



30.3

Million

Viewers who watched Fox's *American Idol* finale

The Next Wave

B&C's annual salute to women who are making a difference in the TV business. **Page 15**



MAY 30, 2005

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Reed Business Information

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SEASON WRAP

Hits and Misses

Desperate Housewives in, *Father of the Pride* out. The 2004-05 TV season delivered a handful of hits and a lot more cast-offs. As networks and advertisers hammer out negotiations for next

fall, here's a revealing look at what worked and what didn't in the season just ended.

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James Denton of *Desperate Housewives*

["Sometimes they refer to us as 'insultants' instead of consultants. At least until they get to know us."]
*Tricia Uhlir,
Frank N. Magid Associates*

An appearance consultant applies makeup to reporter Katie Wiedemann of KCRG Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Photo: Mark Tade/2005 Gazette Communications

News Svengalis At Work

How consultants shape newscasts, from steering coverage to choosing eyeliner

By Deborah Starr Seibel **Page 12**

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World Radio History

B&C WEEK

Where to be and what to watch...

Monday, May 30

For almost everyone else, it's still the great Memorial Day weekend slack-off, but tonight, the hardest-working beauty cham-peen in the pageant business is on the job:

Miss USA 2005 **Chelsea**

Cooley challenges all known galaxies in the 54th annual Miss Universe contest, broadcast live from Bangkok, Thailand (NBC and

Telemundo, 9 p.m. ET). The flacks are touting

"a potential audience of close to a billion viewers" around the world. Of course, the "potential audience" in this country is "close to" 300 million; last year, alas, just 10.4 mil watched the show, down from 12 mil in 2003. *Bonus Olde Timey Stat:* In 1975, 32.7 million Americans (a 50 share!) watched the strut-off on CBS.

Tuesday, May 31

The networks may have been wrong-footed over and over again by technology, but they aren't going to lag behind the curve this time. Darnit, they're getting into podcasting *right now!* Today not only closes out

the last week of May, it also ends that period of human history when the world knew not **John Stossel**, podcaster. In the first week of June, ABC—building its just-launched news and entertainment podcast site—is offering four one-hour "audio specials," including "Real Life Desperate Housewives with ABC's John Stossel." You can listen to the files on your computer, iPod or a less thief-tempting MP3 player.

Wednesday, June 1

Had to happen. First **Bob Schieffer** takes over the *CBS Evening News*, and now he's playing the **Bellagio** in Vegas.

The 51st annual general conference of CBS affiliates invades the hotel today and tomorrow. The agenda includes a presentation of the fall schedule by Viacom co-COO **Leslie Moonves** and CBS Entertainment prez **Nina Tassler**; a bit of music apprecia-

Song of 'The Sopranos'

By **J. Max Robins**

David Chase has the matter-of-fact directness that is the hallmark of those who are truly at home in their creative skin. And the creator of *The Sopranos* had some plain-spoken, instructive things to say about the show and the TV business last week when he was quizzed by *New Yorker* writer Ken Auletta at a breakfast in New York hosted by the Newhouse School of Public Communications.

Asked to talk about his modus operandi, Chase unpacked the oft-told story of how all the broadcast networks passed on *The Sopranos*. But he also deftly analyzed the current pitfalls of prime time. Chase said that one big change from his pre-*Sopranos* days (when he wrote for such distinctive series as *The Rockford Files*, *I'll Fly Away* and *Northern Exposure*) is that the amount of commercial time in

an hour of prime time has more than doubled. "There's a big difference between having 51 minutes and 41 minutes to tell a story," Chase said. Indeed. Sustaining dramatic tension across five acts in an hour seems like a major feat in itself; doing it while being strafed by more commercials than ever verges on the impossible.

Chase also decried the propensity of shows about lawyers, doctors, and cops and robbers to promote a fundamental falsehood about life. "So much of it is a glorification of authority and an attempt to convince the American people that life isn't tragic, that everything works out, and all those cops and all those firemen and all those judges and all those doctors—they really care," he said. Chase's choice for the most honestly wrought character on a major network: Krusty the Clown on *The Simpsons*. "He's about the best you'll find."

