



**With Friends Like These...**  
Colleagues snipe as Rather exits *CBS Evening News*. **Page 4**



The number of Daytime Emmy noms for the axed *Martha Stewart Living*

**SMTA**  
SYNDICATION GUIDE  
PAGE 19

MARCH 7, 2005

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**SWEEPS FINALE**



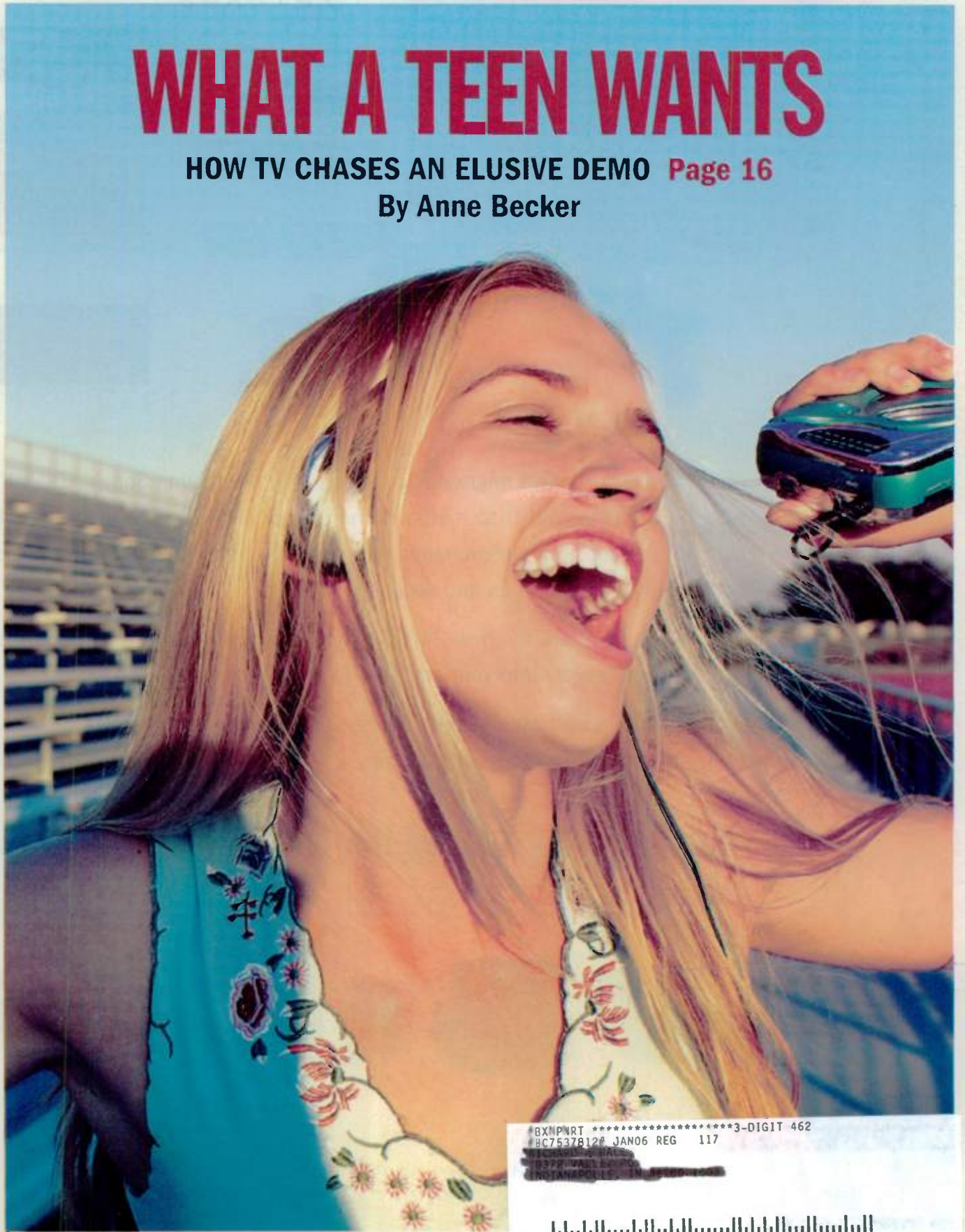
Naveen Andrews of *Lost*

**And The Winner Is...**  
*Idol* worship put Fox on top, while *Lost* and the Oscars kept ABC in the game. CBS finished third, with NBC close behind. Lessons learned. **Page 10**

# WHAT A TEEN WANTS

HOW TV CHASES AN ELUSIVE DEMO **Page 16**

By Anne Becker



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**B&C WEEK**

**Where to be and what to watch...  
Monday, March 7**



**Sylvester Stallone**

They've been leading parallel lives in the hype lane for the past couple of months. Now it's time for the dueling premieres: the Sylvester Stallone/Mark Burnett-produced boxing reality series *The Contender* (NBC, 9:30 p.m. ET)

versus Kirstie Alley's self-mocking comedy *Fat Actress* (Showtime, 10 p.m. ET). Alas, the buzz for the latter is as mixed as a box of Duncan Hines Moist Deluxe Butter Recipe Fudge Cake. Trendspotter alert: **Yahoo!** is Webcasting the *Fat Actress* debut tonight.



**Kirstie Alley**

**Tuesday, March 8**

Webcasting on Yahoo!?! That's so yesterday. The future of TV delivery is a major topic at the Digital Living Room conference sponsored by the **iHollywood Forum** at the **San Mateo Crown Plaza** hotel, conveniently located for **Silicon Valleyites** (today is Day 2 of the two-day affair). "Visionary Speakers" include **RealNetworks CEO Rob Glaser**. Tonight: **Steven Bochco** Productions' *Blind Justice* premieres (ABC, 10 p.m. ET), with **Ron Eldard** as **New York** police detective **Jim Dunbar** (marketing slogan: "*He lost his sight...not his vision*"). Thus continues the tradition of impaired crimefighters, from *Ironside* ("*He lost his ability to walk...not his mobility*") to *Monk* ("*He lost his calm...not his cool*").



**Wednesday, March 9**

**Blind Justice's Ron Eldard**

**Nickelodeon** recently poured another \$1.5 million into its **Let's Just Play** campaign, which encourages "healthy, physical play" for kids. Nice, no? Still, you can almost hear the advertisers at the network's upfront this morning at the **Roseland Ballroom** in **Manhattan** muttering, "Don't get carried away, Nicko." After all, if the kids are outside monkeying around, they're not on the couch staring raptly at **SpongeBob SquarePants** and his lovely sponsors. Tonight: **CBS** turns the

# Grumpy Old News Guys

By **J. Max Robins**



From top: Rather, Wallace, Hewitt and Safer in happier times

Last week, Walter Cronkite, Mike Wallace, Morley Safer, Andy Rooney and Don Hewitt paid tribute to Dan Rather in a manner all too typical of the CBS News culture. In a *New Yorker* profile pegged to his March 9 departure from *CBS Evening News*, Rather's fellow CBS senior citizens, in their own ways, told this colleague of 40+ years: Don't let the door hit your overacting, overpaid anchor ass on the way out.

In case you missed it, Cronkite said he watches Tom Brokaw, while Hewitt sniffed that he prefers Peter Jennings. Wallace, who considers Dan a pal, nonetheless said he found Rather "uptight and occasionally contrived." Rooney and Safer made it clear they thought Rather had sold his reporter's soul for the anchor chair ages ago.

Class, you guys, pure class. These old warhorses—who should all know better—are behaving like some dinner theater version of *Grumpy Old Men*, without the laughs.

Of course, these guys have been stabbing each other in the back—and front, when necessary—for years. Cronkite, whom Rather replaced at the *Evening News* in 1981, has told friends that it was Rather who prevented him from playing the part of the news division's on-camera elder statesman.

And Hewitt, still bitter after being forced out of his executive producer gig at *60 Minutes*, has never forgiven Rather for abandoning in 1981 the legendary newsmag he created. Back in 1997, before there was a *60 Minutes II*, Hewitt paid him back by turning down an exclusive, moving interview Rather had with Bill Cosby in the wake of the murder of the sitcom star's son Ennis. The message was clear: No way was Rather getting time on Hewitt's show, no matter how compelling the story. Rather has had plenty of chances to

slag all these guys, but he's refrained from doing so. No matter how wrong-headed his staunch defense of the discredited *60 Minutes* report on President Bush's National Guard service may be, there's something admirable—even classy?—about his support of those who lost their jobs for their involvement in it. Last Thursday on the *Late Show*, when David Letterman asked him a series of loaded questions about the documents debacle, Rather handled them

with grace and good humor.

Don't get me wrong. It's not like Rather is some septuagenarian virgin in a journalism cathouse. You don't thrive for decades in any major news organization without being a consummate political player and expert counter-puncher. Many of those who've toiled with him believe the hyper-competitive Rather was the key reason the *Evening News* will have nothing like the orderly succession that NBC managed in the transition from Tom Brokaw to Brian Williams. Stories are legion about Rather and his cronies' publicly embracing Connie Chung during her short stint as his *Evening News* co-anchor (1993-95), while privately attempting to drive her out.

Still, there's something unseemly about all the ganging up on Gunga Dan. Last November, I

wrote that, given the depth and breadth of his career, even with all the attendant controversy and eccentricities, it was a shame, after 24 years, he wasn't going to get the quarter-century victory lap he wanted. The sadness of that is made more profound by the public behavior of some sour colleagues.

As it happens, on March 10—the day after Rather's last *Evening News* broadcast—another of the newsman's longtime colleagues, Ed Bradley, will receive the Leonard Zeidenberg First Amendment Award from the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation. The honor is named after the late distinguished *B&C* senior correspondent and staunch defender of this magazine's favorite part of the U.S. Constitution.

Bradley's award is much deserved. Interestingly, he refrained from joining the Rather beat-down in *The New Yorker*. Sometimes your First Amendment rights are about the right not to say anything at all. ■

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

*60 Minutes Wednesday* slot over to the special "Dan Rather: A Reporter Remembers." See **The Robins Report** on this page for more about the exiting anchor. We're more interested in the on-



**SpongeBob SquarePants**

going agita over the bogus National Guard docs scandal.

Apparently, **Josh "I Still Won't Resign!" Howard** and his lawyers are dead-set on trying to clear the executive producer's name by demanding his bosses' paperwork and e-mails. One question: How does Howard intend to authenticate those CBS documents? We hear it's kind of tricky.

**Thursday, March 10**

"The life of a Power Girl at **Lizzie Grubman's** New York City PR firm is sometimes glamorous, sometimes stressful but always exciting. Don't miss the drama on *Power Girls*." We used to be among the whiners who complained that MTV doesn't show music videos any-



**Power Girl Lizzie Grubman**

more, but all's forgiven! A reality TV show about *publicists*? At last, someone is finally striking a blow against the trivialization of American culture. *Power Girls* (premiere, 10:30 p.m. ET) is pronounced "power girls," but it also looks like some kind of IOU: "P owe R." Hey, MTV, we owe U!

**Friday, March 11**

The **National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters** holds its 21st annual **Communications Awards** dinner at the **Wardman Park Marriott** hotel in **Washington** tonight. The "Mistress of Ceremonies" is actress **Kim Coles**, who can be found on **VH1** (4 p.m. ET) every Sunday in *Celebrity Fit Club*, a reality show that features eight overweight entertainers, including **Mia Tyler** and a **Baldwin Brother (Daniel)**, all battling to figure out why Showtime didn't give them their own comedy.



**Kim Coles**

—Mark Lasswell

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# Tower of Babel, on Demand

Ad buyers are eager to exploit VOD advertising possibilities, but how?

Cable systems have never made it easy for advertisers. Until recently, the process of ordering and verifying a local spot in a big city meant a mountain of paperwork and dealing with several cable operators. A new ad campaign for Comcast's local ad sales is almost an apology: Spot cable finally delivers.

Now comes a whole new source of frustration: the difficulty of running commercials on cable's video-on-demand systems. That was the vibe among ad buyers and researchers who gathered in New Orleans last week at the annual media conference of the 4As, the American Association of Advertising Agencies, whose members control the bulk of the estimated \$60 billion that will be spent on all TV advertising this year.

Morgan Stanley analyst Richard Bilotti estimates that cable systems generate \$3.5 billion of that and cable networks get \$12 billion. VOD advertising could allow them to steal even more business away from broadcasters.

Ad buyers are quite anxious over the complexities presented by technologies like VOD and TiVos, which shatter a cornerstone of the television business: the schedule. But they're also eager to get into the sandbox and play, exploiting the possibilities VOD advertising presents.

## FALLING SHORT

Give Comcast CEO Brian Roberts credit for not glossing over the problems. He jetted to the conference to woo ad buyers and confronted cable's track record up front. "For too long, cable has fallen short of the promise of its potential as an advertising medium," he told the crowd. "We're committed to change that."

The opportunities are tantalizing. Comcast—which serves 22 million cable homes alone—expects to double the number of programs and movies available on demand at any given moment to between 8,000 and 10,000, 90% of those viewable for free. Roberts expects his subscribers will summon 1 billion separate VOD programs this year as easily as they call up a Web page.

Other operators aren't quite as aggressive in providing "free VOD," but it's clear that massive changes are coming to a TV near you. Companies see the ability to target commercials far more narrowly than scheduled TV allows.

Advertisers need detailed data in such a splintered marketplace. "The fragmentation that we've had to deal with for the past 10-15 years is nothing compared to what's going to happen when consumers can watch TV on their time and view from thousands and thousands of programs," says Adam Gerber, MediaVest USA's group director for strategy and innovation.

So VOD and ads sound like a match made in heaven, right? But it turns out, cable operators have planned miserably to take advantage of VOD advertising. It's an on-demand Tower of Babel. Major operators use different VOD equipment vendors, so their technologies are all a little different. Operators didn't establish standards for delivering and tracking spots, so there's little uniformity. And the process of actually getting a commercial onto VOD systems is complicated.

A major reason Roberts appeared was to unveil the new tracking system developed by Rentrak, a product that has been

long delayed but will give programmers and advertisers their first look at who's actually watching VOD. But the reports are very limited. What do advertisers want from a VOD "Nielsen"? Precision.

Advertisers demand detailed receipts and reports on what spots aired. Rentrak is merely offering monthly summaries of programs watched, not specific commercials. Viewing is broken down by town, not even by ZIP code, and

there's no demographic breakdown. As imperfect as Nielsen's TV ratings may be, its people meters offer information about the age and sex of who's watching. Cable's advanced set-top boxes do not.

Advertisers targeting young men will know that someone in a certain household watched their spot in MTV's *Pimp My Ride* but won't be able to tell if it's a 17-year-old boy or his 50-year-old father.

## "A BACKLOG OF ANTI-PATHY"

Warren Schlichting, VP of new business strategies for Comcast's ad-sales unit, got a dose of buyers' frustration at the meeting. The three biggest operators with VOD—Comcast, Time Warner and Cox—have incompatible systems for handling commercials, so networks have to order three separate systems to encode spots. Then delivering them takes weeks. Spots, files describing the commercial and any on-screen banners promoting them have to be delivered to each operator, then re-sent to dozens of servers around the country.

"For me to get a spot on Comcast's home page April 4, I'd have to send it on March 4," says a network sales exec. "There's a backlog of antipathy over the data issue that came out here." But he adds that the VOD data is better than advertisers can get from any other media, including the Internet, and will improve.

When cable operators designed their VOD systems, advertising wasn't the big driver. They were thinking movies. "We're retrofitting a cable infrastructure that was originally meant for pay-per-view," Schlichting says. A movie-heavy VOD system would need only to freshen its lineup with a dozen or so new titles a week. There's no capacity for quick insertion of ads into 10,000 titles that Roberts plans to offer on-demand.

Cable operators have been talking about VOD ad sales for a decade. One thing is clear: It will be a long time before cable can tell advertisers "VOD Cable Finally Delivers." ■

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

**MONEY TALKS**  
By John M. Higgins



Comcast CEO Brian Roberts is committed to making VOD advertising a reality.

### THE B&C

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 25-MARCH 3

THE B&C 10

WEEK	YTD
▲ 1.3%	▼ -2.0%

BROADCAST TV GROUPS

WEEK	YTD
▲ 1.3%	▼ -3.6%

CABLE OPERATORS

WEEK	YTD
▼ -1.6%	▼ -0.9%

RADIO

WEEK	YTD
■ 0.0%	▼ -1.4%

	CLOSE	WEEK	YTD
Dow Jones	10833.03	0.8%	0.5%
Nasdaq	2058.40	0.3%	-5.4%

### THE B&C 10

	CLOSE	WEEK	YTD
Cablevision	\$28.65	-5.1%	15.1%
Clear Channel	\$33.31	-1.8%	-0.5%
Comcast Corp.	\$32.00	-0.7%	-2.6%
Disney	\$28.57	1.5%	2.8%
EchoStar	\$30.06	3.0%	-9.6%
Fox Ent.	\$35.07	5.3%	12.2%
Hearst-Argyle	\$25.32	2.6%	-4.0%
Time Warner	\$17.69	1.8%	-9.0%
Tribune	\$40.88	0.9%	-3.0%
Viacom	\$35.68	1.1%	-3.8%

### GOOD WEEK

Gabriel Tech.	\$2.99	17.3%	1.4%
Entravision	\$8.70	11.0%	4.2%
XM Satellite	\$33.28	10.4%	-11.5%
Univision	\$28.60	7.2%	-2.3%
Granite	\$0.35	6.1%	-14.6%

### BAD WEEK

TiVo	\$4.06	-9.4%	-30.8%
Gemstar	\$4.43	-8.7%	-25.2%
Westwood One	\$21.68	-8.6%	-19.5%
Cablevision	\$28.65	-5.1%	15.1%
Interop	\$0.58	-4.9%	-22.7%

### TIVO TUMBLES

-9.4%

Wasn't it great when TiVo rallied on rumors that Apple was planning to acquire the company? Well, never mind. Apple hasn't materialized (managing one group of fanatic customers is probably enough). TiVo's stock is right back down to pre-rumor levels, off 9.4% last week.



3/7/05

VISIT THE BLOG OF TV: [BCBEAT.COM](http://BCBEAT.COM)

NEWS & COMMENT

# Judge Makes Suit Against Penn & Teller Vanish



Penn Jillette (right) and his silent partner, Teller



Senator Ted Stevens



David Letterman

**E**ven though one half of Penn & Teller doesn't talk, the duo has just struck a blow for freedom of speech. A federal judge last week threw out a lawsuit, filed by a group that advocates the teaching of creationism in Cobb County, Ga., public schools, against Viacom, which produces Penn & Teller's Showtime series *Bullshit!*. The magicians/debunkers ran afoul of the creationists with a 2003 episode that included interviews with the activists and their testimony at a school board meeting arguing that textbooks should bear stickers stating that evolution is just a theory. The plaintiffs claimed the release forms they signed were misleading. The show, they found, was "an aggressive, irreverent exposé of the beliefs of Christianity and creationism, and a personal attack." The plaintiffs claimed fraud and breach of contract, but the defense convinced the judge that it was a defamation case—and thus a First Amendment issue.

## FLASH!

senting the show's producers, Showtime and Viacom, welcomed the decision: "If you're in the First Amendment business, it's expensive to litigate, and it's expensive to win." Plaintiffs' attorney James Creasy says he does not know if his clients will appeal. Having survived in the Darwinian world of the TV business, *Bullshit!* returns for a third season on April 25.

## Disney: Prim, Or Just Wily?

The entire cable industry vowed to fight Congress following Alaska Sen. Ted Stevens' recent call to impose broadcast indecency restrictions on cable nets. Well, almost the entire cable industry, anyway. A Disney executive tells *B&C* that, as the owner of ABC Fam-

ily, ESPN as well as the ABC broadcast network, the House of Mouse actually favors indecency limits on extended-basic lineups. That prospect alarms other companies—shows like *South Park* and *Nip/Tuck* would have to be cleaned up or aired only after 10 p.m.—but Disney's fine with it. "Ultimately, all the attempts to distinguish cable from broadcast will fail," says the Disney exec.

Of course, any time you hear a media company volunteering for tighter government controls, it sets off the old Follow the Money alarm bells. As it happens, some lawmakers are suggesting an alternative to the content restrictions: forcing cable operators to allow "à la carte" channel shopping so that parents can opt not to receive channels they don't want their kids to see. Mostly wholesome Disney doesn't have much to fear there. Ah, but à la carte selection would

also allow millions of subscribers who don't like sports but do like cutting expenses to dump ESPN—one of the priciest items on cable's prix fixe menu.

## Better 'Late' HD Than Never

Letterman, Letterman everywhere. He kept popping up on the Flash! radar last week, from CBS uber-boss Les Moonves' contention in a *Playboy* magazine interview that his man would beat Jay Leno in the late-night ratings if Nielsen could just tally guys watching in sports bars and frat houses, to Dave's conducting the Dan Rather exit interview as the newsman gives up the *CBS Evening News* anchor chair. Then there was the tech gossip that came our way: Next fall, Letterman's *Late Show* will, at a long last, start

broadcasting in high-definition (Leno went HD in 1999). Nice to know that the *Late Show* look will finally sparkle as much as the writing still does after all these years.


In case you missed it, the other night Letterman offered a Top 10 list of "Other Changes at CNN." Given the subsequent news that CNN dropped 21% in February prime time ratings from last year, the network might want to give this some serious thought:

10. Wolf Blitzer changing his name to Blitz Wolfer.
9. When covering a hard story, reporters ask, "What would Jack Daniels do?"
8. Every Sunday, it's a *WKRP in Cincinnati* marathon.
7. Reporters must make quotation marks with fingers when calling Bush "President."
6. They're putting Lou Dobbs on steroids.
5. Every night, one lucky viewer receives an on-air physical from Dr. Sanjay Gupta.
4. Last 10 minutes of newscasts anchors sing hits from the '70s, '80s, '90s and today.
3. Let's just say Paula Zahn is now Paul Zahn.
2. Changing name to CNNN.
1. Interactive feature allows viewers to administer painful electric shock to Larry King.