It's essential in any TV entertainment, Chase said, for characters to ring true. In *The Sopranos'* first season, HBO executives were unenthusi-

astic about a script that depicted Tony Soprano escorting daughter Meadow on a tour of prospective colleges but making a side trip to murder a mob turncoat. Chase said he was warned: "You'll lose the audience. Tony will no longer be sympathetic." Yeah, right. Chase fought to keep the storyline, he said, knowing that Tony's actions were in sync with the reality of the man. Viewers agreed: The episode remains one of the most memorable in the series.

Chase mentioned something else that helps explain *The Sopranos'* success: He's a musician at heart. Before ever writing a word for TV, he just wanted to play rock 'n' roll. Given the propulsive rhythm of so much of his TV work, it's not surprising that he favored the bass and drums. As a teenager, Chase said, he used to smoke pot in his basement, turn off the sound on his TV and spin pop tunes to the images, mesmerized when he discovered an absurd juxtaposition that nonetheless worked. Years later, *The Sopranos* would specialize in making startling but somehow savvy music choices.

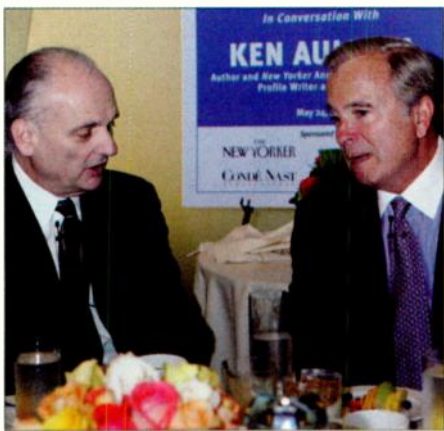
Speaking with Auletta, Chase gave the slightest glimmer of hope that the sixth season of *The Sopranos*, now in production and slated to return next year, might not be its last. The coming season is fully plotted out, he said, but it wouldn't require a drastic overhaul if HBO persuaded him to go another round. Chase's only reluctance to sign up for No. 7 seems to stem from a sense that his watershed creation simply may have run its course.

Whether this is the last season or not, Chase said, he's done with series television, because he could never top his *Sopranos* run.

Meanwhile, Chase offered one other piece of advice for colleagues toiling at the networks: "Take 10% of all that money you spend on development and put it on the shows you think are the most unlikely to succeed." ■

E-mail comments to bcrobins@reedbusiness.com

THE ROBINS REPORT



David Chase (left) with Ken Auletta

tion at the **Celine Dion** show at **Caesars Palace** tonight; and a lunchtime address by Mr. Schieffer tomorrow. The **Bellagio** sports book may want to offer over-and-under betting on how many times **Moonves** is asked by affiliate reps whether he'll consider moving *Everybody Hates Chris* to CBS from UPN if the **Chris Rock** comedy is the gargantuan hit everyone predicts.



Celine Dion

Thursday, June 2

Good-guy journo **John McWethy** takes a break from working the ABC News coal face today to moderate a workshop in **Denver** called "News and Terrorism: Communicating in a Crisis." The **Radio and Television News Directors Foundation** is sponsoring the workshops in 10 cities to help improve coordination between news organizations, first responders and others in the event of a disaster. A great idea, but it's not as if local news stations are novices on the subject: They conduct catastrophe-coverage drills whenever there's a little snow or a really bad thunderstorm.



John McWethy

Friday, June 3

If you live in the eastern **United States** and have a choice pop-culture tchotchke—like, say, a vintage **Beatles** lunchbox or a **Charlie's Angels** game-used tube top—that you'd like to convert into some cash on TV, start packing for **Baltimore**. **Discovery Channel's Pop Nation: America's Coolest Stuff** is taping at the city's convention center tomorrow, before moving on to **Austin, Texas**, **Long Beach, Calif.**, and **Portland, Ore.**



Premise of the show, which premieres in October: Schlep your beloved pop memorabilia in for an expert appraisal, then sell it on the spot, submit it to an online auction or hang onto it in the hope that one day you'll be interviewed about your collecting habits on a TV network's podcast.

—Mark Lasswell

Email info for B&C Week to b&cweek@reedbusiness.com

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

MAY 30, 2005 VOLUME 135 NUMBER 22

FAST TRACK

Fox Wins May Sweeps With 'Idol' Finale

On the strength of the *American Idol* season finale, Fox nabbed its first-ever May-sweeps win in the key 18- to 49-year-old demo. The two-hour Wednesday *Idol 4* finale ranked as the month's second-most-watched program in the demo with a 12.5 rating/31 share. ABC's finale of *Desperate Housewives* earned a 13.4/31.