## ACCESS HOLLYWOOD IS #1 IN POST OSCAR® COVERAGE!

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EXTRA	4.4	1.8	1.5
ENT. TONIGHT	4.3	1.5	2.6
THE INSIDER	3.6	1.9	2.4



SOURCE: NSI WRAP OVERNIGHTS, PA OF PRIMARY TELECASTS ON 2/28/05. #1 AMONG ENT. NEWS MAGAZINES LISTED.

# Sweeps Finale

Fox is first, ABC's on second, CBS slides into third **By Jim Finkle**



**C**BS ended February sweeps running repeats of some of its top-performing shows. The network decided to save fresh episodes of *CSI*, *CSI: Miami* and *Everybody Loves Raymond* until later in the season, betting Fox would place first no matter what the network aired against it.

"This was a sweeps we were never going to win," says CBS EVP Kelly Kahl. "We didn't have a chance, and we knew that a year ago."

CBS, like ABC and NBC, assumed it would be impossible to beat Fox, which has both the top-rated series on television, *American Idol*, and the Super Bowl, among the most successful broadcasts each year.

CBS was right. Per preliminary data released March 3, Fox won with a 6.5 rating among 18-49s, a record for any sweeps period. (Fox started distributing programming in April 1987.)

The battle among ABC, CBS and NBC was much

closer. ABC ranked second with a 4.1 average rating, followed by CBS with a 3.8 rating, then NBC, with a 3.6. The two youngest networks were far behind: The WB and UPN pulled a 1.4 each.

This is the first time NBC placed last in a sweeps period since national people meters were introduced in 1987. Just a year ago, NBC claimed first prize in the February race, thanks to *Friends* and *Frasier*.

Typically, network spin machines were working overtime as sweeps closed. Whatever the rankings, each of the Big Four found a positive take on its performance.

NBC bragged in a press release that "potent ratings" for *Medium*, *ER*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *The Apprentice* and *Las Vegas* kept the network "competitive" among adults 18-49 during sweeps.

To sweeten the comparisons, NBC researchers calculated how Fox, ABC and CBS would have performed if they had relied solely on "regular programming." That is, if they didn't include ratings from the Super Bowl and the Oscars.

"They're almost like false numbers," says ad consultant Tom DeCabilia, president of TSD Marketing. "Advertisers don't watch the sweeps that closely anymore." But they do remain relevant for local stations, which use sweeps data to set ad rates.

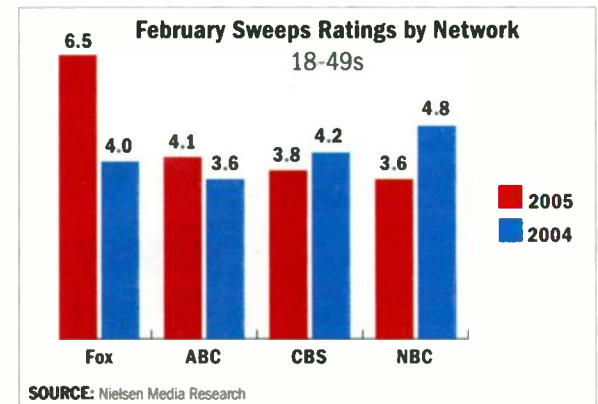
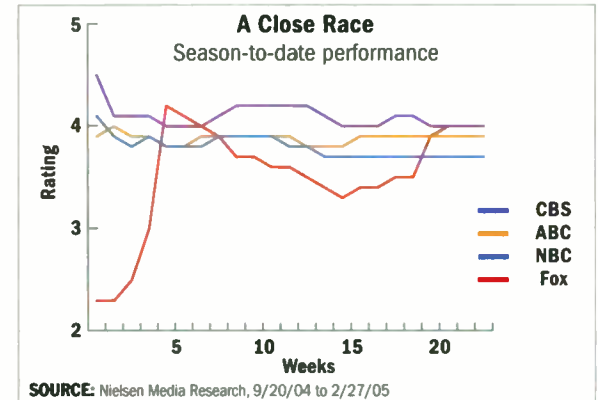
Here is a look at some lessons learned from the February sweeps:

**1. Take chances.** ABC is back. A year ago, it placed last in the February sweeps; now it is No. 2. *Desperate Housewives* and *Lost* brought viewers back to the network, and many are sticking around for the rest of its lineup, including *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, *Boston Legal* and *Wife Swap*.

**2. Never underestimate *American Idol*.** Its ratings

are as strong as ever in its fourth season. And the show is a platform for promoting new programs for Fox. Ratings for medical drama *House*, which follows *Idol*, have soared since the mega-hit's return in January.

**3. The pecking order is fluid.** It may shift over the next three months. "I don't rule anybody out of an 18 to 49 win," says CBS' Kahl. Even laggard NBC has a shot if *The Contender*, Mark Burnett's new reality show, beats expectations and pulls in *Idol*-like ratings. Says ABC Entertainment President Steve McPherson, "There is a lot of TV that will be on from now through the end of the season." ■



## 'Fat' Is a Fit

Showtime chief talks about the promise of Kirstie Alley's new comedy for the network

**A**t Showtime's Los Angeles high-rise headquarters last week, staffers scurried to ready the premium pay cable channel for its invitation-only, red-carpet Hollywood premiere of the new Kirstie Alley comedy, *Fat Actress*. The series' seven episodes begin airing March 7 at 10 p.m. ET, and the buzz is expected to equal or surpass that for such recent high-profile Showtime series as *The L Word* and *Huff*. B&C's Deborah Starr Seibel sat down with Showtime Chairman and CEO Matthew C. Blank to find out how the avalanche of

publicity has affected a network always in the shadow of HBO and how the show fits into Showtime's programming-redesign strategy.

**How would you characterize the buzz for *Fat Actress*, and how does it compare with the response to your programming in the past?**

It is lightning in a bottle. You can do the best job in the world on something creatively in this business, and nobody pays attention. And then there are things that take on a life of their own. We showed the television critics a three- to four-minute tape of Kirstie in July, and within an hour, *People* magazine was calling to photograph her that weekend. There's an interesting thing that goes on in the media and in reality television today, and it's that we're obsessed with the demonization of people. People don't get on the covers of magazines because they've done good things. Reality shows would be nothing without the losers. The print media are obsessed with people with problems or catching people in unfortunate situations. So Kirstie just



Showtime's  
Matt Blank

decided to turn the tables. She is so smart. She just said, instead of hiding behind her front door—which she did for a while—and just taking it, she was going to use [the weight gain] to her advantage.

**Have you seen a spike in your 12 million-subscriber base because of *Fat Actress*?**

I don't think HBO or Showtime has ever been able to demonstrate a spike on a monthly basis because of a piece of programming. What we do see over time is a greater awareness of our programming, a greater inclination to purchase it, or stay on the service. This used to be a business based on feature films. People will always watch feature films on premium TV. The trouble is, they're not going to give you credit for it and they're not going to buy Showtime because of it.

**You're scaling way back on original movies (from 30-40 to about six) and refocusing on drama and comedy series. But the knock on Showtime is that it never seems able to effectively get the word out about its programming.**

The biggest challenge we face in the marketplace isn't the product itself. It's the price of basic cable or satellite service, plus the price of your monthly modem service. There aren't many things that people feel they can do without. So it's our job to make sure that people don't feel they can do without Showtime. We have some of the best proprietary programming on the air, and the service is state-of-the-art: All our series are shot on high-definition, and we'll have 5 million to 6 million on-demand subscribers by the middle of the year. We have to be there first and early because people are paying for it.

**Don't you want to shower Kirstie Alley with chocolates for all the free advertising and publicity?**

Only if they're Jenny Craig [the weight-loss organization for which Alley is a spokeswoman]. She made Bob (Greenblatt, president of entertainment) and me have Jenny Craig chocolate cake with her on her birthday.

**How was it?**

(Choosing his words carefully) It was cake-like. ■





**DON'T ASK WHAT THEY SAID.  
BE THERE WHEN THEY SAY IT.**

## GENERAL SESSIONS

### **From Baud Band to Broadband** **Sunday, April 3, 1:00 - 2:15 pm**

**Paul Allen** • Chairman, Vulcan, Inc.  
**Bing Gordon** • Executive Vice President & Chief Creative Officer,  
Electronic Arts, Inc.  
**Tom Rutledge** • Chief Operating Officer, Cablevision Systems, Inc.  
**Jerry Yang** • Co-Founder & Chief Yahoo, Yahoo! Inc.

### **Attack of the Empowered Consumer: Understanding New Media Markets** **Monday, April 4, 9:30 - 10:45 am**

**John Chambers** • President & CEO, Cisco Systems, Inc.  
**Bob Iger** • President & COO, The Walt Disney Company  
**Jon Miller** • Chairman & CEO, AOL, Inc.  
**Larry Paige** • Co-Founder & President, Google  
**Brian Roberts** • President & CEO, Comcast Corporation

### **Good Things Come in Small Packets: How IP Is Changing Communications** **Tuesday, April 5, 9:30 - 10:45 am**

**Glenn Britt** • Chairman & CEO, Time Warner Cable  
**Rob Glaser** • Chairman & CEO, RealNetworks, Inc.  
**Len Lauer** • President & COO, Sprint Corporation  
**Jim Robbins** • President & CEO, Cox Communications, Inc.

### **Hollywood Squires: Entertainment & the New Rules** **Tuesday, April 5, 4:00 - 5:00 pm**

**Jeff Bewkes** • Chairman, Entertainment & Network Group,  
Time Warner Inc.  
**Peter Chernin** • President & COO • News Corporation  
**Jeffrey Katzenberg** • Film Producer & Co-Founder, DreamWorks SKG  
**Bob Wright** • Chairman & CEO, NBC Universal

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## WASHINGTON WATCH

## File-Sharers Hail Rights "Magna Carta"

Consumer activists and makers of digital recorders warned the Supreme Court that TV programmers and Hollywood are using the switch to digital technology as an excuse to trample longstanding home-recording rights.

In briefs to the high court, Intel, the Consumer Electronics Association, Public Knowledge and others urged the justices to uphold a lower-court ruling absolving file-sharing networks like Grokster of liability when individuals use their technology to illegally swap copyrighted movies and TV shows.

Shutting down Grokster and its siblings would wrongly eliminate legitimate file-sharing, they say. CEA President Gary Shapiro complained that Hollywood is seeking to destroy the 20-year-old ruling that permitted Sony and Betamax to keep producing video recorders over the movie industry's objections. Shapiro calls the ruling "the Magna Carta" of home recording and credited it for the consumer-electronics revolution that led to today's iPods and TiVos. The Supreme Court will hear the Motion Picture Association of America's appeal March 29.

## Microsoft Helps Cable Lobbying

Microsoft has given cable operators a big helping hand in their fight to postpone a looming government restriction that would hamper their deployment of low-cost set-top boxes for digital TV.

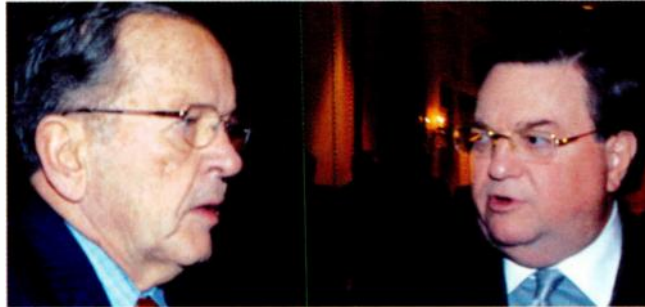
Microsoft has told the FCC it supports the cable industry's request to delay, until at least 2007, a deadline for eliminating cable operator-provided set-tops that combine descrambling functions with channel-surfing and other interactive features. Microsoft, which wants to supply interactive software for cable boxes, argues that cable is moving towards developing retail products of its own.

The ban is scheduled to go into effect July 2006, but after lobbying by cable, the FCC is leaning towards at least postponing the deadline. The deadline was originally imposed to encourage a retail market for interactive digital boxes.

# Cable Under Attack

Programmers could be forced to tone down content

By Bill McConnell



Sen. Ted Stevens' (left) blast at cable pleased NAB's Eddie Fritts.

A showdown is brewing between Congress and the cable industry now that two top lawmakers are vowing to bring the industry under the same indecency restrictions as broadcasters.

"I think we can put restrictions on cable, and I intend to tell them that," Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Ted Stevens told an appreciative crowd of TV and radio-station executives in Washington for the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) annual state leadership conference last week.

Stevens' comments were echoed by his House counterpart, Rep. Joe Barton (R-Texas). Both men said their viewers, particularly children, do not differentiate between traditional broadcast channels and pay-TV channels when they scroll through program guides, and there is no reason for Washington to make that distinction either.

Edgier networks like FX and MTV could be forced to corral shows containing sex scenes, profanity and bathroom humor to late-night and early-morning hours, like broadcast TV stations do. Alternatively, cable could be forced to sell channels "a la carte" or one by one, so parents could pick and choose the programming they want coming into their homes. This presumably would apply to satellite radio as well, which is also exempt from indecency restrictions.

### BROADCASTERS FAVOR SUCH A LAW

NAB President Eddie Fritts seemed thrilled by Stevens' ideas, because broadcasters would favor such a law, perhaps as part of a larger telecommunications bill. With a package, broadcasters might accept higher indecency penalties if the new restrictions also applied to cable. Such a package could also include a deadline for TV stations' going all-digital and an obligation for cable operators

to carry broadcasters' digital signals.

Kyle McSarrow, new president of the National Cable & Telecommunications Association (NCTA), insists there is no reason to reverse long-standing indecency exemptions for cable, given the options subscribers have

for blocking channels they don't want. McSarrow also vows to fight any new cable-carriage mandate.

### "FOUR-LETTER WORDS AS PARTICIPLES"

Stevens called cable to task for programming that's "worse, much worse" than broadcasters'. One recent show was so bad he took the rare step, for him, of turning it off in disgust. He would not identify the program but complained that the dialogue was riddled with "four-letter words as participles."

The cable industry so far has been able to evade the type of federal limits on over-the-air stations faced by broadcasters. Stations can be fined if they carry indecent programming between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. A year-long crackdown has led to record-breaking fines against stations. Congress is expected to pass even tougher penalties this year.

With the help of federal courts, cable has repeatedly fended off restrictions on its content, even during the hours children are most likely to be watching, by arguing that First Amendment law won't permit restrictions on cable if parents have other options for shielding their kids from objectionable shows. For instance, parents have the option of using channel-blocking technology or simply

not subscribing to pay-TV.

Stevens dismissed the notion that cable is constitutionally exempt from indecency restrictions, noting that the industry vainly fought a mandate to carry local analog TV signals on the same First Amendment grounds.

He could attempt to apply indecency fines to cable or try a less intrusive alternative that would let parents buy channels à la carte. "If we can force them to carry broadcasters' signals," Stevens says, "then we can tell them that the same level of standards that apply to broadcasters should apply to cable." ■

"We can tell them that the same level of standards that apply to broadcasters should apply to cable."

SEN. TED STEVENS (R-ALASKA)

Persuaded by electronics retailers like Best Buy and their suppliers, the FCC judged that a retail market would be hindered if cable operators continued to supply all-in-one boxes, leaving customers less incentive to seek a retail version.

## FCC Spares 'Private Ryan'

ABC stations that aired the uncut version of World War II movie *Saving Private Ryan* won't be punished by the FCC.

The network's Veterans Day broadcast stirred up a hubbub when scores of affiliates questioned whether the movie's profanity and violence would lead to FCC fines. No matter that the FCC had dismissed complaints about it in 2001 and 2002, GMs of 66 stations decided they'd rather be safe than sorry, given the ongoing crackdown on indecency, and refused to run



ABC stations that ran *Saving Private Ryan* won't be fined.

the movie. The affiliates' boycott sparked headlines across the country. But the five FCC commissioners unanimously ruled the profanity and violence of the movie integral to "conveying the horrors of war."

## 'Buster' Ban: No Second Thoughts

PBS President Pat Mitchell said she has no regrets over nixing an episode of *Postcards from Buster* that featured the cartoon bunny's visit to a family headed, presumably, by a lesbian couple.

"I wouldn't inject PBS stations into a culture war they did not start and cannot stop," she said at the American Women in Radio and Television's annual meeting. PBS in early February decided not to provide the episode, "Sugar Time," after Mitchell and the series' main funder, the Department of Education, balked over a "two-mommy" family featured in *Buster's* visit to Vermont.

WGBH Boston, which produced the show, aired the episode Feb. 2, as did a handful of other stations that obtained the episode directly from WGBH.



SYNDICATION

RATINGS 2/14-20/05

Nielsen Media Research

Top 25 Shows HOUSEHOLDS

PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 Wheel of Fortune	9.7	NA
2 Oprah Winfrey Show	8.2	8.4
3 Jeopardy!	8.0	NA
4 Everybody Loves Raymond	7.3	9.3
5 Seinfeld	6.2	7.7
5 Seinfeld (wknd)	6.2	7.5
7 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	6.0	7.1
8 Dr. Phil	5.6	5.7
8 Entertainment Tonight	5.6	5.7
8 Friends	5.6	7.2
11 Judge Judy	5.3	8.3
12 Wheel of Fortune (wknd)	4.9	NA
13 Everybody Loves Raymond (wknd)	4.2	4.3
14 Entertainment Tonight (wknd)	3.8	4.0
15 Inside Edition	3.7	3.7
15 Who Wants To Be a Millionaire	3.7	4.1
17 Judge Joe Brown	3.6	5.2
17 Live With Regis and Kelly	3.6	NA
19 Malcolm in the Middle	3.5	4.4
20 Cops	3.3	4.1
20 That '70s Show	3.3	4.1
22 Maury	3.2	3.5
22 Will & Grace	3.2	4.0
24 King of the Hill	3.1	3.8
25 Divorce Court	2.9	3.9

Top Court Shows HOUSEHOLDS

PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 Judge Judy	5.3	8.3
2 Judge Joe Brown	3.6	5.2
3 Divorce Court	2.9	3.9
4 People's Court	2.7	2.8
5 Judge Mathis	2.6	2.9

According to Nielsen Media Research Syndication Service Ranking Report Feb. 14-20, 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

# Make a Date

## Dating shows face tough challenges By Jim Finkle



ElimiDate's all-star weekend in Las Vegas

Telepictures is still in the matchmaking game, at least for another season. The syndication arm of Warner Bros. has just renewed *eliminate*, its half-hour reality/comedy strip that sets single people up on dates with four suitors. Three are eliminated during the course of each episode.

"When you put five people together, it's like putting five pieces of wood together. You're going to have fire," says Alex Duda, the show's executive producer. "It's all about story and surprise." *Eliminate* is currently broadcast in 96% of the U.S.

Duda is always looking for new twists to keep her show fresh. During "Spy Week," she places a mole among the four suitors, who secretly passes information to the picker. "Help Is on the Way Week" adds a sixth member to the cast: a friend, relative or even an "ex" who helps make crucial decisions.

Debuting in 2001, other members of *eliminate*'s freshman class included *Change of Heart* (also from Warner

Bros.), *Rendez-view* (Paramount) and *Shipmates* (Sony). Only *eliminate* is still standing. It faces just one rival in first-run syndication: NBC Universal's titillating *Blind Date*. When *Blind Date* premiered in 1999, it blazed new territory by taking viewers on the date.

*Blind Date* sets two people up, then uses on-screen graphics to poke fun at the sometimes awkward situations. The approach may be

irreverent, but it leaves more room for romance than *eliminate*'s survival-of-the-fittest dating contests. NBC U says it is looking to renew *Blind Date* for a seventh season, but has yet to announce it has won enough clearances to do so.

In fact, both shows are ratings-challenged. *Blind Date* pulled a 1.2 average household rating from Sept. 20 to Feb. 13, while *eliminate* had a 1.1 average household rating during the same period.

Many stations schedule the dating strips in overnight time slots. ABC affiliate KITV Honolulu runs *eliminate* following a block of paid programming that airs after *Jimmy Kimmel Live*.

"It kills a time slot at 1 a.m.," says KITV GM Mike Rosenberg, who plans to sign up for another season. Telepictures will let him renew for just a single season, giving Rosenberg the flexibility to switch gears, he says, if something better comes along for fall 2006.

Although the genre has a high failure rate, Telepictures EVP Hilary Estey-McLoughlin believes *eliminate* has staying power: "It continues to compete effectively in late night." ■

### IN FOCUS

#### DANZA IN PROGRESS

The Tony Danza Show, the low-rated freshman strip from Buena Vista, found a better time slot in Chicago for next fall. The show moves from 1:40 a.m. on ABC's WLS to noon on WMAQ. Danza also found a daytime slot in Los Angeles, moving from overnights. Winning daytime clearances is a start, but won't guarantee strong numbers. On March 1, Danza pulled a 5.0 household rating at 10 a.m. in New York (behind The Ellen DeGeneres Show's 6.0). But the same day in Miami, it pulled a 1.0 at 10 a.m. (behind Family Feud's 3.9). In Pittsburgh, the show earned a 0.2 rating at 11 a.m.