NBC, meanwhile, plummeted from first place a year ago to a fourth-place finish in May. The network posted losses in various key demos, including a 27% drop in viewers 18-49 to a 3.2 rating, a 29% dip in 18-34s to a 2.7 rating, and a 20% loss in total viewers to an average 9.3 million. (For a season wrap-up, see page 10.)

For the second straight May sweeps, CBS finished second in 18-49. The network is No. 1 in total viewers and in adults 25-54. It rallied several huge finales,

including the series sendoff for *Everybody Loves Raymond* (39.2 million viewers), *CSI's* season finale (30.7 million viewers) and the conclusion of *Survivor: Palau* (20.8 million).

The comeback story continues for a resurgent ABC. The network jumped to third place in 18-49s and gained more than 20% in all the key demos, including a 30% jump in 25-54. *Desperate Housewives'* May 22 finale recorded 30.3 million viewers, making it the most-watched finale of a freshman drama on network TV since *ER* in 1995. ABC's own medical show *Grey's Anatomy* sizzled in its season finale, drawing 22.8 million viewers.

UPN edged out *The WB* in 18-34s, with a 1.5/5 to *The WB's* 1.5/4. *The WB* is off 17% in the demo from last May, while UPN improved 25%.—A.R./A.B.

'Jeopardy!''s Jennings Gets Cable Show

*Jeopardy!'*s answer to Cal Ripken, iron answerman Ken



New *Idol* Carrie Underwood



Tricia Uhlir, communication consultant, Frank N. Magid Associates Inc., page 12

COVER STORY: News Svengalis at Work

How Consultants Shape Newcasts, From Steering Coverage to Choosing Eyeliner
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Jennings, has parlayed his fame as the show's longest-running winner into a game-hosting gig for Comedy Central.

Jennings, a Utah software engineer is at work on a show with game guru Michael Davies (*Who*



Ken Jennings

Wants To Be a Millionaire). The two will begin work on the show late this summer and likely launch it as a strip in late 2005 or early 2006.

Davies brought *Who Wants To Be a Millionaire* to the U.S. He continues to executive-produce the series, now in daytime with Meredith Vieira, who on Friday beat out *Jeopardy!'*s Alex Trebek for a Daytime Emmy for hosting duties.

Viacom-owned Comedy Central is currently in more than 87 million homes.—A.B.

DeLay Slams NBC Over 'Criminal Intent'

House Majority Leader Tom DeLay fired off a letter to NBC Universal Television Group President Jeff Zucker Thursday, citing "a failure of stewardship of our public airwaves," and a "brazen lack of judgment" over a shot taken at him during NBC's *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* finale May 25.

According to a transcript excerpt supplied to B&C by DeLay's office, the episode features a white supremacist who kills an appellate judge and another judge's family.



Rep. Tom DeLay

As the detectives hunt for the killer, one says, "Maybe we should put out an APB for somebody in a Tom DeLay T-shirt."

Saying he assumed it was a response to his comments about Congress' closely monitoring federal judges, an obviously upset DeLay wrote Zucker, "To equate legitimate constitutional inquiry into the role of our courts with a threat of violence against our judges is to equate the First Amendment with terrorism.

"This manipulation of my name and trivialization of the sensitive issue of judicial security," he continued, "represents a reckless disregard for the suffering initiated by recent tragedies and a great

Continued on page 37

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NBC's Shapiro Out, Replacement Watch Begins

Within minutes of news leaking last week that **Neal Shapiro** will be leaving his post as president of NBC News, the guessing game began: Who will replace him? Initially, the buzz centered on three internal candidates—NBC *Nightly News* Executive Producer **Steve Capus**, NBC News Senior VP **Phil Griffin** and MSNBC chief **Rick Kaplan**. But *Flash!* hears that all three are long shots. There was also speculation about **Court TV** chief **Henry Schleiff**'s getting the nod, but that's a reach, too.

One rumor making the rounds is that NBC Sports President **Dick Ebersol** will be tapped for a dual role—just as his mentor, the late **Roone**

Arlledge, famously ran both ABC's news and sports divisions. Does Ebersol have pull on the news side at NBC? Well, he helped put former sports producer **Jim Bell** in his job as executive producer of *Today* last month.