#### ET, OPRAH GET OSCAR BOUNCE

Entertainment Tonight and The Oprah Winfrey Show scored big with the Oscars, recording impressive ratings on the day after the show. Both catered to a big appetite for news from Sunday night's ceremony. Paramount's ET pulled in a 7.9 household rating/12 share, according to Nielsen's



metered-market averages. It was the highest-rated episode in two years, up 7% from last year's post-Oscar show. Oprah's Oscar show was taped Monday morning with Jamie Foxx, Hillary Swank and thousands

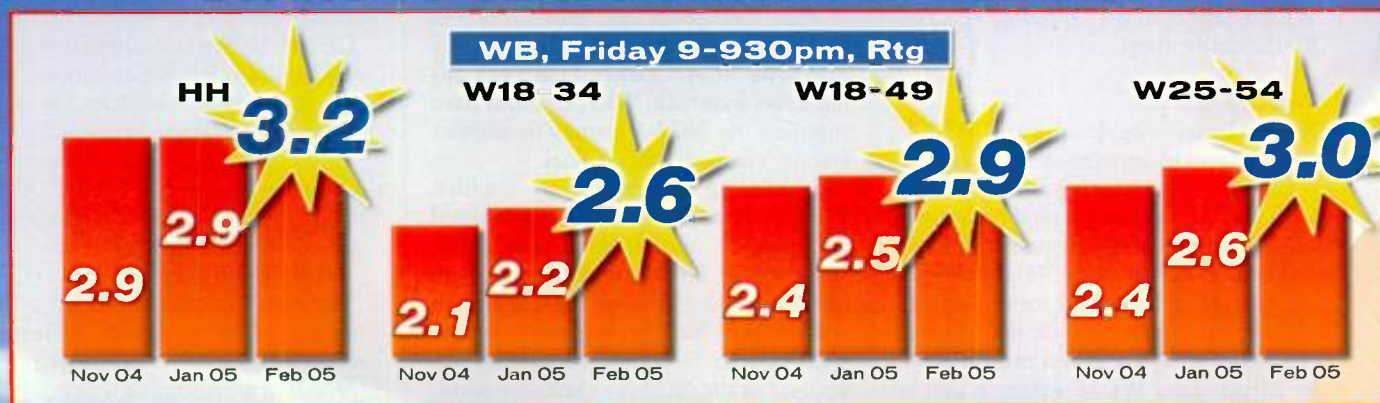
of adoring fans. It was the program's highest-rated episode of the season, according to King World and Harpo Productions. It pulled a 10.8/23.

#### AFFAIR RETURNS

Twentieth Television says it will launch its revival of A Current Affair March 26 on Fox stations, covering 40% of the country. Show runner Peter Brennan wooed correspondent Michel James Bryant from access magazine Extra. Anchored by Tim Green, the show will be produced out of Fox's WWOR studio in Secaucus, N.J.

# reba Hits New High Notes!

## SOARS TO SEASON HIGHS IN FEBRUARY!



Source: NTL, English, Nov 04=11/11-11/29/04, Jan 05=1/3-1/30/05, Feb 05=1/31-2/27/05. Original broadcast only. Ratings high in February=1/17/04-2/27/05. HH, W18-34, W18-49, W25-54, N18-34, N18-49, M25-54.

### AVAILABLE FALL 2006!



## STATION TO STATION

## KMAX Reaches Out to Hispanic Viewers

By Allison Romano

KMAX Sacramento, Calif., is dipping into Spanish-language broadcasting. For five hours each morning, the Viacom-owned UPN station interprets its successful morning show, *Good Day Sacramento*, for the market's Hispanic population, via the Secondary Audio Program (SAP) feed.

KMAX interpreters work in teams of two. But where SAP is usually a direct translation of English-language scripts, the KMAX feed is original and extemporaneous. The interpreters work on a five-second delay, recounting the show's news and features in their own words. (Airing since late November, the show's Hispanic ratings for February sweeps won't be available from Nielsen until May.)

One immediate bonus: *Good Day Sacramento en Español* is sellable. Regional mattress company Sleep Train signed on as the exclusive first-year sponsor. KMAX plans to sell sponsorships for particular segments.

The Spanish version is the brainchild of VP/GM Bruno Cohen, formerly CNBC's business programming chief. He was impressed

**"This is part of Sacramento's life blood."**

BRUNO COHEN, KMAX

with the market's heavy Hispanic composition. Sacramento now ranks as the 12th-largest Hispanic market with a population projected at 797,000 in 2005, or 22% of the population. "This is part of Sacramento's lifeblood," says Cohen.

Yet KMAX offered no Spanish-language fare, an oversight Cohen was eager to correct. The station carried one of the top English-language shows popular with Hispanic viewers—*WWE Smackdown*—which offered an SAP feed. KMAX didn't have the requisite technology to carry it. For about \$10,000, the station installed a translation device.

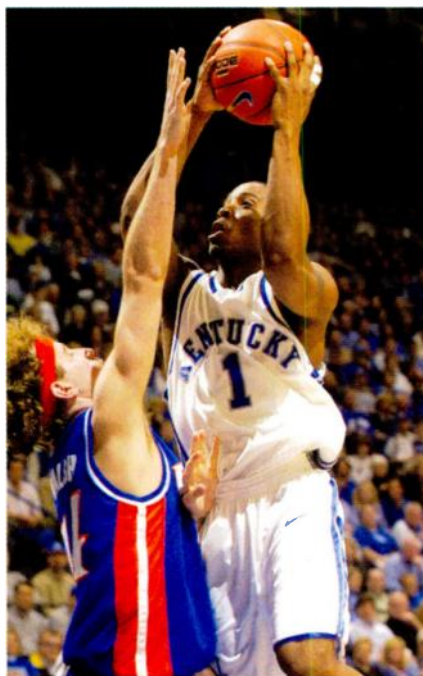
Then Cohen turned his sights on KMAX's local programming.

The station offers 31 local hours per week, an aggressive tally for

# Hoopla!

WLKY Louisville, Ky., latest to air NCAA on broadcast, digital

By Allison Romano



The Kentucky Wildcats are a local favorite.

At last, basketball fans in Louisville, Ky., get a say in what they see during March Madness. When the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament tips off March 17, local CBS affiliate WLKY will carry several games rather than the single regional feed CBS traditionally supplies. To up the ante, WLKY is utilizing its digital broadcast channels to telecast up to three games at once.

"We are in the heartland of basketball country, and every year, we're challenged to determine which one game makes [the most] sense to carry," says WLKY President/GM Jim Carter. The University of Louisville is the hometown favorite, and the University of Kentucky and Indiana University are both within an hour's drive. Basketball fever is so intense that the Louisville market regularly ranks as the top-rated CBS station for the NCAA games. In the past three years, WLKY averaged a 17.6 rating/31 share for the entire event.

### MULTIPLE GAMES

Now Hearst-Argyle-owned WLKY doesn't have to agonize over carriage. It is the latest in a growing roster of local CBS stations utilizing digital broadcasting to transmit multiple games. WRAL Raleigh, N.C., and WISH Indianapolis—also rabid basketball regions—were the earliest pioneers. Both used digital channels for NCAA games back in 2000. In Milwaukee, WDJT offers multiple games, as does KLAS Las Vegas. Stations have to request that CBS supply them with the extra games.

The network, increasingly savvy about NCAA production, has been obliging. CBS already produces all the games and farms out feeds to regionalized areas. For \$49, DirecTV subscribers can buy 37 out-of-market games; new college-sports channel CSTV will stream 56 out-of-market games online for \$19.95. CBS is also upping its HD output to 39 high-def games, compared with 12 last year.

Digital broadcast is another way to maximize sports coverage.

### GETTING FEEDS

But not every TV can receive the digital broadcasts. A digital receiver is needed to capture over-the-air signals, but only 1 million to 2 million TV owners have them. Some cable companies are filling the void. WLKY partnered with Insight Communications to deliver games to Insight's 106,000 digital-cable subscribers at no extra charge, and the operator's 11,000 high-def customers will also get HD coverage. They plan to promote the added games on-air as "Mega March Madness."

In Raleigh, WRAL estimates 210,000 homes can receive its digital channels. Time Warner counts 205,000 digital-cable customers and estimates there are about 5,000 digital receivers in that market. Assessing how many viewers tune in, however, is difficult.

Nielsen Media Research doesn't rate digital broadcast channels, so stations have to rely on anecdotal evidence. Viewers regularly e-mail WRAL Programming Manager Jimmy Goodmon to suggest ways to program the digital channels. "Then you know they are using it," he says. Often, they request more college basketball games.

For some stations, the cost of upgrading technology is a barrier. While nearly all stations have spent millions on digital upgrades, not all have the equipment to broadcast multiple channels.

WLKY already had technology to split its feed. Two years ago, with the war in Iraq looming, it devised a contingency plan to air NCAA games if CBS was airing news coverage. WLKY would have supplied the NCAA games to another station, via its digital channel.

Scheduling advertising is trickier. WLKY plans to insert regular taped commercials into all three games. But since it will break for commercials at different times, two or three different staffers will be keeping track of the spots. Carter is hoping to sign an advertiser as the NCAA's exclusive sponsor. "This is an experiment," he says. "We're doing this because basketball is king here." ■

any station, particularly a UPN outlet. *Good Day Sacramento* airs seven days a week and is typically the second-highest-rated morning show in the market, behind powerhouse NBC affiliate KCRA. In February, KCRA's 6 a.m. news grabbed a 4.0 rating/20 share, and KMAX nabbed 2.4/12. ABC affiliate KXTV was third with 2.2/11. Univision's morning show recorded 0.4/2.

But rather than use closed-captioning, the most common way to deliver Spanish translations, Cohen utilizes SAP, which he says is more attractive to viewers and advertisers. KHTV Little Rock, Ark., also offers an SAP simulcast of its 10 p.m. news, and CBS O&O KPIX San Francisco translates its 11 p.m. news.

So KMAX hired Martha Garcia, a former diplomatic translator and Spanish teacher. With most programs, scripts are written in advance, and a translator reads from an advance copy. But on *Good Day Sacramento*, the anchors often banter. "When they ad-lib, there is no way to follow them," says Garcia. Plus, the five-hour broadcast was grueling for one person.

Cohen simply hired more interpreters and suggested a model akin to sports broadcasting. On a baseball telecast, the play-by-



Martha Garcia interprets on KMAX.

play announcer describes what is unfolding on the field, while a color analyst provides context and insight. KMAX interpreters could do both: relay what the English-language hosts do in terms that make sense to Spanish speakers.

Then he made the interpreters on-air personalities. KMAX built a radio booth off to the side of the set, and the English-language hosts worked them into the ensemble. Several times an hour, they ask their Spanish-language colleagues for a word of the day or how to translate a feature. The tab is about \$25,000 to update the studio and technology, plus the cost of the interpreters.

Ratings, however, are still unknown. Yet, armed with anecdotal evidence as a guide, Cohen is expecting a spike: "We are giving people new reasons to watch."

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



AT A GLANCE

The Market

DMA Rank	26
Population	2,960,000
TV homes	1,026,000
Income Per Capita	\$18,523
TV Revenue Rank	16
TV Revenue	\$322,700,000

Commercial TV Stations

Rank*	Ch.	Affil.	Owner
1	KFMB	8	CBS Midwest TV
2	KNSD	39	NBC NBC
3	KGTV	10	ABC McGraw-Hill
4	XETV	6	Fox Grupo Televisa
5	KUSI	51	Ind. McKinnon Bcstg.
6	KSWB	69	WB Tribune
7	KBNT	17	Uni. Entravision
8	XUPN	49	UPN Televisora
9	XHAS	33	Tele. Entravision

\*February 2005, households, sign-on to sign-off

Cable/DBS

Cable subscribers (HH)	861,840
Major cable operator	Cox Cable
Cable penetration	84%
ADS subscribers (HH)	82,080
ADS penetration	8%
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! (KNSD)	9.4/15
Network Show	
CSI (KFMB)	22.5/32
Evening Newscast	
KGTV	5.9/13
Late Newscast	
KNSD	7.8/18

\*\*\* February 2005, total households

SOURCES: Nielsen Media Research, BIA Research

# Sea of Change

San Diego sees shakeups, stays course **By Allison Romano**

San Diego is best-known for sun and surf, but the local TV scene is shifting faster than the tide. Since November sweeps, three well-known anchors have found new TV homes. Market vet Michael Tuck, main anchor at CBS affiliate KFMB, defected to independent KUSI to host a new 11 p.m. newscast. KUSI also hired Leonard Villareal, a 27-year vet of ABC affiliate KGTV, for weekends. And Stuart Miller, who left KUSI to be a minister, was lured back to TV by KFMB for its 5:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. news.

The shuffling has only heightened anticipation for February-sweeps results. While Midwest Television-owned KFMB and McKinnon Broadcasting's KUSI have made changes, their rivals remain intact. McGraw-Hill-owned ABC affiliate KGTV, bolstered by *The Oprah Winfrey Show* at 4 p.m., is typically the early-evening news leader. At 11 p.m., NBC O&O KNSD is the dominant force.

In February, KGTV held on to its early-evening lead, although KFMB and KNSD are tight competitors. Once again, KNSD was on track to win late news with a 7.8 rating/18 share, extending an eight-year winning streak. Consistency is key, says station President/GM Phyllis Schwartz. "Our team has been together for many years." KUSI's new 11 p.m. news came out with a respectable 2.3/5. Even without Tuck, KFMB ranked second with a 5.8/13, boosted by CBS' strong prime time. The market is bracing for another programming shakeup in 2006. This summer, KFMB will add the powerhouse syndication combo of *Oprah* and *Dr. Phil* to its afternoon lineup, which could push its early news out in front.



KNSD 11 p.m. anchors Marty Levin and Susan Taylor

KNSD is also planning a daytime maneuver. Following a growing trend in local TV, the station is taking charge of its 10 a.m. hour. Come June, it will expand its 10 a.m. newscast on Fridays with *Streetside Studio With Kimberly King*, a half-hour of lighter fare. The show will feature fashion, local bands and cultural stories. KGTV and Cox Cable, the area's largest operator, collaborate on News Channel 15, a regional news network. Time Warner also carries the network. Says Derek Dalton, VP/GM for KGTV, "This gives them an opportunity to watch our news on their schedule."

While San Diego ranks as Nielsen's 26th-largest TV market, it is listed as the 16th-largest in TV revenues. The stations in the market are projected to take in \$322.7 million in gross revenue this year, up from \$314.8 million in 2004. Also rising are new industries, such as biomedical and research, in this increasingly sophisticated city. Says Schwartz, "This isn't just a tourist and Navy town any more." ■

NEXT: INDIANAPOLIS

## KSWB Does Mornings

With help from sister station KTLA, Tribune Broadcasting's KSWB San Diego is now a player in the local-morning-news battle. On March 7, KSWB debuted its *WB Morning News*, a two-hour simulcast of KTLA's popular morning act, broadcast from 7 to 9 a.m. KSWB localizes the program by cutting away four times each hour to update traffic, weather and local headlines. "Morning news is the fastest-growing area for news viewership and revenue," says KSWB VP/GM Bob Ramsey.

But the TV rush hour in San Diego is already crowded. Five English-language San Diego stations program live a.m. shows. At 7 a.m., the traditional affiliates—KFMB, KNSD and KGTV—repeat their networks' morning shows. Independent KUSI and Fox affiliate XETV stay local. Their household ratings can range from a 1 to 5.

Ramsey says sharing KTLA's morning show was a cost-effective way to break into the time slot, but he declined to break down financials. KSWB, which already programs a 10 p.m. newscast, will use a late-news crew to cover the morning shift.—A.R.

### THE DEMOS

WHO	SHARE OF POPULATION	INDEX*
White	65%	115
Black	7%	59
Hispanic origin	24%	180
Asian	5%	197

\*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 (February '03 March '04)

# THE King OF SACRAMENTO!



THE KING OF QUEENS is the #1 strip on KMAX!

4.0 HH RATING!

+67% OVER YEAR AGO!

+11% OVER LEAD-IN!

Source: NSI WRAP Overnights, 2/21-2/25/05 HH Rating M-F 6:30PM Rank = 6AM-2AM Year ago = Feb 04 TP

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# What a Teen wants

HOW TV CHASES AN ELUSIVE DEMO

By Anne Becker

a

Pacific breeze blows across the Manhattan Beach set of *The O.C.*, where calm has descended after the cast and crew scatter for lunch. But the teen drama's creator, Josh Schwartz, is pacing outside his office, staring at photos of women's clothing. At 28

years of age and dressed in a T-shirt and cords, Schwartz looks more like a production assistant than an executive producer, but he is very much in charge of this Fox show, right down to the wardrobe selection for his actresses.

His micromanaging is understandable: With *The O.C.* in its second season after a breakout debut, his show's future—everything from ad revenue to DVD sales and syndication—rests on his ability to master an extremely tricky task: maintaining a grip on teenagers' notoriously fickle affections. Teens spend less time watching television than any other demographic group, approximately 25% fewer hours in prime than 18-49s. And their attention is increasingly splintered by the Internet, videogames and even multi-tasking cellphones. But 13- to 17-year-olds will spend \$34.5

billion this year, according to market-research firm Harris Interactive, and certain advertisers—movie studios, cosmetics firms, electronics makers—are perpetually desperate to get their wares in front of them. Which is why, despite the risks that have wrecked hopes for worthy but ratings-challenged shows like *My So-Called Life* and *Freaks and Geeks*, networks are always willing to take another shot.

With *The O.C.*, Schwartz is chronicling the Newport Beach surf-and-party culture that he witnessed while a student at the University of Southern California—before dropping out to try his hand at writing TV pilots, emboldened by selling a movie script to Columbia in his junior year. His pitch to Fox for *The O.C.* included a collage of surfing and movie photos (*Sixteen Candles*, *The Outsiders*, etc.), a poster that now hangs in his office near an

oversized "O.C."-emblazoned red gumball machine that sits beside his desk.

"When you're cooking up a show, you're like, 'Yeah, well if it's huge, I will have a giant gumball machine in my office so I'll know I've arrived,'" he says, with a wry smile. "But this is beyond my wildest dreams, actually."

*The O.C.* was indeed "huge" for Fox—especially when it got an *American Idol* lead-in on Wednesdays midway through its first season—but the show, while still performing well, is nonetheless slipping in its sophomore year. In 2003-4, the show pulled in a 6.9 rating/21 share with

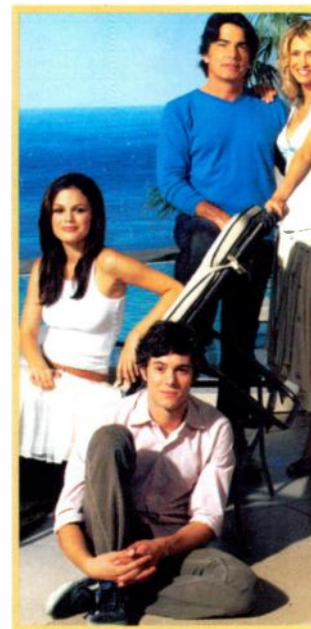
viewers 12-17. So far this season, the numbers have taken a pronounced dip in that demographic, to a 4.1/13.

Much of the drop can be attributed to a simple change of venue on the schedule this fall: Fox, bidding to establish a Thursday-night beachhead, moved the hit show opposite CBS' *Survivor* powerhouse and launched a massive marketing campaign in conjunction with Warner Bros., which owns the show.

"We knew we were going to take a hit on Thursday nights. Fox knew it, and that was a risk they were going to take," Schwartz says. The network's numbers in that time slot have markedly improved over last year (up 82% with 18-49s and 86% with 12-17s) even though *The O.C.*'s have not.

But even with less daunting competition, *The O.C.* would still face the challenge of any young-skewing drama: how to become a long-running success (*Beverly Hills 90210* ran for 10 years) and not another *Felicity*, which looked like a major hit initially but slowly waned in teens' esteem.

*The O.C.* sailed into the young-adult Zeitgeist last season with an approach that paid plenty of attention to the usual staples of young TV drama: sexual attraction and the labyrinths of adolescent emotions. But the package was presented with thoroughly ironic, post-modern winks to the audience. (In an episode earlier this season, the geek-turned-heart-throb character Seth Cohen, played by Adam Brody, wonders with post-drunk chagrin whether he produced as much vomit as "the little girl in *The Sixth Sense* or the big fat guy in *Monty Python*?" *O.C.* aficionados know that Mischa Barton, the actress who plays Seth's wild-child neighbor Marissa, was the spooky kid in *The Sixth*



The *O.C.* creator Josh Schwartz

*Sense*.) Hip cultural references and music by buzz-worthy bands such as The Killers and Modest Mouse are also liberally ladled into the mix to clinch *The O.C.*'s coolness credentials.

But will it all be enough for *The O.C.* to sustain its success? Shows that live by cool can die by cool if they start hitting false notes—a pitfall *The O.C.* has largely avoided so far.

"Teens are very good at sussing out when you don't understand their experience," says Stacey Lynn Koerner, an executive vice president at media-services company Initiative. Shows pursuing young audiences "need to be drawn in a way that sort of screams, 'I know who this target is.'"

That fact that teens are a moving target with changeable tastes might make programming for them difficult, but it is also, of course, why advertisers endlessly chase them.

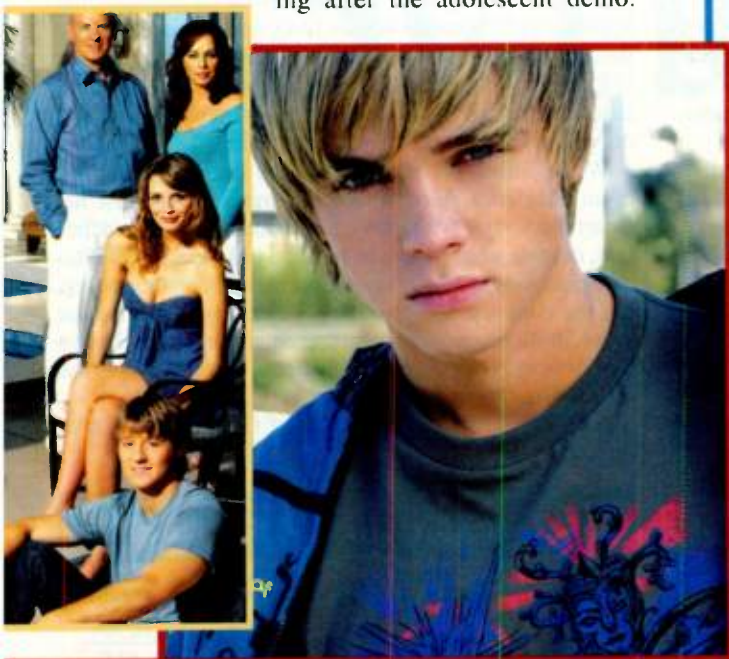
The most concerted effort to date to corral teenage viewers was the launch of The WB network in 1995, with the goal of positioning itself as a destination for teens—mainly females—by showcasing inventive youth-targeted fare, including *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Charmed* and *Dawson's Creek*. The network's business plan was to get an advertising premium with a 12- to 24-year-old audience. To accomplish that goal, WB execs decided to carve out a creative niche as well, jettisoning the TV stereotype of teens as crazed with sex and shopping.

"We felt like we had a responsibility to portray that

experience as realistically as possible and with empowerment," says former WB CEO Jordan Levin.

The approach proved so successful that, now firmly established, The WB is attempting to expand by aging up to 18-34s and signing development deals with such producers as Jerry Bruckheimer and David E. Kelley, who have solid records attracting mass audiences. Strong teen shows, such as *One Tree Hill*, remain important to the network, but The WB is aiming for a "subtle shift in the tone and age of its characters," says WB President of Entertainment David Janollari.

Levin, who was squeezed out last summer in the network's new push, has this advice for anyone going after the adolescent demo:



(center), the cast of *The O.C.* (center), Jesse McCartney of *Summerland*

"Like with any teenager, the key to success is to rebel against the rules that have been put in place."

The rules that The WB broke were largely put in place in the 1980s by Aaron Spelling, executive producer of *Beverly Hills 90210* and patriarch of the teen drama (just one genre among many mined by the TV legend). But these days, Spelling Television is happily dancing to The WB's tune. Last month, the network ordered a tenth season of the company's family drama *7th Heaven*. The WB also renewed for a second season Spelling's *Summerland*, comfort-food programming about kids who move from Kansas to live with their aunt in Southern California, where they learn lots of worthwhile lessons about growing up.

The show, starring Lori Loughlin, who is also a producer, is light-years from the hipness of *The O.C.*, but, like the Fox hit, *Summerland* is a sophomore show and trying to retain the attention of a largely adolescent audience.

*The O.C.*'s young characters constantly discuss their emotions, something *Summerland* tends to avoid. Executive producer Remi Aubuchon says, "I'm adamant about teen characters not talking about their feelings. It's a full-time job just experiencing those feelings."

*Summerland*'s 13-episode debut season last sum-

mer earned solid ratings: a 2.7 rating/9 share with viewers 12-17; returning for a second season on Feb. 28, it garnered a 3.5/10 with viewers 12-17.

The octogenarian Spelling, who has a pinball—not gumball—machine festooned with images from his shows beside his desk, says: "The thing about television today is, if young people are in a show and the audience likes them, thumbs up. But if it's older actors or actresses—no effect whatsoever." Teen girls are giving a big thumbs-up to *Summerland*'s 17-year-old star,

"We live in a post-everything universe, and everyone's hyper self-aware."

JOSH SCHWARTZ, *THE O.C.*

Jesse McCartney. He is a new favorite on *Teen People* magazine's Trendspotter list, based on surveys of 14,000 readers, says the magazine's Entertainment Director Laura Morgan.

*Summerland* and *The O.C.*—one the product of a Hollywood institution, the other from a wunderkind upstart—are two of the few recent bright spots in the teen genre. ABC passed on a second season of *Life as We Know It*, which couldn't hold its own on Thursday nights. UPN's *Veronica Mars*, beloved by critics, has failed to gain traction. The WB's new drama *The Mountain* tanked this fall and was cancelled after its last episode aired in January. And Fox's *Point Pleasant* has faltered since

its January premiere.

The cancellation of most new shows is part of the TV business, but the attrition in the teen genre can be pitiless. Adults who used to like a show but quit watching don't tend to turn around and mock anyone who still watches it, but that goes with the territory when courting teenagers. Having grown up over the past decade being spoon-fed teen drama mostly by

The WB, teens are savvy—if not inured—to the melodramatic conceits of typical teen fare. But it's a delicate balancing act trying to be innovative without alienating a wide audience.

*The O.C.*'s Schwartz thinks he and his producing partners, most notably Stephanie Savage, Bob DeLaurentiis and the mono-named McG, found the answer by crafting his show as a "Trojan horse," he says, meaning "beautiful surf, sun, mansions and parties on the outside, soulful, quirky characters as the soldiers inside." His attention to detail extends even to picking the up-and-coming music on the show—a trademark of *The O.C.* but also another area where one wrong move can invite derision. Schwartz describes *The O.C.* as a "soapedy": half soap opera, half comedy. "That's how you do a show like this in the 21st century," he says. "We live in a post-everything universe, and everyone's hyper self-aware."

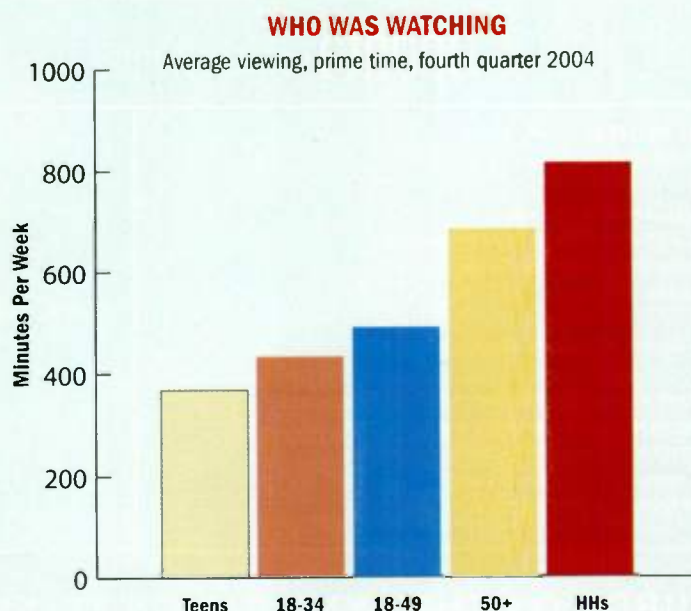
But despite his affection for "post-everything" irony, Schwartz cautions, "You don't want it to feel like you're trying so hard to be hip that it's just, like, exclusionary. If you're too hip, the parents don't know what the hell you're talking about." There's much in the storylines for adults, too, with the complicated lives of the teens' parents heavily woven into the plot. Lest he seem too calculating, though, Schwartz says the grown-up angle was not "cooked up in a demographics lab."

Not that he doesn't constantly tweak *The O.C.* in an effort to keep the audience hooked. With the chemistry of what makes a teen hit stay a hit such a mystery, inattention can be deadly. The show's downward ratings drift this season may be traced in part to Schwartz's distraction heading into *The O.C.*'s second year, when his hands-on creative guidance slipped as he worked on another project.

"There was a lot of pressure in trying to do a new show," he says. "I tried to do two things at once and just felt like I need to be here full-time." Schwartz recently shelved the project, called *Athens*, about college life in a New England town, after Fox urged him to rework it as a direct *O.C.* spinoff (he wants to come up with a more "organic" spinoff, he says).

The first half of this season frustrated some *O.C.* fans as Schwartz and his team introduced new characters, young and older, and toyed with relationships established over last season's 27 episodes. He wants the show to keep evolving, he says, without alienating devotees. (He'd like the show to run only about five years, he says, to avoid exhausting the creative possibilities. Five also happens to be the golden number for syndication.)

"This year's been a tremendous learning experience for me, much more so than last year, which was all about just like jumping in the pool and trying to swim," he says. "Trying to take a show from being a one-year phenomenon kind of thing and stretching it out in the long haul, I was loath to come out and repeat myself out of the gate and do a *Mad* magazine version of the show, a parody." He's also loath to echo the *Mad* magazine catchphrase, "What, me worry?." In the business of catching and keeping teenage viewers, TV producers have to be a lot like the kids' parents: anxious, even when things are going well.



SOURCE: Carat Programming analysis of copyrighted data from Nielsen Media Research

**NEXT WEEK: A Special Report on marketing to kids, tweens and teens**



**Wheel of Fortune**



**Everybody Loves Raymond**

# Top 50 Shows

Aug. 30, 2004-Feb. 13, 2005

Households			Adults 18-49		
PROGRAM	AA	GAA	PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 Wheel of Fortune	9.0	NA	1 Everybody Loves Raymond	4.1	5.1
2 Jeopardy!	7.1	NA	2 Friends	3.9	4.9
3 Oprah Winfrey Show	7.6	7.7	2 Seinfeld	3.9	4.7
4 Everybody Loves Raymond	6.9	8.7	4 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	3.0	3.4
5 Seinfeld	5.9	7.3	4 Oprah Winfrey Show	3.0	3.1
6 Friends	5.7	7.2	6 Wheel of Fortune	2.6	NA
7 Seinfeld (wknd)	5.5	7.0	7 Jeopardy!	2.3	NA
7 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	5.5	6.3	7 Entertainment Tonight	2.3	2.3
9 Dr. Phil	5.2	5.3	9 That '70s Show	2.2	2.7
9 Entertainment Tonight	5.2	5.3	10 Will & Grace	2.0	2.4
11 Judge Judy	5.0	7.6	10 Malcolm in the Middle	2.0	2.3
12 Wheel of Fortune (wknd)	3.6	NA	10 Everybody Loves Raymond (wknd)	2.0	2.0
13 Live With Regis and Kelly	3.5	NA	10 Dr. Phil	2.0	2.0
13 Who Wants To Be a Millionaire	3.5	3.8	14 Judge Judy	1.9	2.8
13 Inside Edition	3.5	3.5	14 King of the Hill	1.9	2.3
16 Judge Joe Brown	3.4	4.9	16 King of Queens	1.8	2.2
16 Everybody Loves Raymond (wknd)	3.4	3.6	17 Home Improvement	1.7	2.1
18 Malcolm in Middle	3.3	3.9	18 King of Queens (wknd)	1.6	1.9
19 Will & Grace	3.2	3.9	18 That '70s Show (wknd)	1.6	1.9
20 That '70s Show	3.1	3.9	20 Cops	1.5	1.9
20 Entertainment Tonight (wknd)	3.1	3.2	20 Maury	1.5	1.7
22 King of the Hill	3.0	3.7	22 Entertainment Tonight (wknd)	1.4	1.4
23 Maury	2.9	3.2	23 Judge Joe Brown	1.3	1.8
24 Cops	2.8	3.6	23 Frasier	1.3	1.5
25 Divorce Court	2.7	3.7	23 Inside Edition	1.3	1.4
25 Home Improvement	2.7	3.5	23 Live With Regis and Kelly	1.3	NA
25 King of Queens	2.7	3.4	27 Divorce Court	1.2	1.6
28 People's Court	2.6	2.7	27 Access Hollywood	1.2	1.3
28 The Insider	2.6	2.7	27 Stargate SG-1	1.2	1.2
28 Access Hollywood	2.6	2.6	27 Friends (wknd)	1.2	1.2
31 King of Queens (wknd)	2.4	3.0	31 People's Court	1.1	1.2
31 Judge Mathis	2.4	2.5	31 Montel Williams	1.1	1.2
31 Montel Williams	2.4	2.5	31 Fear Factor	1.1	1.2
34 That '70s Show (wknd)	2.3	2.8	31 The Insider	1.1	1.1
34 Extra	2.3	2.3	35 Girlfriends	1.0	1.2
36 Frasier	2.2	2.5	35 Becker	1.0	1.2
36 Chris Matthews Show	2.2	2.2	35 Drew Carey	1.0	1.2
38 Family Feud	2.1	2.8	35 Just Shoot Me (wknd)	1.0	1.2
38 Jerry Springer	2.1	2.3	35 Jerry Springer	1.0	1.1
38 Ellen DeGeneres Show	2.1	2.1	35 Who Wants To Be a Millionaire	1.0	1.1
41 Texas Justice	2.0	2.6	35 The West Wing	1.0	1.1
41 Ebert & Roeper	2.0	2.1	35 ER	1.0	1.0
41 The Insider (wknd)	2.0	2.1	35 The Practice	1.0	1.0
41 Stargate SG-1	2.0	2.1	35 Maximum Exposure	1.0	1.0
41 Becker	1.9	2.3	35 The Insider (wknd)	1.0	1.0
45 The West Wing	1.9	2.2	46 Dharma & Greg	0.9	1.0
45 Fear Factor	1.9	2.0	46 Ellen DeGeneres Show	0.9	0.9
45 Friends (wknd)	1.9	1.9	46 Ebert and Roeper	0.9	0.9
49 Judge Hatchett	1.8	2.5	46 Access Hollywood (wknd)	0.9	0.9
49 The Practice	1.8	2.0	46 Andromeda	0.9	0.9
49 Yes, Dear	1.8	2.0			
49 Access Hollywood	1.8	1.8			

NA = Not available; AA = Average Audience Rating; GAA = Gross Average Audience  
SOURCE: Nielsen TV National People Meter, Season-to-Date 8/30/04-2/13/05

## OFF-NET SITCOMS

Households			Adults 18-49		
PROGRAM	AA	GAA	PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 Everybody Loves Raymond	6.9	8.7	1 Everybody Loves Raymond	4.1	5.1
2 Seinfeld	5.9	7.3	2 Friends	3.9	4.9
3 Friends	5.7	7.2	2 Seinfeld	3.9	4.7
4 Malcolm in the Middle	3.3	3.9	4 That '70s Show	2.2	2.7
5 Will & Grace	3.2	3.9	5 Malcolm in the Middle	2.0	2.3

## TALK SHOWS

Households			Women 18-49		
PROGRAM	AA	GAA	PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 Oprah Winfrey Show	7.6	7.7	1 Oprah Winfrey Show	3.0	3.1
2 Dr. Phil	5.2	5.3	2 Dr. Phil	2.0	2.0
3 Live With Regis and Kelly	3.5	NA	3 Maury	1.5	1.7
4 Maury	2.9	3.2	3 Live With Regis and Kelly	1.3	NA
5 Montel Williams Show	2.4	2.4	5 Montel Williams Show	1.2	1.2

## GAME SHOWS

Households			Adults 18-49		
PROGRAM	AA	GAA	PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 Wheel of Fortune	9.0	NA	1 Wheel of Fortune	2.6	NA
2 Jeopardy!	8.0	NA	2 Jeopardy!	2.3	NA
3 Who Wants To Be a Millionaire	3.5	3.8	3 Who Wants To Be a Millionaire	1.0	1.1
4 Family Feud	2.1	2.8	4 Family Feud	0.7	1.0
5 Street Smarts	0.9	1.1	5 Street Smarts	0.5	0.6

## MAGAZINE SHOWS

Households			Adults 18-49		
PROGRAM	AA	GAA	PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 Entertainment Tonight	5.2	5.3	1 Entertainment Tonight	2.3	2.3
2 Inside Edition	3.5	3.5	2 Inside Edition	1.3	1.4
3 The Insider	2.6	2.7	3 Access Hollywood	1.2	1.3
3 Access Hollywood	2.6	2.6	4 The Insider	1.1	1.1
4 Extra	2.3	2.3	5 Extra	1.0	1.0

## COURT SHOWS

Households			Adults 18-49		
PROGRAM	AA	GAA	PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 Judge Judy	5.0	7.6	1 Judge Judy	1.9	2.8
2 Judge Joe Brown	3.4	4.9	2 Judge Joe Brown	1.3	1.8
3 Divorce Court	2.7	3.7	3 Divorce Court	1.2	1.6
4 People's Court	2.6	2.7	4 People's Court	1.1	1.2
5 Judge Mathis	2.4	2.6	5 Judge Mathis	1.1	1.1

## OFF-NET DRAMAS

Households			Adults 18-49		
PROGRAM	AA	GAA	PROGRAM	AA	GAA
1 CSI	5.5	6.3	1 CSI	3.0	3.4
2 The West Wing	1.9	2.2	2 The West Wing	1.0	1.1
3 The Practice	1.8	2.0	2 The Practice	1.0	1.0
4 ER	1.7	2.0	2 ER	1.0	1.0
5 The X-Files	1.5	1.5	5 The X-Files	0.8	0.9

NA = Not available; AA = Average Audience Rating; GAA = Gross Average Audience  
SOURCE: Nielsen TV National People Meter, Season-to-Date 8/30/04-2/13/05



# For Syndicators, Burg Is the Man With a Plan

He aims efforts at ad execs who map strategy, not just buyers **By Paige Albinia**

**W**hen syndicators felt like their product was getting short shrift in an ever-changing media world, they went out and found lifelong media planner and buyer Mitch Burg to do their selling for them.

According to those who hired him as president of the Syndicated Network Television Association, Burg approaches their business from a fresh perspective. That allows him to best pitch the business to the people who control what advertisers buy.

"He can position syndication in a way that we haven't been able to in the past. We haven't had his broad background and knowledge about overall media choices," says Bob Cesa, EVP, advertising sales, Twentieth Television.

Explaining the value of syndication to media planners, and not just buyers, has become compulsory, and the media-planning crowd is a group that syndicators have not paid much attention to attracting in the past. But the business has changed so that a media buy is carefully orchestrated before it is executed. If a buy isn't on the schedule, then no amount of pitching will change the way an advertiser spends money.

"The planners have not necessarily been our go-to individuals in the past," says Chris Kager, EVP of advertising sales for NBC Universal Domestic Television Distribution. "Media is more crowded today, and there is more choice and more complexity. The planners have more responsibility now, and it behooves us to spend time with them."

## MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT SYNDICATION

While several syndicated staples seem like an obvious choice for advertisers, many planners are younger and haven't thought about syndication in a while, Burg says. Cable is the hot new kid on the block, and new forms of advertising, such as Internet and viral marketing, are getting more attention.

Plus, planners often perceive syndication as scattered—although many of the higher-rated shows tend to run in the same time frames across the country—and they don't think they will get as much bang for their buck if they place an ad on a show that runs at 9 a.m. in some markets and 3 p.m. in others.

"Just because syndication has been around forever doesn't mean that people understand what it is," says Burg, who replaced former SNTA head Gene DeWitt a year ago. "When I'm out talking to clients and planners, that's what I talk about: how syndication helps them achieve their goals."

Burg has developed several innovative presentations meant to highlight syndication's value. Indeed, his overriding mission at SNTA is raising the profile of syndication to advertisers. The organization, backed by major studios (with the exception of Sony), thinks the annual NATPE confab is centered more on station relations than on meeting head-on with advertisers. That's

"I would say he's making my job easier," says Michael Teicher, executive vice president of media sales for Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution. "He's reinforcing what we do, as a person who is objective about what he's selling within syndication because he doesn't sell any one company or show. Just having an authoritative voice out there is effective."

"Mitch has done a tremendous job in positioning the strengths of syndication," says Howard Levy, EVP of media sales for Buena Vista Television and chairman of SNTA's board of directors. "His drive and knowledge of the media landscape already has paid huge benefits to our market."



## MITCH BURG PRESIDENT, SYNDICATION NETWORK TELEVISION ASSOCIATION

B. Sept. 18, 1954, Queens, N.Y.

### EDUCATION

B.B.A., advertising, Baruch College, New York, 1976

### EMPLOYMENT

Media estimator and planner, Woolrick, Welsh and Miller, New York, 1976-78; media planner, media supervisor, associate media director, group media director, EVP, NW Ayer ABH, 1979-94; founder, president and COO, MediaEdge, 1994-2001; CEO, IDT Media, 2002-03; current position since 2004

### PERSONAL

Married; four children

## THE RIGHT COMBINATION

Back in his days as president and COO of MediaEdge, a spinoff of NW Ayer ABH owned by larger firm WPP, what Burg did best was take an overall look at a client's business, and then determine what type of media buy would best fit.

"He has this innate ability to very quickly home in on key issues," says Tim Jones, managing partner and account director at MediaEdge. "He looks for insights into a client's category, studies how consumers use the category and then determines a way through media to address all of that specifically."

That means determining the right combination of television, radio, print, outdoor, Internet and other advertising approaches to best meet a client's needs.

In his almost 20 years in the media business, Burg has developed plans for AT&T, Burger King, Yum-Brands (which includes Pizza Hut, KFC and Taco Bell), Procter & Gamble, Ford, Kraft and pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline.

## NO WORKAHOLIC

Although New York-native Burg is enthusiastic and impassioned, he is not a workaholic, according to former co-workers. "He hits a perfect balance," says Joe Abruzzo, director of MediaEdge's MediaLab and OHAL marketing response consulting firm. "When he's at work, he's a thousand percent, but he makes time for his family."

Burg, the father of four and grandfather of two, agrees: "Your children are why you work, and not the other way around." ■

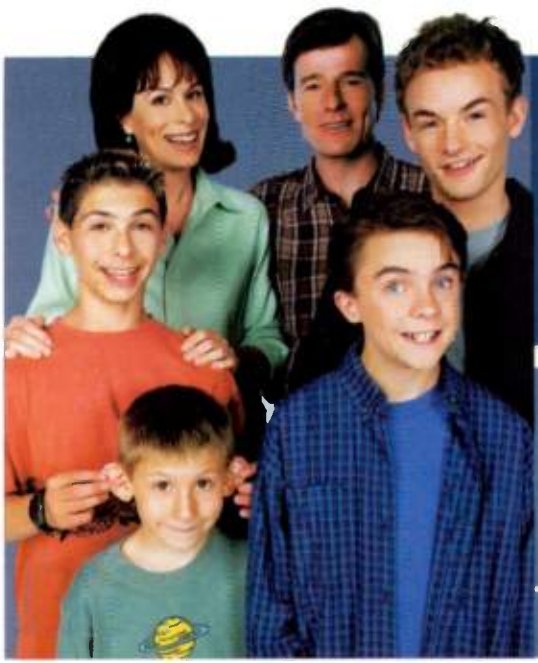
why SNTA exists, and Burg leads the sales charge.

First, he says, syndication reaches more viewers than network prime time. "Any one of the major networks only reaches, on average, two-thirds of any target in a week, while syndication reaches 90% of the target audience."

Syndication also skews younger than the networks and boasts some of the top-rated shows on television due to its reach. One of Burg's recent presentations demonstrates why syndication represents buyers' highest-rated option on Fridays, leading into weekend moviegoing and shopping. This is the kind of stat syndicators tended to overlook.