Meanwhile, the official spin continues that Shapiro asked to be let out of his contract. The reality is, he was shown the door by his boss, NBC Universal Television Group President **Jeff Zucker**. Shapiro's star had been fading



Exiting NBC News President Neal Shapiro



TiVo paused more than TV: Nielsen project was stymied.



John Muszynski delighted cable execs last week when he announced Starcom's move away from CPMs.

for more than a year. Major changes at the news division, such as naming Kaplan to run MSNBC and replacing **Tom Touchet** with **Bell**, were made by **Zucker** and presented to Shapiro as done deals. Famously loyal, Shapiro is said to have hoped the network might reciprocate by allowing him to stay on in some capacity until his pact ends in 2006, but that's unlikely to happen.

FLASH!

TiVo Goofs

Your TiVo is a bit like *Big Brother*—a nice and helpful *Big Brother*—tracking everything you record, everything you watch, every commercial you skip. But sometimes TiVo forgets, and that has frustrated **Nielsen Media Research** and TV executives yearning to understand exactly how wide use of digital video recorders might disrupt

the advertising business. Nielsen has been working with TiVo for months to authoritatively report DVR users' viewing behavior, but perfecting the process has taken far longer than anyone expected. Ad executives last week outlined one snag that has slowed the pace. TiVos already regularly phone home to report what shows are recorded, etc., when they update their on-screen guides. So the companies created a "panel" composed of 10,000 homes. TiVo was gathering the data and delivering it to Nielsen—with demographics but no identifying information—for processing.

The problem: Some TiVo models didn't allocate enough capacity to hold viewing data. Heavy users who generate a lot of keystrokes would fill up the data cache, prompting their TiVo box to start deleting older data that hadn't yet been uploaded. TiVo, then, was delivering incomplete

information to Nielsen. And, of course, it's the heavy DVR users who could be the most disturbing to TV networks' advertising model, so their habits are of particular interest.

Nielsen had been providing preliminary TiVo research to networks but suspended operations. "We had to rebuild the panel from scratch," says a Nielsen spokeswoman. The historical data it had already processed is now unreliable. TiVo readily fixed the technical glitch last month.

The research chief for one cable network says he's looking forward to Nielsen and TiVo's getting back on track. "I haven't seen a report out of them in months."

CPM, R.I.P.?

John Muszynski, CEO of ad-buying giant **Starcom**, Chicago, brought down the house at last week's **Cable-television Advertising Bu-**

reau local ad sales conference in **Chicago**. On a panel loaded with some of TV's top media buyers, Muszynski declared that Starcom is abandoning traditional cost-per-thousand (CPM) advertising models based on the delivery of audience impressions. He wants to move toward "pay-for-effectiveness" models that reward media outlets for delivering consumers who are more engaged with his clients' messages. "Hear what I'm saying," he told the audience. "If you engage with consumers, we will pay you for it."

Cable execs love any kind of talk that might tilt money away from the broadcast networks, but this message, coming from the powerful Starcom, was especially significant. They've been preaching the "engagement" mantra for years, but now it looks like the agency may have figured out how to make it work.

Muszynski hinted that the new metrics resemble the kind of "cost-per-lead" generation deals used by the direct-response and online industries. But he wouldn't reveal any other details to *B&C*, saying that he wanted to wait until the current ad-buying season is over. The implication: Some of the deals the agency is negotiating right now may be using the new approach.

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TOD CLUB
WBFF/F

0.5

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DIC KIDS' NETWORK



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MARQUEE MOVIES

THE TWILIGHT ZONE

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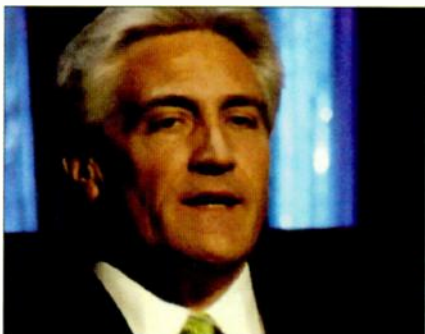
In the Eye of the Upfront Storm

After the rush of presentations, the industry waits for the market to "break"

The merriment of upfront week is over. The fall schedules have been set. The champagne is flat, and executives have put away Polaroids, taken at network parties, of them grinning with the *Desperate Housewives* or the latest winner of *Survivor*.

Now the buyers have moved on to the serious business that is the entire reason networks spend millions of dollars on their elaborate presentations: How will they commit nearly \$20 billion in advertising during the next TV season?

Like the first few minutes after a Super Bowl kickoff, the initial cacophony has quieted down to a tense silence as the big buying agencies call the networks, nosing around on price and program availabilities. They're still detailing the needs of their clients: major car companies, fast-food restaurants and retailers that need to secure air time.



President of ABC Sales and Marketing
Mike Shaw

All this silent strategizing and squeezing is part of the big buildup. At some point, the Byzantine upfront market "breaks," and broadcast networks will rush to sign deals, locking up commitments for billions of dollars' worth of business perhaps in just a few days.

And the first cracks in the wall showed up immediately. By last Thursday, ABC was writing business with advertisers. As for other networks, buyers and sellers reported that upfront talks were slow, that phones and BlackBerry were not yet beeping.

If ABC is actually breaking early, that doesn't mean all the other networks will move as quickly. Last year, the market broke within days after the broadcast presentations. But the process stretched into July.

Mike Shaw, ABC president of sales and marketing, wouldn't comment, and a spokeswoman said he'll say little until he has his upfront business wrapped up.

ABC's deals didn't immediately electrify the market. An executive at another Big Four broadcast network said at mid-

week that few agencies had completed even the most basic stage of the negotiating process: submitting their clients' budgets. "We've seen maybe 20% so far," the executive said at midweek.

Cable executives report a similar situation. At this point last year, major cable networks had wrapped up major deals, sealing a couple of billion dollars' worth of sales. But so far this year, only midsize agencies have submitted budgets and cut a handful of deals.

"No one's in a rush," says the ad-sales chief for one major cable-network group. "People have come to us wanting to do early deals, but not at a price we want to do it."

ABC's Shaw said recently that his network doesn't even begin price negotiations until it sees nearly all of its clients' budgets. Advertisers and their buying agencies lay out a plan for each individual brand, specifying the size and type of audiences they need to reach and the timing of their campaigns through the year. ABC then matches the plans against its model of the 30,000 or so prime time spots the network sells for the year, each individually coded with expected audience delivery and the amount of revenue it generates. Network sales reps and analysts balance the plans against the clients, favoring those paying the most or that have the best relationship or ordered the same show last year.

ABC is asking for the biggest gains in price per spot this year. Its ratings are up a dramatic 16%, and the network is seeking a 5% hike in average cost per thousand (CPM) viewers, which would raise its average revenue per spot 21%. Other networks were inclined to sit back, letting ABC set the pricing bar high and help them get higher prices themselves.

NBC's strategy is different. The network comes into the market with a 17% decline in audience, 10 points more than the network had expected after *Friends* went off the air last year. The network's plan has been to wait until ABC, CBS and No. 1 network Fox were negotiating hard, looking for advertisers resisting their price demands to

come to NBC for a little relief and leverage to negotiate with the others.

NBC is trying desperately to keep its premium. Because the network was No. 1 for so long and its audience tends to be more upscale and urban, it has long set its CPM about 5% higher than other networks'. NBC Ad Sales President Keith Turner is working hard not to give that price up now that NBC has fallen to fourth place.

After closing deals before broadcast-ers even got out of the gate last year, cable networks won't likely have the same clout this year. Still, they'll post bigger

gains than broadcasters.

There are many other parts of the upfront-market equation—daytime, late-night and evening-news dayparts, Spanish-language, syndication—but the biggest factor is broadcast prime time, which Merrill Lynch media analyst Jessica Reif Cohen expects to grow just a hair to \$9 billion. (Other analysts forecast a decline.) Cable prime time is the next largest and is expected to rise 11% to \$7.3 billion.