## 'REINFORCES' SALES MESSAGE

Burg also developed another story focusing on how syndication's ratings tend to rise during the holidays when kids are home from school, making that an excellent time for advertisers to reach younger viewers with retail messages.



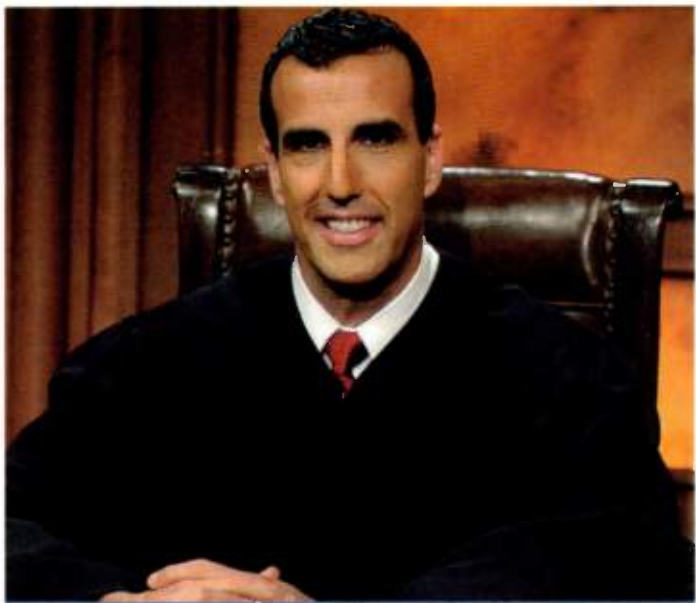
MALCOLM IN THE MIDDLE

THAT '70s SHOW



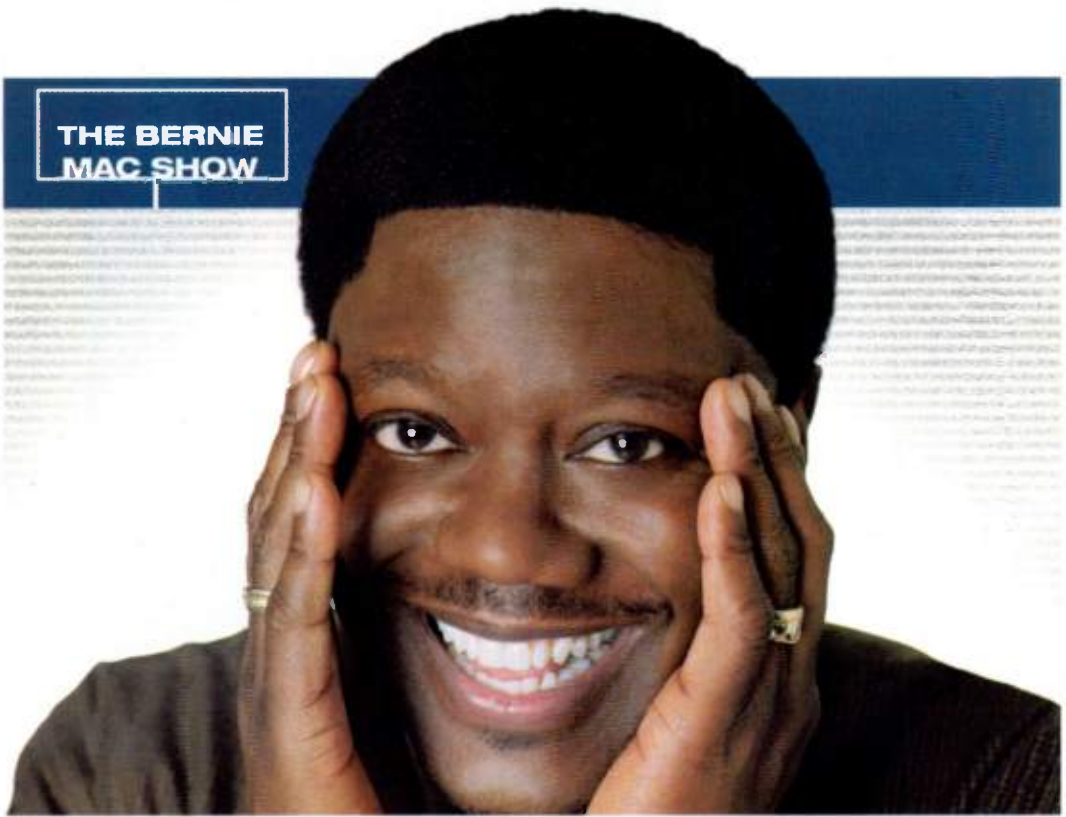
keep them

ENTE



JUDGE ALEX

THE BERNIE MAC SHOW



COPS



DIVORCE COURT



AMBUSH MAKEOVER



COMEDY BLOCK

YES,  
DEAR

KING OF  
THE HILL



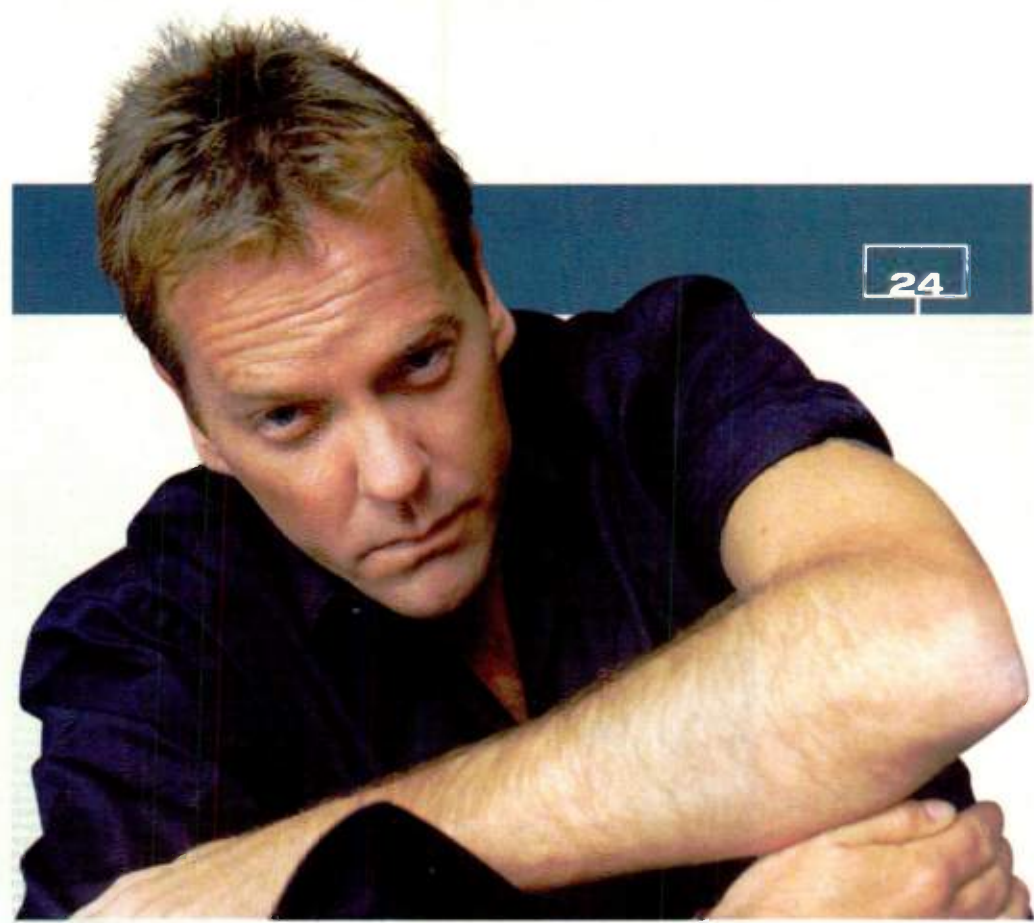
FARSCAPE



RTAINED



**A  
Current  
Affair**



24



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FEATURES



AD SALES  
NEW YORK: 212.556.2520  
CHICAGO: 312.494.2975

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# The Secret Success of Syndication

## Top sales execs make their best pitches

**V**iewers of syndicated television can see four of comedy's biggest hits—*The Simpsons*, *Seinfeld*, *Friends* and *Everybody Loves Raymond*—every night of the week, at least once. It is home to TV's biggest star, Oprah Winfrey. Episodes of *Law & Order* will rerun forever. And *Wheel of Fortune* has been around since some ad buyers were in diapers.

Still, syndication doesn't get much buzz in the marketplace—a situation the Syndicated Network Television Association hopes to remedy when it makes its pitches to ad buyers and planners at SNTA Day in New York March 10 at the Grand Hyatt. (SNTA takes the show to Chicago on March 21 and to Los Angeles on March 24).

*B&C's* Joe Mandese recently sat down with six of syndication's top sales executives to discuss the trends shaping the biz.

Each represents a SNTA member studio or distributor: Michael Auerbach, SVP, Eastern, King World Media Sales; David Barrington, SVP/general sales manager, Twentieth Television; Marc Hirsch, president, Paramount Advertiser Services; Chris Kager, EVP, ad sales, NBC Universal Television Distribution; Clark Morehouse, SVP, advertiser sales, Tribune Entertainment Co.; and Michael Teicher, EVP, media sales, Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution.

*Continued on page 26*



Top sales executives for six of the major syndication companies. Top row, from left: Chris Kager, NBC Universal Distribution; David Barrington, Twentieth Television; Michael Teicher, Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution; Clark Morehouse, Tribune Entertainment. Front row, from left: Marc Hirsch, Paramount Advertiser Services; Michael Auerbach, King World Media Sales.

Photos by Leslie Jean-Bart

***Last Year, Paramount  
Promised You a  
Sudden Power Surge  
in Access.***

**the  
Insider**



**Secret Success**  
*Continued from page 24*

**The syndication advertising marketplace was up 14% in 2004, making it the fastest-rising measured medium next to the Internet. That's really good growth. What's driving it?**

**Michael Teicher:** By several measures, syndication is doing pretty well. The upfront we had for '04-'05, I think, most of us would consider pretty solid, but the success goes beyond dollars and cents. Some of the success that we're seeing is in terms of ratings. When you have veteran shows that have been on the air for a while or even newer shows like *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* and veterans like *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and some of the court shows, increasing their ratings in an era where that's almost unheard of, that's an incredible measure of success.

**Michael Auerbach:** Michael has taken a chapter out of our book with the tremendous success of the King World shows over the last couple of years, and the phenomenal success of our latest show, *CSI*, almost a 6.0 household rating. That's tremendous for a syndicated network drama.

**So it's the product that's driving the growth?**



**Warner Bros.' Michael Teicher:** "We believe we have to work harder and smarter and to be more creative to find ways to get our product on the air."



**Twentieth's David Barrington:** "In the pre-holiday weeks, which are very important and when network ratings tend to drop, our ratings stay consistent."

**Chris Kager:** It's our business. It's all about the product. It's all about the show.

**Marc Hirsch:** It's always product. What happens sometimes in the press is, cable gets a lot of play because it somehow seems to get a lot of buzz. But the things that are getting buzz

are one show that does a 0.7 rating and everybody is talking about it as opposed to shows that do double-digits, five days a week on a regular basis. But they've been on the air for 20 years, in the case of *Entertainment Tonight* 24 years and, in the case of some of the King World properties approximately 20 years.

It's as though people have stopped talking about it, and therefore the buzz is gone. If you're an advertiser looking for a different audience to reach your prospective customers, I think you're smart enough to continue to spend money there.

**Teicher:** Marc makes a really interesting point that I'd like to extend. Sure, there are at least a dozen or so cable shows that have really made a name for themselves with a lot of buzz, but what some advertisers are doing is using that as an opportunity to purchase more on a particular cable network than they necessarily would.

There are a couple of shows on general-entertainment cable networks that most advertisers won't buy, but they have good buzz. Because of the content, advertisers won't buy them, but because of the ripple effect, the network seems to have benefited.

But when you really look at the schedule on the network, you'll find that you're buying shows already in syndication and we have the brands for all these years that are delivering big ratings with extensive reach.

**David Barrington:** Not only that, but it's every single day of the week, as Marc and Michael said, but it's 52 weeks a year as well. In the pre-holiday weeks, which are very important and when network ratings tend to drop, our ratings stay consistent.

For a company like ourselves [Twentieth Television], which has young-skewing product, we look at our numbers, and [they hold] up through the second quarter, through the third quarter. It's an incredibly viable medium, and again it's programming. You know exactly what you're buying. You know exactly what you're going to get eight months out. It's a tremendous advantage.

**Hirsch:** SNTA has taken a very aggressive stance. We have the right people in place, and our story is getting told. For all of us collectively who compete on a day-to-day basis but benefit from the strength of the medium, Mitch [Burg] and his people are getting to corners of the business that we routinely do not, mainly the planners and high-end clients. And so I've been very pleased with his efforts there. That benefits all of us.

**Kager:** I'd like to maybe differ a little bit with what these guys have said. Obviously, it's programming. But it's also distribution. Our shows are fully distributed in 99%-100% of the U.S..

in consistent time periods—as Dave said—52 weeks a year. So people have come to know our shows running at 7:00 Eastern Standard Time, week after week after week. And the reason that it runs at 7:00 is not only that it is a well-produced show but it's also a well-distributed show.

So to me, they go a little bit hand in hand. It's a chicken and the egg. But at the end of the day, our industry brings stability to Madison Avenue.

**Chris, you have a new show coming up with Martha Stewart that should get some good coverage. What is the distribution story, and how is that playing out in terms of getting product out there?**

**Kager:** Well, we've taken some big heavy swings in the last couple of years, with Jane Pauley and Martha Stewart, and the reason that we can take some big heavy swings is that we have electronic distribution in place, with our NBC owned-and-operated stations. So that's clearly an advantage. Anything we do, we take to the NBC owned-and-operated stations. And then we have a relationship with the Hearst-Argyle stations that extends pretty deep into our company.

So we're fortunate enough that we can take product to the marketplace. We get a pretty good hearing from about 50% of the U.S. between those two station types.

**Teicher:** This has been the single biggest challenge probably for a company like Warner Bros. at this point. Certainly, the folks around this table have heard me say this before, but given the consolidation of media companies in our business through vertical integration, these big media companies own the television stations, and Warner Bros. does not. Therefore, we believe we have to work harder and smarter and to be more creative to find ways to get our product on the air.

Fortunately, in the past two years, the NBC station group saw the potential for a long-term franchise with *Ellen*. This year, the Fox station group latched onto *The Tyra Banks Show*, thinking they could put a real stake in the ground in their daytime.

But, for us, that's probably been the single biggest challenge that we've had to confront by not owning stations.

**Hirsch:** Distribution is a situation that gets talked about but doesn't really exist as a problem. I don't think [Warner Bros.] has any more problems getting programming cleared that will ultimately succeed than the rest of us will.

*Continued on page 28*

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## Secret Success

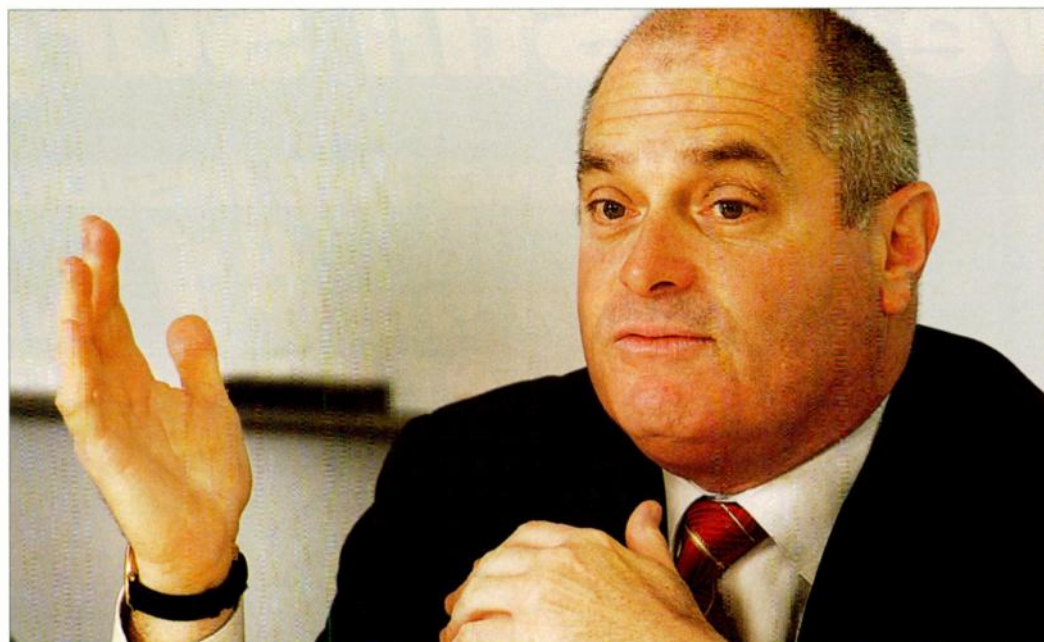
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At the end of the day, most television programs don't work.

There hasn't been a successful television show yet that didn't get enough play on the air, to be given a chance to succeed, to ultimately become a hit. Yet it might be easier, if you're NBC Universal and you've got a relationship with the NBC stations or if you're King World or Paramount and you have a relationship with the CBS stations. But Dennis Swanson [executive vice president and chief operating officer for Viacom Television Stations] at CBS isn't going to force the station group to take a bunch of product that just doesn't work. When we came out with *The Insider*, originally, it's because he wanted the program, not because we forced it down his throat.

Over the course of time, anyone with a program that works is going to find an ability to get it cleared. Station people are not stupid. They want the good shows, and they'll take them from anyone.

**Barrington:** Absolutely. Obviously, the Fox stations—our stations—felt *Tyra* was the product they wanted, and at the end of the day, that's where the margins are. That's where the revenue is. Obvi-



Paramount's Mark Hirsch: "Why is it so hard to get a new show on the air? Because there are so many long-term, very successful franchises in our marketplace."

ously, they felt relative to what they saw in the rest of the marketplace, including some stuff from Twentieth, that *Tyra* had a better shot in the marketplace, and that's what was best for the company. We had plenty of opportunity to go out and sell [Twentieth programs to Fox stations], but *Tyra* is the one they felt was right for them.

**Hirsch:** But then I think what [ABC] did for years. ... They took most of the [Disney] stuff for themselves. They didn't have outside suppliers on the network, and they thought that, when they got the big hit, they would win twice. They'd win because, as a producer, you'd win. But what really happened is, they lost twice because the network lost big time and the people who produced all of these shows just ran tens of millions of dollars of deficit.

With some marginal shows, you could argue, the decision might be easier. But if you have a big show, the stations will take it.

**Teicher:** There's probably an inclination to keep it another year to try a little bit harder.

**So why does the perception exist now that it's harder to launch new shows? That there isn't shelf space, and you can't get the slots. The shows**

**that do go out get OK carriage, but it's not enough to really goose the national rating. Is there a little bit of a clog in the pipeline, or can a good show really get the coverage it needs?**

**Auerbach:** A good show certainly can get those time periods. But remember this is a very competitive marketplace, and you have great television stations across the country that have signed up well into the next decade for the King World properties, some Paramount shows, Warner Bros., all of us around the table. And that creates a very, very tough environment not only for the stations but also for the producers.

There's a different economic model now. It's really tough and expensive to produce new shows. In the old days, you used to launch a show every year. Now we're not doing that. That's okay. That's okay for the business.

**Teicher:** But I do agree with something you said earlier: the word *perception*. There may be a perception that more syndicated shows potentially fail, but in reality that's not the case. This is a very difficult business. The entire television business launching new programs is extremely difficult.

We've had a few successes the last couple of years. Certainly, *Dr. Phil* has been an enormous success, and now *Ellen* is really finding her stride now. But we've reached a point in time given the complexity and the fragmentation in the market that it almost requires the perfect storm of circumstances, terrific talent, unique ideas, flawless execution, and then, in my opinion, after that, a really smart, strategic and deep consumer-marketing investment to really make a show work.

**Clark Morehouse:** The financial wherewithal and guts also don't hurt in that equation. And so that perception, which is nothing but a perception, should really go away based on what's

happening with Warner Bros. and the Fox situation, and it does create a different paradigm and business model now.

**Hirsch:** Why is it so hard to get a new show on the air? Because there are so many long-term, very highly rated, very successful franchises in our marketplace. The off-network sitcoms, quite frankly, will be there for another 10 years. They're taking up time periods, not only single run but double runs.

And then some of the first-run shows, like *Wheel of Fortune*, *Jeopardy!*, *Oprah*, *Dr. Phil*, *Ellen*, can be there for the foreseeable future. It's just that there aren't the usual time periods available.

**Morehouse:** Plus the squeeze is accentuated by The WB continuing to take time periods from their affiliates, to repurpose them on Sunday. [It] really closed out a lot of time periods. Look at the Tribune group specifically: Their 5-7 p.m. Sunday movie moved right to Saturday, which took away a lot of the time periods where we typically were producing and clearing the action-hour genre, which is pretty much over for us at this point in time.

Those great time periods, that pure daypart of 5-8 p.m. on Saturday, which at one time was a unique daypart with unique viewership really isn't there any more. And so, it's a bigger squeeze.

**We hear a lot about station managers who, rather than go with new programs, are double-running hit shows a lot more than they used to. Has that become a problem for syndicators? Is it harder to get a new show on because people would rather double run a Dr. Phil than try a new hour?**

**Hirsch:** I think so to some degree, if you're running a television station and have a show that's successful and you look at other television stations in similar circumstances that have already done it. Let's just say for the sake of argument you're getting a 5.0 the first time around and you can add another 2 or 3 rating points, you have to look around and say, "Okay, how many shows out there are going to get that, are going to deliver another 2 or 3 rating points? And what am I going to have to pay for them?"

We talk about *Ellen* as a success. The truth of the matter, *Ellen* is doing a 1.9 or a 2.0. If you can add 2 or 3 points—and *Ellen* is arguably in daytime one of the most successful shows that have come out in recent years—I think from the station manager's standpoint, he'd say, "This is a good



NBC Universal's Chris Kager: "We've taken some big heavy swings in the last couple of years with Jane Pauley and Martha Stewart."



business for me. I can add a second run. I can get the 2 or 3 rating points, and it's going to cost me a lot less." And it's surer, because how many shows are there that are going to go out and really deliver?

**Kager:** The industry is just becoming less risk-averse, as we continue down the road, in my opinion, and part of that is due to the changing ownership at a lot of places. And debt service has now come into play. People have to service their debt.

**Isn't it as simple as giving people what they want—both the viewers and the advertisers? If you look at network prime time now, they're double-running CSI and Law & Order because they're what people want. It's ironic that syndication's strength is the fact that you have some programs that do so well, that it creates a bottleneck that is perceived as a weakness.**

**Hirsch:** I've got to go back to the word buzz. People forget that *Entertainment Tonight* is on for 24 years, *Wheel* and *Jeopardy!* for 21, 22 years. If the networks had a show other than *60 Minutes* that was on the air for 21 or 22 years and arguably as successful today as it was 20 years ago, people would talk about it all the time.

**Teicher:** To dovetail to what Mark is saying, maybe it's not sexy to talk about a show that's been on 10, 15, 20 years, but it's that consistency and that reliability that is a strength of syndication. If I'm an advertiser in an environment like this, where accountability is held to higher standards than ever before, I want to know what program I'm buying.

You're not buying hope in a time period. You're buying a proven winner.

**Auerbach:** When the King World sales people make their presentation at SNTA, they're selling shows that are cleared through the rest of the decade. No cable network, no broadcast network can make that claim for so many different television shows, in different dayparts, geared towards different targeted demographics.

**Barrington:** What we do for a living may not be the sexiest job in broadcasting, but we have the product people want and, at the end of the day, in this environment, that's what media planners, that's what clients want. We're not trying to catch lightning in a bottle.

**So you've got a great distribution system. What are the real challenges for you then?**

**Auerbach:** We just have more damn competitors, 60 or 70 fragmented cable networks out there. The networks are selling hard. Our competitors for syndication are selling hard.

**Morehouse:** Talk about perception. Look at how cable sells itself. Going back in time, we were outsold to a certain degree at the planner level, and we all agree that that's the case,

and that's why we pony up big time to make the SNTA a bigger, more muscular marketing organization. And frankly, we were behind the curve on that a little bit.

But the cable industry gets buzz that, on the one hand, they work hard for, but results-wise, they don't deserve it at the level that they have.

The perception of us is somewhat staid and maybe not sexy. [The perception of cable by advertisers] is a little bit over the top, and that's where we need to work hard to level the playing field and make sure people understand the benefits of what we do.

**Kager:** I'm going to be a little bit candid here, too. We need to do a better job within certain categories within our industry.

We need to do a better job with the domestic-automobile category. As an industry, we need to do a better job in the automobile category. We need to sell them on our value. That's an area that we could improve. Another area where we could improve is with the telcos. Those are two major spending categories.

**There's a big shift going on now where the automotive is starting to move money out of television. They're looking to reach many more discrete consumers in a wider array of media that they never looked at before. There's a lot of change going on in other big advertising categories. How does this shape up for your 2005, 2006 plans? How do you see the market drumming up, and what are the hot categories that you think will demand syndication?**

**Teicher:** I don't think it's a secret that some of these categories, like automotive, may be moving some money out of television to do some really specific targeting, most notably through the Internet. To me, that makes the ratings and reach that syndication offers, our value proposition, that much more important, frankly.

Not that anybody generally buys 55 cable networks deep, but that average prime time adult 18-49 rating is 8.2. That's across 55 networks. If you're launching a car or you have new information on an automotive model that you're bringing out, you're better off on the left side of the decimal than on the right side of the decimal.

**So one of your biggest threats—fragmentation, which is driven by competition—is also one of your greatest assets, because it makes you guys look bigger as the other guys get smaller?**

**Teicher:** It certainly can be a strength, and it's something that we all collectively in our individual meetings talk about.

**Hirsch:** Fragmentation counts. I don't want to just focus on cable because I think you have to include the networks, also. When I came into this business, the average network prime time rating

was a 17.0. It's better to say that the average prime time share doesn't look anything like a 17 any longer.

And yet, we continue to have programs that do ratings that are comparable to or, in some cases, greater than network prime, and there is a perception advertisers have in many cases that they can't live without network. No one is suggesting that they should live without network prime time, but to not include cable and to not include syndication, you're making a huge mistake. It's as simple as that.

The cable fragmentation ultimately affects everyone. It affects cable because the cable network, the cable ratings are not growing. The mass of cable ratings are growing because, every year, there are three or four new ones. But they're cannibalizing from themselves as well, which means the average cable rating is going down, as is the average network rating.

If you look at syndication's performance among these three, you're going to see there's a greater stability here than there is in network prime time.

We can't ignore the fact that the networks have lost so much of their audience, and we are so competitive on a pure high-ratings basis with much of what they do that you just can't buy broadcast network prime without including major syndication properties as well.

**Advertisers and agencies say they are moving away from traditional media planning toward total communications planning, and they say they're doing it to find better ways of engaging consumers. How does syndication play into that?**

**Teicher:** The notion of communications planning really plays to the strength of syndication. Communications planning goes beyond reach and frequency to attributes syndication already has, but it also includes things like engagement. And when you consider that some of the most popular television brands of all time and six of the top 10 most popular personalities on television are in syndication today, that takes engagement to a new level.

**How well does the syndication industry understand what agencies are doing**

**now, how they're restructuring in terms of moving from media planning to communications planning?**

**Teicher:** We at Warner Bros. are engaging right now in the most expensive project we've ever done to understand a specific group of women, their mindsets, their motivations, what they care about, how they think. [We are doing] some research on usage of media but more importantly, understanding what makes them tick. And that will help drive content in some of our current shows and program development down the road.

**Kager:** Well, we plan on spending a lot of time with planners on entertainment opportunities at SNTA Day. We plan on taking our executive producers and our programming people into deal-specific meetings, not every meeting but real specific meetings. We're pre-qualifying those meetings right now.

If the consumer can relate to a product and the product is looked at as a hero in this whole communication mechanism, then we've accomplished something that's very unique with clients and advertisers as opposed to doing their 30-second spot.

It's tricky, very tricky, but at the end of the day, that's what we are striving for. ■



King World's Michael Auerbach: "When the King World sales person makes their presentation at SNTA, they're selling shows that are cleared through the rest of the decade."

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 Touchstone and Miramax  
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## King World Media Sales

www.kingworld.com

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*Bob Vila's Home Again*  
*CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*  
*Everybody Loves Raymond*  
*Inside Edition*  
*Jeopardy!*  
*Marketwatch Weekend*  
*Soul Train*  
*Soul Train Music Awards*  
*Dr. Phil*  
*The Oprah Winfrey Show*  
*Wheel of Fortune*

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**MICHAEL AUERBACH**



*Live With Regis and Kelly* is a mainstay for Buena Vista Television.



*Everybody Loves Raymond* leaves the CBS schedule in May but thrives in syndication.



*Fear Factor*, filled with dangerous (or disgusting) competitions, is a hit for NBC Universal.

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www.nbcuni.com

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*List of a Lifetime*  
*Maury*  
*Rebecca's Garden*  
*Starting Over*  
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*Continued on page 34*

# Tyrannosaurus Nielsenus?



Is Nielsen Media Research fated to go the way of the dinosaurs? According to the Feb. 21 *Broadcasting & Cable*, "the 82-year-old ratings service, say a legion of critics, is a monopoly past its prime, a creaking giant about to be overwhelmed by new technologies."

Maybe not. At TVB's 2005 Annual Marketing Conference, a trio of top executives from Nielsen Media Research will examine that question and talk about measurement issues and the company's R&D efforts. It's another reason TVB'05 is a must-attend!

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SVP, Strategic Relations,  
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**Paul Donato**  
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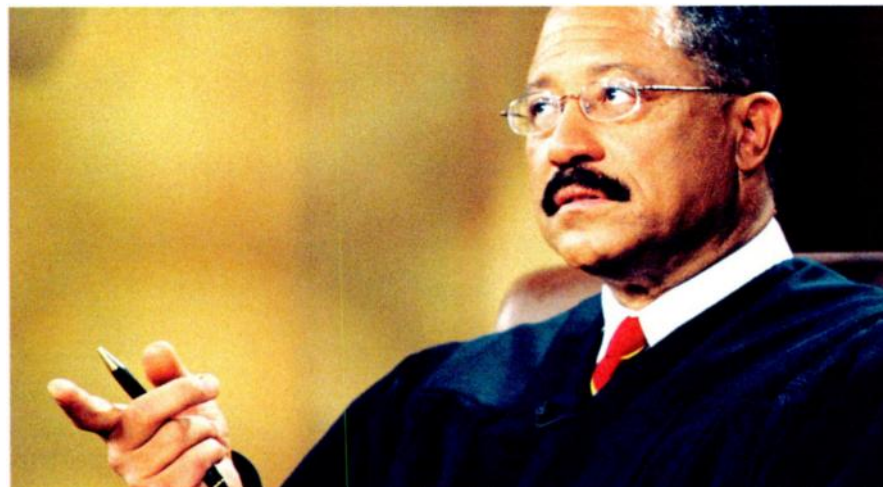
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Talk about legs: Mary Hart has been anchoring *Entertainment Tonight* for 23 years, Mark Steines for nine.



Judge Joe Brown is part of a resilient handful of court shows scattered on daytime TV.



Twentieth Television's *Malcolm in the Middle* is probably off-net's most subtle "performer."

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www.sonypicturestelevision.com

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Judge Hatchett  
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Life & Style  
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The Robin Quivers Show  
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Family Feud  
Famous Homes & Hideaways  
Gene Roddenberry's *Andromeda*  
Home Delivery  
It's Showtime at the Apollo Classic  
Live in Hollywood  
Mutant X  
Ron Hazelton's *House Calls*  
The Twilight Zone  
Town and Country Living  
DIC Kids Block

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Continued on page 35



## Buyers' Guide

Continued from page 34

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## Twentieth Television

www.fox.com

### PROGRAMS:

Ambush Makeover  
Angel  
Buffy the Vampire Slayer  
Cops  
Dharma & Greg  
Divorce Court  
Good Day Live  
King of the Hill  
Malcolm in the Middle  
Texas Justice  
That '70s Show  
The Comedy Block  
The Practice  
The X-Files  
Yes, Dear  
Fox Features

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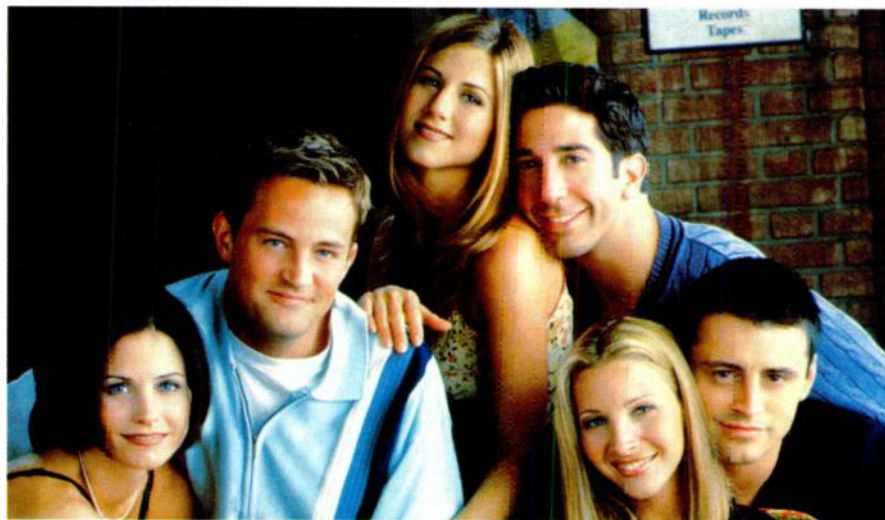
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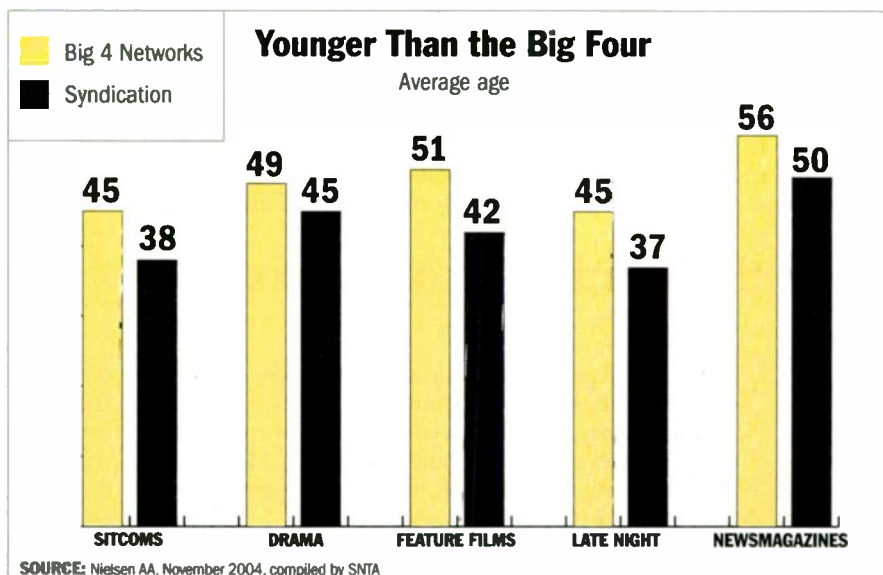
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Five out of six *Friends* aren't on NBC's Thursday lineup, but the show is a hit in syndication.



Veteran TV personality Leeza Gibbons fronts the Warner Bros. daily strip *Extra*.



## Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution

www.warnerbros.com

### PROGRAMS:

Access Hollywood  
Celebrity Justice  
eliDate  
ER  
Extra  
Friends  
Judge Mathis

### Street Smarts

The Drew Carey Show  
The Ellen DeGeneres Show  
The Larry Elder Show  
The People's Court  
The West Wing  
Will & Grace  
Prime Movies

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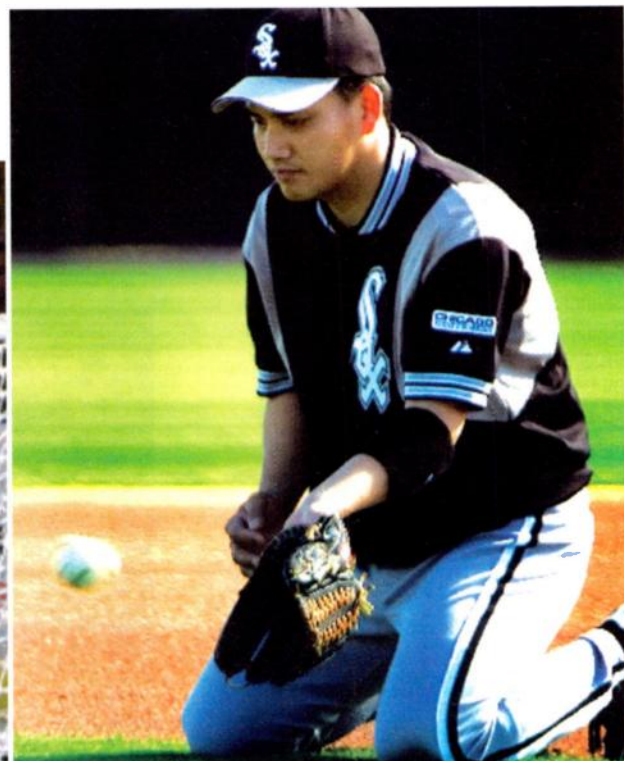
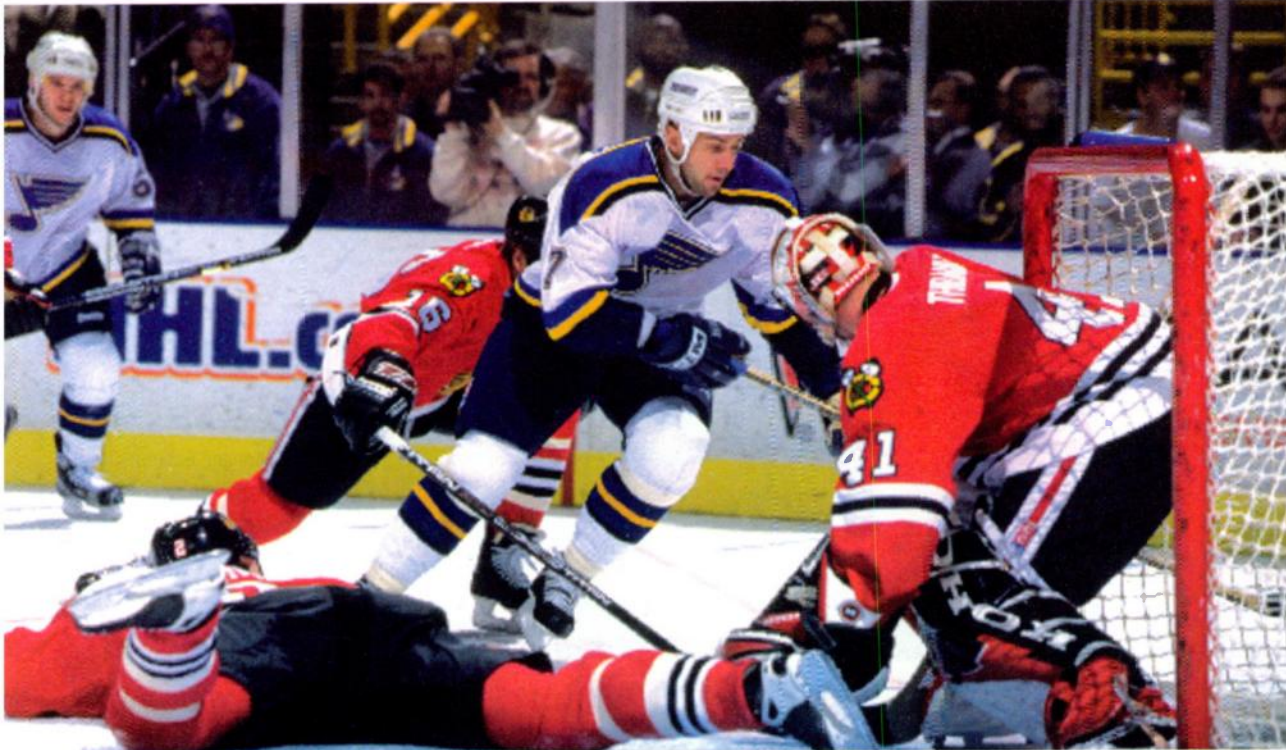
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In St. Louis, instead of the NHL Blues (left), sports fans will see more Cardinals' exhibition games. In Chicago, the White Sox will fill time once allotted to the Blackhawks.

## With NHL Frozen Out, Baseball, Basketball Score Big

Why St. Louis isn't so blue about losing its Blues **By Stuart Miller**

**I**n St. Louis, there will be no playoff games for the National Hockey League's Blues this spring—but the baseball-crazed city will be perfectly content watching their National League baseball champion Cardinals play exhibition games. In Philadelphia, the NHL's Flyers are grounded, but the arrival of star player Chris Webber means that extra 76er NBA games are a welcome addition on the tube.

The NHL lockout this year is a gain for baseball, which knows plenty about the damaging effects of labor strife, and basketball, which will face its own labor negotiations later this year.

Local sports networks that typically carry NHL hockey aren't saying they're happy without it. "Make no mistake, we want the games back," says Chris Helein, spokesman for Comcast Sports Net, which has been filling the void in Chicago, Philadelphia and the Washington-Baltimore markets with other sports and specials.

"Anything bad going on in sports is not in anybody's best interests," adds Tom Chiappetta, spokesman for Fox Sports Net, which televises 14 teams on its own networks. (It also partners with Comcast and owns Sun Sports in Florida, but those don't use Fox programming.)

The concerns are mainly about long-term planning. In the short term, just because NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman and union boss Bob Goodenow are leading the league in obstinacy doesn't mean the landscape is littered with darkened sets as hockey fans mourn the loss. Every missed hockey game this season has provided an opportunity as well, a chance for cable outlets to fill in the blanks in ways that will keep sports fans coming back for more.

While much has been made of how ESPN is doing

better without hockey on a national level, the ratings have, for the most part, held up just fine on a regional level as well. Although the networks won't divulge specific ratings, Chiappetta points out that a market like Detroit, where the Red Wings get a 6 or 7 rating, is the exception. While local baseball generally gets a 3 to 3.6 rating and the NBA draws in the 2s, he says NHL games typically reel in just a 1 to 1.5.

"In Detroit, you'd say we miss hockey," he says, "but some of the other markets have not been as impacted."

For Fox affiliates, the gap has been most ably filled by the *Best Damn Sports Show Period*, which has run consistently in hockey's stead. That not only provides ratings but gives the program extra exposure as it chases ESPN's dominant *SportsCenter*. Regional news reports have also performed ably off the bench,

**"Anything bad going on in sports is not in anybody's best interests."**

**TOM CHIAPETTA, FOX SPORTS NET**

Chiappetta says, and Fox has offered hockey editions of its *Beyond the Glory* documentary series.

Additionally, the NHL gave the rights for each market to rebroadcast classic hometown games. Men's and women's college basketball and hockey games have been plugged into the mix as well.

Some markets are certainly hit harder this particular year, such as Sun Sports, which televises the Tampa Bay Lightning, the winners of last year's NHL Stanley Cup. Cathy Weeden, VP/GM of Sun Sports, says that, from a "strict programming standpoint, it has not been that bad." The channel added games from the University of Florida and University of South Florida, plus the NBA's Orlando Magic to maintain its regional presence. But she still has lost out on a great across-the-board promotional, marketing and ad-sales opportunity. "We had momentum and this

could have been a tremendous year for us," she laments. "We were expecting a big ratings jump."

In Washington and Philadelphia, Comcast has been subbing in not only more college games but more Wizards and 76ers games, which generally do better than hockey anyway (especially now that the 76ers are loaded up for a championship run). Helein points out that much of the other substitute programming was already planned but would likely have been at least occasionally preempted if hockey were around.

For instance, in the Baltimore-Washington market, Comcast introduced a new 90-minute football show last fall called *Monday Night Live*. "We probably would have done it anyway," Helein says, "but there would have been schedule conflicts."

Weeden says the same is true for *Chevy Florida Fishing Report*, which begins at the end of the month. The studio program would have been subjected to preemptions if Tampa Bay's hockey team were in the playoffs, but now it will get a consistent run. And Weeden's network picked up 20 arena football games for the Orlando Predators and Tampa Bay Storm, which is "good, exciting live programming that we would not have gotten if we had hockey."

With spring comes spring training and NBA play-

offs. Helein says in Chicago, instead of the hockey Blackhawks, viewers will see 20 White Sox spring-training baseball games—"the most ever"—along with a few Cubs games. In the Washington-Baltimore market, where there is plenty of excitement over the arrival of a new baseball team in Washington and the signing of slugger Sammy Sosa by the Baltimore Orioles, the focus is on "lots of news coverage," including three half-hour spring-training specials.

Fox, of course, has a big portfolio, televising 62 of 82 teams across major-league baseball, basketball and hockey—from exhibition to regular season to playoff games. So it has options.

In fact, says Chiappetta, "A Cardinals spring-training game might do as well as a Blues playoff game." After a short pause, he amends that assessment: "It might do better." ■



# Icing the Trucks

NHL's lost season has chilling effect on the production side



Vendors have seen prices for mobile facilities plummet.

**W**hen the National Hockey League hung up its skates on the 2005 season, it left more than just hockey fans hurting. Freelance camera operators, the crews that work in the production trucks handling instant replays and graphics—and even the truck vendors themselves—felt the pinch.

In an interview with B&C's Ken Kerschbaumer, Mark Howorth, CEO of National Mobile Television (NMT), one of about a dozen major companies providing production vehicles for sporting events, discusses what has been a tough winter for those who typically rely on the NHL as a source of revenue and jobs.

*It seems that all of the headlines and stories covering the NHL lockout didn't deal with what has happened to those who don't hit the ice.*

The focus has always been on the players and owners, but it's rippled all the way through us here at NMT. Hockey is 17% of our business. So where do you make that up? It's very tough, and for a lot of the below-the-line providers, there isn't an opportunity to make it up. We're really just taking it out of our hides this year.

*From the outside looking in, it would seem that everyone on the production side would still be busy because the hockey games would be replaced with other events like college basketball.*

There is some fill-in, but what you find is that, for every time [networks] fill in a college basketball game, they're also filling in with canned entertainment or the *Best Damn Sports Show Period*. You don't need a truck for that. Fortunately, we'll make up about half of the missing 17%, but we've asked our employees—including me—to take a pay cut across the board for the duration of the hockey strike. But now that it's clear hockey isn't going to come back, we've gone back and reinstated people's pay.

*So what happens next year with hockey and rental rates?*



**"Hockey is 17% of our business. So where do you make that up? We're really just taking it out of our hides this year."**

**MARK HOWORTH, NMT**

*What has been the impact on pricing of trucks?*

Every vendor has seen prices for mobile facilities drop, as we're all desperate to keep our units, particularly the low-end ones, busy. Our prices, particularly for analog technology, have come down on the range of 15%-20% just because there is so much competition for college basketball games.

*So I guess you can't wait for baseball season to start.*

Baseball will fill in a big gap for us, and it's great to see a market where there's a sport with a little bit of stability. Baseball telecasts

Hockey games have been produced with a large number of analog trucks, and when it comes back, the world will have changed, and most broadcasters will want at least digital technology, and maybe even HDTV technology, for hockey telecasts. As for the pricing, like the NBA, it's largely regulated by the NHL, and that dictates what technology will be used. But it will come back with a lot more digital and HDTV technology.

*I guess that's a little bit of an upside. But it still doesn't help all the freelance camera people and operators who aren't working this season.*

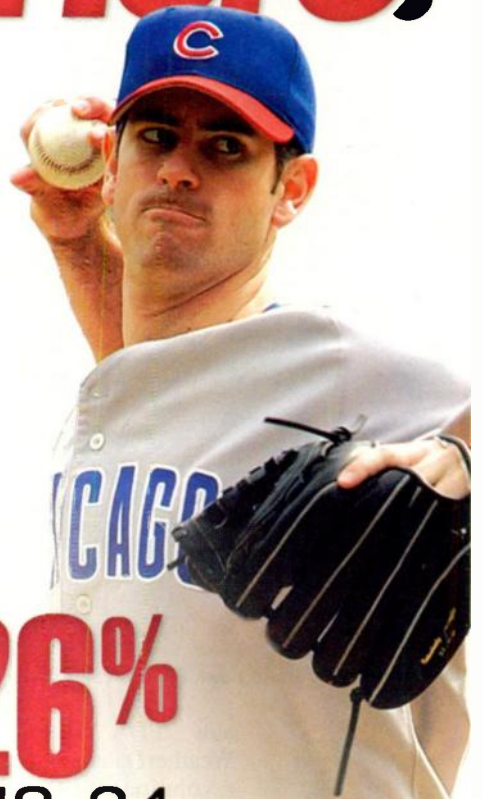
It's the hidden things that happen. Los Angeles, for example, is controlled by IATSE [the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees] for crews. But now there's no hockey, and what's happening is sporting-event [producers] are coming in and offering non-union jobs for lower wages than they would usually pay. Usually, IATSE would shut those things down, but this year they aren't because IATSE knows there are people who need the work. So it's a ripple effect. It starts with the owners and players taking hard lines, but we're down at the very end of the tail of the dog. And it's the television truck guy, crew person, and popcorn vendor who pay the price.

are using a lot more digital technology than they used to. And I would guess that 50% of the road games will be done using digital trucks this year, so that's a big change. ■

The



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**SUPERSTATION WGN**

Source: Nielsen Media Research; WGNC NHI Overnights. Based on audience projections for the average of all Cubs regular season baseball games; 2004 vs. 2003. Qualifying data available upon request.



# Storming the Weather

New tracking devices safeguard reporters, improve news stories **By Ken Kerschbaumer**



WeatherData's Storm Hawk Reporter sends storm information to the station with three taps on the PDA.

**A** new PDA from WeatherData could revolutionize the way reporters collect weather information and send it back to stations. Known as the Storm Hawk Reporter, the PDA uses a combination of Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking and advanced National Weather Service reporting systems. It gives reporters instant access to their location on radar images so they can quickly and safely cover local weather events.

"We believe this system can do for weather systems what the first portable news camera did for news coverage," says WeatherData founder and CEO Mike Smith.

The system, which includes both the PDA device and SelectWarn, an on-air Doppler radar system at the station, makes use of a new, more accurate storm-tracking system available from the National Weather Service.

The old system issues countywide warnings for storms, even if parts of the county are clearly out of harm's way. The new system, which uses a technology called "geocoded polygon" warnings, tracks a storm by its anticipated path and gives specific longitude and latitude coordinates of that path.

## HIGH ACCURACY RATE

Smith says that makes it 70% more accurate than the countywide warnings. "By using that data, users can concentrate their efforts on people genuinely

at risk and reassure other viewers they aren't," he says. The cost of a full system, with both Storm Hawks and SelectWarn, ranges from \$50,000 to \$100,000, says Smith, depending on the number of Storm Hawk units purchased. (They run \$1,500 each.)

KWCH Wichita, Kan., has been using the system, introduced at last year's NAB

**"We believe this system can do for weather systems what the first portable news camera did for news coverage."**

**MIKE SMITH, WEATHERDATA**

conference, since August. It now has 15 Storm Hawks in use by meteorologists, reporters and storm chasers. The first true severe-weather season will begin in about a month. KWCH meteorologist Kelsey Angle believes the units will give the station a big competitive advantage. "It's hyper-local information that only we will have," he says. "Other stations will have to ask the reporter where it is located, and a lot of times the reporters will be wrong. But with GPS, we'll know exactly where they are."

Six NBC owned-and-operated stations recently began using five Storm Hawk Reporter units along with SelectWarn. One, WCAU Philadelphia, hasn't used it yet for a tornado or flash flood, but the system did help the station keep up-to-date on snow measurements.

"Even though snowfall is a slow event, it was nice to see the amounts pop up automatically on the radar and map," says WCAU meteorologist Dave Warren. The other NBC O&Os are KNBC Los Angeles, WMAQ Chicago, KXAS Dallas/Ft. Worth, WNCN Raleigh, N.C., and WJAR Providence, R.I.

## IMPROVED REPORTING

Smith says the system provides two major advantages: First, reporters can be more safely and accurately deployed, because GPS gives users an instant sense of where they are in relation to a weather event. The direction the reporter is traveling is always at the top of the screen.

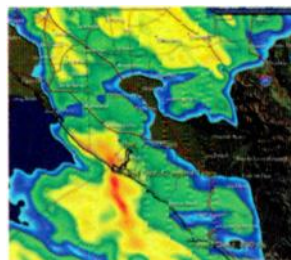
"It's far safer than having reporters trying to guess," says Smith. "And with trees or buildings, it's sometimes hard to even see the sky to know where a tornado or storm is located."

The system also improves reporting. The PDAs are outfitted with wireless-transmission capabilities, a low-resolution camera for shooting video and still pictures, and a cellphone. A reporter can track a storm closely, shoot a quick video and send it back to the station.

Smith decided to tie Storm Hawk and SelectWarn together while he was

in the field testing Storm Hawk. He saw a tornado funnel touch down a few miles away and attempted to call 911, a local radio station and local authorities. All numbers were busy or unreachable. "The phones were ringing and ringing, because personnel were busy dealing with the storms," he says.

Storm Hawk removes that frustration. Reporters can send back information with three taps on the PDA screen. If they see a tornado funnel, they can tap in its distance and direction from their current location and then tap another menu describing the type of funnel it is. That information is then relayed to the station and incorporated into SelectWarn. It can be on-air within five seconds of transmission. ■



SelectWarn doppler radar

## BRIEFS



Idol prefers Sony DSR PD-150.

## IDOL NIXES JVC, RETURNS TO SONY

American Idol's experiment with first-generation HDV technology came to an abrupt halt as Idol producers returned to the Sony DSR PD-150 standard-definition camcorder. The problem? The single-chip JVC HDV camcorder could not deliver quality video and audio images.

"We've gone back to using the images from the PD-150 cameras, and we find they look better than the JVC images," says Idol producer Simon Lythgoe. He adds that producers had huge issues with the first-generation cameras: "Being a reality show, we're inside and outside a lot. The cameras couldn't cope with the light change."

However, Lythgoe adds, Idol will take a look at the just introduced Sony HDV cameras that have three chips for imaging, solving many headaches experienced with the JVC cameras. (A one-chip camera has one computer chip processing all picture information. The three-chip camera dedicates one chip each to processing red, green and blue signals, ensuring purer picture quality.) One problem: Fox requires acquisition in 720p, but Sony cameras record only in 1080i (although they do output 720p). Says Lythgoe, "We're going to try and do a deal with Sony for those cameras."

## WNET EMERGENCY SYSTEM

WNET New York gave a live demonstration of its emergency-responder system to government officials last week. The GUARD system (Geospatially-Aware Urban Approaches for Responding to Disasters) provides police, fire and sanitation workers with better communication in the field. Next up: allotting additional TV spectrum in the New York City area to expand coverage and features.

## HARMONIC ACQUIRES BTL

Harmonic has paid about \$8 million to acquire UK-based Broadcast Technology Ltd. and will integrate it into Harmonic's Convergent Systems Division. Harmonic's headend and edge-server systems already fully support BTL receivers, decoders and other products. Says Dr. Yaron Simler, president of Harmonic's Convergent Systems Division, "Pairing the BTL professional multi-decoder system with Harmonic's standard- and high-definition encoders helps us play a stronger role in the content-delivery chain, which grows our market potential."

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**MARCH 14, 2005**

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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.

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# The Master Builder

Sports vet launches Nat Geo and delivers ad, ratings success **By Anne Becker**

**N**ational Geographic Channel President Laureen Ong spent 15 years working in sports TV. There was just one problem: She hated sports. "I used to joke that it must have been my punishment for a previous life," she says. "It was a business for me. I liked what I was doing at the time, but it just wasn't my passion." Luckily, passion returned. The Madonna-esque master of career reinvention now holds a post that suits her well.

An avid biker—she and her husband routinely wake at 5:30 a.m. to ride 15 miles—and a devotee of all things outdoors, including hiking, tennis and skiing, Ong has built the Nat Geo channel's staff from nonexistent into a fighting force of 120. She has also led the channel to steady ratings growth in its nearly five years on the air—it is currently 52 million subscribers strong.

And last year Nat Geo, two-thirds owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp., posted the biggest audience growth of any ad-supported cable channel: an impressive 66%.

The network has delivered in a genre in which competitors are struggling. For example, Discovery Channel went down 27% in prime time from February '04 to February '05, sinking to 979,000 viewers from nearly 1.4 million. (In fairness, Discovery is fully distributed, reaching about 89.6 million subscribers.) TLC was also down 36% year to year, averaging 727,000 viewers in prime last month.

"Most people think of Nat Geo as lions and tigers and bears and tribes, but when we say 'dare to explore,' we also cover science and the whole field of exploration with a contemporary lens. That can mean a lot of things," Ong says. "There are not a lot of networks really covering our turf. Let's just hope it stays that way."

## PLANNING AHEAD

Ong arrived at her current position after serving in a variety of roles nationwide. En route, she worked in syndication sales for MTM Enterprises and ad sales for WPVI Philadelphia. She helped manage a sports channel in Chicago, was VP/GM for SportsChannel and Prism in Philadelphia, and held the same post at Fox O&Os in Phoenix and Washington.

"I always try to look a couple of steps ahead of where I am and keep thinking where this is going to lead me," says the New York native, who double-majored in math and theater arts at Montclair State and picked up a master's in teaching from Columbia.

Following graduation, she took a summer job as a receptionist at TVS Television Network, a sports syndicator. Ong worked her way up the ranks before leaving to start Sports Syndication, a small network, with several co-workers. A series of other sports gigs, including several years with the Chicago White Sox (she is still a minority owner) and SportsVision Chicago, led Ong, then in her 20s, to reconsider her career options.

She decided to capitalize on the

## FIFTH ESTATER



**LAUREEN ONG**

President, National Geographic Channel

B. Sept. 24, 1952

## EDUCATION

B.A., Math/Speech and Theater Arts, Montclair State University, 1974; M.A., Columbia University, Teachers College, 1976

## EMPLOYMENT

Receptionist, TVS Television Network, 1974-77; VP, Sports Syndication, 1977-79; program director, CBS Sports Spectacular, 1979-81; VP of Broadcasting, Chicago White Sox and SportsVision Chicago, 1981-88; regional sales manager, MTM Enterprises, 1988-91; account executive, WPVI Philadelphia, 1991-92; local sales manager, KRON San Francisco, 1992-94; assistant GM, SportsChannel, Chicago, 1994-96; VP/GM, SportsChannel and Prism, Philadelphia, 1996-97; VP/GM, KSAZ Phoenix, 1997-98; VP/GM, WTTG Washington, 1998-2000; current position since 2000

## PERSONAL

Married

TV component of her career, selling sports programming to station managers, to expand

her business knowledge. Ong was even willing to take a financial hit to secure a better TV future. She left MTM to work for Capital Cities/ABC—taking a nearly 50% pay cut in the process—selling time for station WPVI. "Part of my investment at that stage was, I needed to learn more," she says. "Otherwise, I was going to have a golden handcuff going nowhere."

Here, her math background served her well. She realized TV specials and big-ticket items, such as parades, gave her a 6% profit; day-to-day programming yielded just 3%. She made up that initial salary cut within the year. "Sometimes it appears as if you're going backwards and sideways," she says, "but it ends up being just fine."

## THE CABLE CHALLENGE

Still, Ong always kept her eyes on the prize. After doggedly pursuing a GM position with one of the Fox O&Os for five years, she ending up running two, in Phoenix and Washington. In April 2000, she went from a broadcast station to a cable network. Tapped to head the launch of National Geographic, she had nine months to get it up and running.

To the seasoned TV vet, it was a challenge she couldn't resist. She simply dug through her Rolodex, beefed up her staff and began ramping up programming. Nat Geo turned a profit after four years and is on the road to full distribution. "It seems like I'm cursed with always having to look for another mountain to climb," Ong says.

Her boss disagrees. "Laureen is someone who is always interested in taking on the tough challenges," says Tony Vinciguerra, president and CEO of Fox Networks Group, "and has the enviable combination of instinct and intelligence to see them through."

Ong's goals for the channel include branching into high-def, building line-extension businesses, like VOD and broadband, and maintaining ratings growth. Most important, she hopes to build to full distribution—some 86 million subscribers.

"One thing I'm particularly good at is starting something without structure and putting things around it." The arts enthusiast applies the same philosophy to entertaining as she does to work. "I have no problem making something I've never made before for a dinner party," says Ong, who welcomes challenges. "I'll do anything for as long as it remains interesting." ■

## FATES AND FORTUNES



**Dr. Libby Haight O'Connell**  
A&E Television Networks

## CABLE TV

At Insight Communications: **KEVIN DOWELL**, VP, advertising sales, Insight Media, New York, promoted to senior VP; **SCOTT COOLEY**, senior VP, employee relations and development, Fishers, Ind., named senior VP, operations, West region, Fishers; **SUE MISIUNAS**, GM, Time Warner Cable, Binghamton/Liberty division, Jamestown, N.Y., appointed district VP, Northwest Indiana, Lafayette, Ind.

At Time Warner Cable, Stamford, Conn.: **MELINDA C. WITMER**, VP/chief counsel, programming, named VP, programming; **MICKEY CARTER**, Law Office of Arthur M. Carter/VP, Taseis Media Group, New York, named director, programming.

**JAMIE MCDOWELL**, VP/director, promotion, ACME Television, Albuquerque, N.M., named creative services director, Northwest regional operating center, Tribune Broadcasting, KCPQ Tacoma, Wash., KTWB Seattle and KWBP Salem, Ore.

**GREG DUDKIN**, VP, technical operations, Greater Chicago region, Comcast, named regional senior VP, Michigan region.

**DAVID TROXEL**, VP, affiliate relations, Daystar Television Network, Dallas, appointed general manager, Comcast system, Florence, Ala.

## PROGRAMMING

**DR. LIBBY HAIGHT O'CONNELL**, VP, historical alliances, and historian-in-residence, The History Channel/VP, community marketing, A&E Television Networks, New York, appointed chief historian/senior VP, corporate outreach, A&E Television Networks.

At Univision Communications: **ALINA FALCON**, SVP/operating manager, TeleFutura, Miami, promoted to EVP/operating manager, Univision Network, Miami; **BERT MEDINA**, VP/GM, Univision WGBO Joliet, Ill., and TeleFutura WXFT



**Sandi Alouete**  
VH1

Aurora, Ill., promoted to SVP/operating manager, TeleFutura, Miami; **VINCENT CORDERO**, VP, business development and labor affairs, Los Angeles, promoted to VP/GM, WGBO and WXFT.

**CATHERINE NEBAUER**, GM, Nickelodeon Australia, promoted to SVP/GM, Nickelodeon Asia Pacific, Singapore and Hong Kong.

**SANDY ALOUETE**, senior director, music and talent, VH1, New York, promoted to VP, music and talent relations.

**LISA M. WEGER**, VP, Latin America consumer products, off-channel commerce group, Cartoon Network, Burbank, Calif., named VP, U.S. and Latin America consumer products, Cartoon Network Enterprises, Burbank.



**Catherine Nebauer**  
Nickelodeon

**BROWN JOHNSON**, EVP, Nick Jr., promoted to executive creative director, preschool television, Nickelodeon Television, New York.

**JENNIFER ORMÉ**, consul-

tant, *America's Next Top Model*, UPN, Los Angeles, joins the network as director, alternative programs.

**CHRIS VAN AMBURG**, television packaging, William Morris Agency, Los Angeles, joins Sony Pictures Television, Culver City, Calif., as director, DVD marketing.

**JOURNALISM**

At Fox News Channel, New York: **DAVID BROWN**, senior producer, *The O'Reilly Factor*, promoted to senior producer, weekend prime time programming; **HOLLY CERELLI**, senior producer, *Fox News Live*, named senior



**Lisa M. Weger**  
Cartoon Network

producer, weekend daytime programming; **KIM ROSENBERG**, producer, *Studio B With Shepard Smith*, promoted to senior producer, *Fox News Live*.

**LIZ MARLANTES**, national political reporter, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Washington, named general assignment correspondent, ABC News, Washington bureau.

**ADVERTISING/MARKETING/PR**

**DAVE SIMON**, senior account executive, Continental TV Sales, Chicago, named national account manager, Midwest territory, Jones MediaAmerica, Chicago.

**WHAT'S YOUR FATE?**

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

**DATEBOOK**

**THIS WEEK**

**MARCH 8**  
**THE JOHN A. REISENBACH FOUNDATION**  
13TH ANNUAL GALA TRIBUTE FOR A SAFER AND BETTER NEW YORK  
The Harmonie Club, New York. Contact: Ronny Venable 212-935-1840 or ronnyvenable@aol.com

**MARCH 9**  
**THE SOCIETY OF CABLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERS/GFC**  
MEMBERSHIP MILESTONE LUNCHEON  
GFC Corporate Headquarters, Conshohocken, Pa. Contact: 800-542-5040 or www.scte.org

**MARCH 12-13**  
**TELEVISION NEWS CENTER**  
REPORTER TRAINING  
Ventana Productions, Washington. Contact: Herb Brubaker 301-340-6160 or hnbrubaker@televisionnewscenter.org

**MARCH 13**  
**ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS & SCIENCES**  
COLLEGE TELEVISION AWARDS  
The Renaissance Hotel, Hollywood, Calif. Contact: Academy of Television Arts & Sciences 818-754-2800 or www.emmys.com

**MARCH**

**MARCH 19**  
**TELEVISION NEWS CENTER**  
NEWSCAST PRODUCER/WRITER

**TRAINING**

Ventana Productions, Washington. Contact: Herb Brubaker 301-340-6160 or hnbrubaker@televisionnewscenter.org

**MARCH 22**  
**THE MEDIA CENTER AT NEXPO**  
CONVERGENCE 3.0: MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE MULTIPLE MEDIA ENTERPRISE  
Convention Center, Dallas. Contact: www.mediacenter.org/content/5101.cfm

**MARCH 30-APRIL 1**  
**DIVERSITYBUSINESS.COM**  
5TH ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE AND AWARDS CEREMONY  
Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashuntucket, Conn. Contact: William Stokes 203-255-8966, wstokes@ccaii.com or www.DiversityBusiness.com/conference

**MARCH 31**  
**TELEVISION BUREAU OF ADVERTISING**  
ANNUAL MARKETING CONFERENCE  
Jacob Javits Convention Center, New York. Contact: Janice Garjian 212-486-1111 or www.tvb.org

**APRIL**

**APRIL 1**  
**BROADCASTERS' FOUNDATION**  
OFFSHORE FISHING CHALLENGE  
The Breakers, Palm Beach, Fla. Contact: Gordon Hastings 203-862-8577 or ghastings@broadcastersfoundation.org

**APRIL 2**  
**RADIO-TELEVISION NEWS DIRECTORS**

**ASSOCIATION & FOUNDATION**

**EMERSON COLLEGE CHAPTER**  
REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND AWARDS DINNER  
Marriott Hotel, Newton, Mass. Contact: Bob Salsberg 617-357-8100 or www.aprntdaemerson.com

**APRIL 3-5**  
**NATIONAL CABLE & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION**  
THE NATIONAL SHOW  
The Moscone Center, San Francisco. Contact: NCTA Industry Affairs 202-775-3669 or www.thenationalshow.com

**APRIL 3-5**  
**THE NATIONAL CABLE & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION**  
2005 VANGUARD AWARDS  
The Moscone Center, San Francisco. Contact: www.thenationalshow.com or 202-775-3669; Nominations: Michelle Ray 202-775-3669 or mray@ncta.com

**APRIL 5**  
**THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MULTI-ETHNICITY IN COMMUNICATIONS**  
2005 ANNUAL AWARDS BREAKFAST  
Marriott, San Francisco. Contact: Beatrice M. Robbio/NAMIC 212-594-5985 or Dana Gleeson/Beaman Inc. 312-751-9689

**APRIL 5**  
**[ITVT] AND THE NATIONAL CABLE & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION**  
2ND ANNUAL [ITVT] AWARDS FOR LEADERSHIP IN INTERACTIVE TELEVISION  
Moscone West, San Francisco. Contact: www.itvt.com/eventregistration.html



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**Fast Track**

Continued from page 4

the biggest jump, up 46% to an 8.9 rating/21 share on WABC at 4 p.m.

Rookie *The Insider* was up 38% to a 3.3/6 over *Hollywood Squares*' performance last February in the same 7 p.m. time on WCBS. *Insider* delivered that audience and more to lead-out *Entertainment Tonight*, which was up 35% to a 4.2/7, its best February number in the Big Apple in six years.—J.E.

**More on Martha**

**Martha Stewart's** new syndicated daily hour lifestyle/talker has been cleared in 85% of the country for fall, according to NBC Universal.

In addition to the already announced clearances on NBC-owned stations (almost 40% of the country), the show has been cleared on Hearst-Argyle, Gannett, Scripps Howard, Albritton, Post-Newsweek, Belo, Freedom, CBS, Young, Clear Channel, Meredith and Milwaukee Journal stations. Newest sign-ups include KPRC Houston, WOAI San Antonio and WMC Memphis, Tenn.

The show is now sold in all top 20 markets and 47 of the top 50.—J.E.

**FCC Asks High Court To Ignore Activists**

A variety of industry and activist groups have asked the Supreme Court to overrule a lower-court decision that would force the FCC to rewrite most of its broadcast-ownership rules. Last week, the FCC asked the high court to ignore them all.

Although the FCC has its own objections to the lower-court decision, commission lawyers told the justices that there is insufficient ground to pursue its own appeal and that separate appeals by various broadcast companies, minority advocates and activists opposing media consolidation seek to limit the agency's flexibility in setting new rules.

The FCC's rewrite was ordered by the federal appeals court in Philadelphia last June.

Industry lawyers argue that FCC limits on the number of media properties a company can own violate free-speech rights. Anti-consolidation activists argue that the FCC has pushed ownership deregulation too far.

Recognizing that the justices may take the case of its objections, the FCC asked the justices to consider its own disagreements with the lower-court ruling. For instance, the FCC dismissed its finding that faulty economic models were used to set limits on local crossownership of TV, radio

**Dolan Family Feud**

The war between the Dolans grew nastier as Cablevision Chairman **Chuck Dolan** ousted three directors who opposed his plan to keep DBS service **Voom** alive. CEO **Jim Dolan** has pushed to shut down Voom before it cost the company the \$1 billion-plus it would require in funding to give it a chance at success.

Chuck Dolan used his voting power to oust three directors, including long-time Cablevision executives **Shelia Mahoney** and **William Bell**. Dolan associates say he's hurt that those executives, who have been close advisors, voted against the continuation of Voom. He's also ousting investment banker **Steve Rattner** of **Quadrangle**

**Partners**. A fourth slot is open after the recent death of former Cablevision executive **John Tatta**.

Replacing them are **Liberty Media** Chairman **John Malone**, former **Viacom** President **Frank Biondi**,

former **Century Communications** CEO **Leonard Tow**. Cablevision's board has a total of 15 members, including Chuck, Jim and two other Dolan family members.

Now the troubled service has a temporary reprieve. The company says it will delay shutting down Voom to give the elder Dolan a chance to buy it. Cablevision initially announced Voom would shut down, in part because the service has burned through more than \$650 million so far. Cablevision's board cut a deal to sell its core satellite assets to **EchoStar** in January. The structure of a new Voom remains unclear.

—J.M.H.



Charles Dolan

**FAST TRACK**



Nip/Tuck



Daisy Does America



CSI: Crime Scene Investigation

and newspaper properties.

The commission also said the Philly court was wrong to minimize the impact of the Internet on media diversity and challenged the notion that its numerical limits on station ownership were arbitrary.—B.M.

**'CSI' Target of Non-Complaint**

**Speakspeak.org**—a Web site launched one month ago to fight back against the FCC's indecency crackdown—has set up an online form on its opening page for surfers to submit a letter of "non-complaint" to the commission to counter a **Parents Television Council's** complaint against *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*.

PTC took issue with a Feb. 17 episode of the drama in which an obese man with an infantilism fetish flings himself to his death wearing only a diaper.

Speakspeak.org, by contrast, has a form letter ready to e-mail to the FCC saying that the sender did not find the show offensive and that it was a work of fiction with artistic merit, "not pornography."

"Our members feel that, while not

every program is appropriate for every age group, neither is it appropriate for a small but active segment of the population to control the airwaves," site founder **Amanda Toering** told *B&C*. "Because their mobilization has led to fear and self-censorship at the broadcast networks, the PTC has become the nation's de facto censorship board."—J.E.

**TNT, TBS Unveil New Shows**

Two **Turner** networks each unveiled a variety of shows for the summer and fall. Drama-focused TNT lured top talent to expand its thematic repertoire, developing six recurring dramas, plus *Nightmares & Dreamscapes*, a limited series based on **Stephen King** stories. Stories in development vary in subject from a hit man (*Confessions*) to advertising executives (*Smoke & Mirrors*). The network also shot a pilot for *The Dark*, an FBI drama from **Stephen J. Cannell** (*The A-Team*, *Rockford Files*).

TNT also announced that detective drama *The Closer* will air Mondays at 9 p.m. ET beginning June 13. Crime show *Wanted*, starring **Gary Cole**, will air Sundays at 10 p.m. beginning July 31. *Into the West*, **Steven Spielberg's** six-

week summer miniseries, launches June 10 at 8 p.m. with new episodes bowing Fridays at 8 p.m. through July 22.

Sister channel TBS will branch into character-driven comedies and reality competition with upcoming shows. TBS greenlighted **Nash Entertainment's** reality competition *Losers Leaves Town*, in which warring neighbors duke it out in a series of competitions, with the loser forced to move. It has ordered nine episodes of Coquette's mockumentary *Daisy Does America*, in which UK-based actress-comedian **Daisy Donovan** travels the country as a high-society Brit trying to become an all-American girl. TBS is considering projects from Whoopi Goldberg and Cedric the Entertainer. Reality show *The Real Gilligan's Island* will premiere for a second season June 8 at 9 p.m.—A.B.

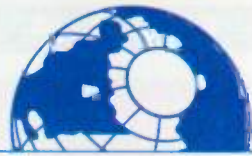
**'Nip/Tuck' OK With FCC**

FX program *Nip/Tuck* won't be getting into trouble with the FCC. The agency Friday dismissed numerous complaints over the racy dark comedy about plastic surgeons and their patients. A variety of complainants had insisted that FX be fined on grounds that the show is indecent and/or obscene. It's a frequent target of criticism by the **Parent Television Council**, although none of the complaints this time were generated by the group. The gist of the complaints focused on characters' engaging in simulated sexual intercourse, including oral and anal sex. Some also demanded FCC sanction for graphic depictions of liposuction, rhinoplasty and other surgical procedures. The FCC said it has no authority to find *Nip/Tuck* indecent because longstanding court rulings give cable networks greater First Amendment protections than broadcasters. The FCC also ruled that the scenes in question don't meet the Supreme Court test for determining whether content is obscene.—B.M.

**Clarification**

The Sony HD XDCAM to be unveiled at NAB (Technology, 2/28, page 20) will be a demo model. Sony has yet to determine how many models will be released and at what price points when the products go on the market in 2006. Estimates of a price point for a mid-price, \$17,000-\$20,000 model were based on industry sources, not Sony. Alec Shapiro's title is SVP, marketing, Broadcast & Production Systems Division of Sony Electronics.

R E G I S T E R N O W



NCTA • SUNDAY, APRIL 3RD • SAN FRANCISCO

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# HISPANIC TELEVISION UPDATE

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#### SALES CAREERS

##### LOCAL SALES MANAGER

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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

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## CABLE

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# The Sold-Out Crowd

OPEN MIKE

**N**ow cable and satellite-delivered content finds itself in the crosshairs as Congressional leaders take new and frighteningly broader aim at indecency, with a foolhardy assist from broadcasters.

As is too often the case, when dollars are threatened or a political advantage is in sight, the Constitution becomes just another bargaining chip.

We had a foreshadowing it was going to be a bad week for the First Amendment when former Attorney General Ed Meese introduced new Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez at a luncheon speech last week.

Meese, you'll remember, formed a commission to investigate indecency in the mid 1980s that helped chill content on radio and TV. And sure enough, Gonzalez proceeded to put cracking down on obscenity in the same category as fighting the war on terror and other violent crime.

Then, Sen. Ted Stevens, chairman of the powerful Commerce Committee, vowed to find a way to regulate cable and satellite indecency. It could come as an amendment to the broadcast-indecency legislation pending in the Senate, tied to DTV legislation, or inserted into a rewrite of the 1996 Telecommunications Act.

Unfortunately, Stevens was seconded by House Commerce Chairman Joe Barton, who said he was on the same page when it came to regulating cable speech. He made his proclamation to a roomful of broadcast executives—and they actually applauded.

The First Amendment didn't have a chance. When Stevens suggested he is amenable to some form of digital multicast

must-carry, broadcasters latched onto the idea of a package deal, suggesting that they might not fight higher indecency penalties on themselves as part of a deal that also included similar penalties on cable and a guarantee of mandatory cable carriage of their digital channels.

The broadcasters' horrendous logic is this: If broadcasters are going to be gagged and bullied, they're in favor of letting Congress or the FCC do it to cable, too. National Association of Broadcasters Joint Board Chairman Phil Lombardo signaled in a speech to the Media Institute several weeks ago that he would settle for restrictive new indecency rules if cable had to abide by them, too.

Even the cable industry is split on the free-speech crackdown. A Disney executive reminded reporters last week that the company does not oppose the indecency crackdown.

It wasn't a Mickey Mouse morality play. What was left unsaid was that the chief alternative to applying indecency prohibitions would be to require cable to provide à la carte tiers that would make subscribers have to actually choose to pay extra to get ESPN. That could severely impact that Disney sports cash cow.

Broadcast and cable executives, or rank-and-filers for that matter, who do not want to become common carriers of pre-chewed government pablum need to stand up for themselves while they still can.

Ironically, they could take their cue last week from exiting FCC Chairman Michael Powell, who stood up for the pay media, opining that legislation was unwise and likely unconstitutional.

The First Amendment is not negotiable. Broadcasters who treat it that way sell out themselves and the public they are supposed to serve.

EDITORIAL

## Support, With an Asterisk

**I**n the children's game called Telephone, a word or phrase whispered into an ear at one end of a line often comes out the other end with results injurious to the original meaning. I fear that may have happened in my exchange with *Broadcasting & Cable*, leading to your editorial "No 'Amen' for House Bill" (2/28, page 52).

But let's begin with our common ground. NRB shares *B&C's* concern over government regulation of content. As George Washington observed, "government is a dangerous servant and a fearful master." And as history amply demonstrates, restrictions on freedom of expression often begin by targeting religious communication. In short, religious broadcasters have a lot at risk in this debate.

Having said that, we do not share the extent of *B&C's* concern over pending legislation aimed at strengthening penalties for indecency violations. While the FCC has been decidedly uneven, and perhaps even unclear, in its en-

forcement of indecency standards, the standards themselves are well-rooted in law, jurisprudence and public policy. The Communications Act, which codifies indecency restrictions, dates back to 1934. And the FCC standards for indecency are well-specified and have been upheld all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court (*FCC v. Pacifica Foundation*).

While we must defend our First Amendment freedoms, we must also acknowledge that our free-speech rights are not absolute. One cannot, for example, shout "Fire!" in a crowded theater, because of the risk of injury from an ensuing panic. One cannot commit treason by communicating national-security information to hostile nations and then claim First Amendment freedoms. Neither can one commit libel or slander and justify such damaging communications by claiming constitutional protection.

Regarding matters of indecency, the U.S. Supreme Court has also carved out an exception to First Amendment concerns because of the very real threat

to the welfare of our nation's children. For this reason, while we must tread very lightly on this subject, there are certain standards respecting what children should not have to see (or hear) that we as a people hold in common. Does this restrict our creative freedom from time to time? Perhaps, but that is a small price to pay to protect children who are unsophisticated consumers of electronic media and lack the cognitive ability to deal with indecency.

In summary, NRB still views government involvement in dealing with indecency as necessary, as long as the enabling legislation is carefully crafted. We remain supportive of the efforts of both Rep. Fred Upton and Sen. Sam Brownback to that end. We continue to believe the best approach is to strengthen the penalties and leave it at that. We will not, however, withhold our support from a good-faith, bipartisan effort to protect children from indecent programming.

*Wright is president/CEO of National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), an international association of Christian communicators with more than 1,500 member organizations.*

**AIRTIME**  
**Dr. Frank Wright**

### News Study Pulled No Punches

Editor: In an editorial ("An Incomplete Guide," 2/21, page 44) that calls into question the very competence of its authors, the editors of this trade publication attacked a research report on local television coverage of politics that I helped direct.

The editorial starts with a bizarre conspiracy theory questioning my integrity because the University of Wisconsin at Madison is "arguably the cradle of anti-consolidation sentiment." It frankly took me a little while to figure that one out. After asking around, I learned that a major national conference did take place on the Madison campus in November of 2003. All sorts of conferences take place here at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and I'm not sure why that one makes us "the cradle of anti-consolidation sentiment."

In terms of my own personal connection to the conference and its agenda, there was none. I was not invited to the conference, did not go to the conference, and did not even know it was taking place. I have no position on media consolidation, and I dare you to find one statement I have ever made—in public, private, teaching or in my published work—about media consolidation. I am a professor in the Department of Political Science and director of the University of Wisconsin NewsLab, which is a research lab with no partisan or policy bent. Finally, none of my graduate-student staff attended the conference or have any position on the issue.

You argue that the research findings are a "sham" because the research only analyzed broadcasts [in 11 markets] aired between 5 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. We studied this time period because these are the hours *broadcasters themselves* suggested [in 1999's Gore Commission report] would best demonstrate their commitment to cover campaign news.

As your editorial points out, we have an obligation to be "fair, accurate and as complete as possible." We have more than met this obligation. The title of our report is "Local News Coverage of the 2004 Campaigns: An Analysis of Nightly Broadcasts in 11 Markets." Do you really believe that we tried to pull the wool over people's eyes with such a title? We have never claimed that our report provides more than an in-depth analysis of these 11 markets. We have never claimed that we were able to capture every single election story aired on every single station.

Anyone who still has doubts about what the study actually did should go to [www.localnewsarchive.org](http://www.localnewsarchive.org).

**Kenneth M. Goldstein**  
Professor, political science  
Director, University of Wisconsin NewsLab

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World Radio History





# Let TV Go to the Circus

The public wants and deserves to see Jacko's trial

**C**alifornia is among 47 states that allow trials to be televised. Yet no TV camera is allowed in the courtroom as Michael Jackson faces child molestation charges in coastal Santa Maria.

The reason? Presiding Superior Court Judge Rodney S. Melville doesn't want Jackson's trial—hold your laughter—to become the circus of the century.

No courtroom camera, no Big Top? Puh-leeeeeze!

As the trial gets under way, it is time to debate again the question of allowing cameras in the courtrooms, a crossroads of the 1st and 6th Amendments, where some believe freedom of expression and the public's right to know collide with a citizen's right to a fair and speedy trial.

This is a valid concern. Yet the Jackson trial should be televised because, simply put, there is wide public interest and no compelling argument against it. There is, however, a big argument in favor of it: public enlightenment.

A camera isn't needed in Jackson's courtroom, one might argue, given that E! Entertainment and Rupert Murdoch's British satellite service BSkyB will provide their own trial accounts by having actors read testimony from the previous day's transcript, just as E! did during O.J. Simpson's civil trial. But although the words will be accurate, missing will be the tone of the testimony and overall courtroom ambience. It is still phony.

As Court TV affirms, telecasts of actual criminal trials have the potential to smarten viewers about a process few of them will ever encounter in person. So the Jackson trial won't be typical? So it will be salacious? So what! It will be what it is.

Rarely do TV cameras inside courtrooms harm high-profile trials. This is true despite the camera's bad rap at O.J. Simpson's criminal trial. Judge Lance Ito lost control of that courtroom, but the cameras were blamed for the chaos. The result was a lingering backlash, causing judges to be more camera-wary in recent years.

These judges need to be reminded that it was *outside* the O.J. courtroom that media kazoos tooted off-key and TV-ready lawyers scored the trial like a sporting event. And the sawdust is hitting the fan once again just outside the Santa Barbara County Courthouse. This is Ringlingville, where the jugglers, trapeze artists and floppy-shoed, fright-wigged, bulb-nosed clowns of media are gathered.

Only a handful of press members are actually inside the 160-seat courtroom. Yet more than 1,000 have signed on for Michael Madness in a coastal town that surely has more homely strip malls per square foot than any other community in California. To say nothing, these days, of satellite dishes, portable toilets for media and newly erected platforms for anchors.

Beside the courthouse is a narrow corridor marked off for 17 satellite trucks. And behind a six-foot security fence are spaces allotted to more than 50 TV crews from as far away as France and Japan, another chain-link barrier separating them from expected throngs of screaming Jackson groupies.

How curious that directly behind the courts complex sits a quaint anomaly known as the Santa Maria Lawn Bowling Club. On a recent sunny morning, elderly bowlers strode across the green in slow motion compared with the frenzied buzz of media abutting them, with sound-bite-desperate reporters pouncing on locals when not quizzing each other.



**HOWARD ROSENBERG**

The Jackson trial (like the Supreme Court) is off-limits to TV.

"I was interviewed by this feller from Norway," said a creaky oldster named Skip. "Or was it Australia?" Not that it matters. A circus is a circus in any language.

There is a long history of media misbehavior at sensational trials, at least as far back as the manic newsreels and brutalizing print headlines surrounding Bruno Hauptmann's 1935 conviction for the murder of Charles Lindbergh's infant son.

Consequently, cameras remain banned from federal criminal trials, and only rarely are federal civil actions televised. The cameras-in-courtrooms paranoia is fed by the U.S. Supreme Court, which stubbornly refuses to allow its hearings to be televised, denying the public an opportunity to witness the nation's highest legal body at work. What are these robed sages hiding?

Opponents of cameras in courtrooms insist they inhibit participants or transform others—witnesses, lawyers, judges and even juries—into actors performing for the lens.

No credible evidence supports the claim that those inside the courtroom either turn off or on in response to the camera. And since when, in fact, do trial attorneys require

a camera to encourage them to vamp? Don't they always do that to impress juries?

Foes of cameras in courtrooms also note that even responsible newscasts air the most titillating sound bites from televised trials, distorting coverage.

But that charge is as applicable to print reporters who haven't space to regurgitate entire trial transcripts and instead risk taking testimony out of context when deciding what to include and omit.

No one advocates barring print reporters from courtrooms. Why discriminate against TV? ■

**So the Jackson trial won't be typical? So it will be salacious? So what! It will be what it is.**

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