One network executive is frustrated by the flurry of inquiries from Wall Street and media about talks so far. "You people are trying to call the Super Bowl, but it's only one minute into the first quarter," the executive says. I noted that Super Bowl pre-game coverage starts at noon for a 6:30 p.m. kickoff. In a game with this much at stake, you have to anticipate every number. ■

E-mail comments to
jhiggins@reedbusiness.com

MONEY TALKS

By John M. Higgins

REVENUE FORECAST

	TOTAL (MILLION)	CHANGE 2004-05	TOTAL (MILLION)	CHANGE 2005-06
NBC	\$2,800	-3%	\$2,410	-14%
CBS	\$2,350	+8%	\$2,590	10%
Fox	\$1,500	+0%	\$1,530	+2%
ABC	\$1,250	-17%	\$1,510	+21%
The WB	\$600	-15%	\$600	0%
UPN	\$400	57%	\$450	+13%
Big Four prime time	\$7,900	-2%	\$8,040	+2%
Big Six prime time	\$8,900	-2%	\$9,090	+2%
Daytime	\$930	+4%	\$930	0%
Late night	\$670	+2%	\$700	+5%
News	\$520	+1%	\$500	-4%
Major broadcast	\$11,020	-1%	\$11,220	+2%
Cable	\$6,600	+18%	\$7,300	+11%
Syndication	\$2,750	+15%	\$2,890	+5%
Kids	\$910	+12%	\$970	+7%
Univision	\$810	+13%	\$930	+15%
Telemundo	\$300	+28%	\$320	+7%
Total upfront	\$22,450	+8%	\$23,690	+6%

SOURCE: Merrill Lynch analyst Jessica Reif Cohen

THE B&C

WEEK OF MAY 20-26

THE B&C 10

WEEK YTD

0.5% -3.6%

BROADCAST TV GROUPS

WEEK YTD

-0.7% -9.5%

CABLE OPERATORS

WEEK YTD

0.0% -4.1%

RADIO

WEEK YTD

-0.8% -9.3%

	CLOSE	WEEK	YTD
Dow Jones	10537.60	0.4%	-2.3%
Nasdaq	2071.24	1.4%	-4.8%

THE B&C 10

CLOSE WEEK YTD

Cablevision	\$25.65	-0.5%	3.0%
Clear Channel	\$30.14	-1.4%	-10.0%
Comcast Corp.	\$31.34	-0.2%	-4.6%
Disney	\$27.80	-0.5%	0.0%
EchoStar	\$29.11	-2.0%	-12.5%
Hearst-Argyle	\$24.99	0.0%	-5.3%
News Corp.	\$16.66	4.1%	-13.2%
Time Warner	\$17.57	-1.0%	-9.6%
Tribune	\$36.44	-1.2%	-13.5%
Viacom	\$35.34	2.0%	-4.7%

GOOD WEEK

Tivo	\$6.94	29.0%	18.2%
Sonicblue	\$0.00	25.0%	0.0%
Charter	\$1.18	13.5%	-47.3%
Young Bcstg.	\$5.99	11.2%	-43.2%
Paxson	\$0.74	8.8%	-46.4%

BAD WEEK

Pegasus	\$6.30	-14.6%	-31.9%
Granite	\$0.19	-9.5%	-53.7%
Knology Inc.	\$1.92	-5.9%	-50.8%
Beasley Bcstg.	\$16.38	-4.8%	-6.6%
New York Times	\$31.64	-4.6%	-22.5%

TIVO SOARS

+29%

Tivo's stock jumped as it posted much stronger financial results than expected for the first quarter. The DVR maker trimmed losses to just \$1.5 million from \$9 million during the same quarter last year. The company is holding costs relatively low even as it adds subscribers at a brisk pace.

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STATION TO STATION

Local News,
Now 'Showing'
On Your iPod

By Allison Romano

With Americans spending less time at home, a handful of stations nationwide have begun offering news to go with "podcasts," audio versions of newscasts that can be downloaded for free to an iPod, MP3 player or computer.

"We are looking for ways to reach audiences that may not be available for traditional newscasts," says Frank Whittaker, VP of news for NBC-owned WMAQ Chicago.

The high-tech feature is another stab at developing new business as local broadcasters hunt furiously for new revenue streams. To that end, stations are launching secondary digital channels that provide continuous news, weather and traffic. A few dozen offer their local news on-demand with cable operators to reach more viewers and, eventually, to attract more advertising dollars.

Podcasting is an outgrowth of stations' emphasis on their Web sites, where many archive video and stream newscasts. With podcasts, TV stations are even willing to abandon their most distinguishing feature—video—to offer portable, but just audio, content.

The major target for stations' podcasting is the hordes of young Americans devoted to Apple's iPods. The digital device is still a relatively new product, but sales are brisk. Through fourth quarter 2004, Apple had sold more than 10 million.

As sales multiply, content providers are dreaming of ways to get their programming on the trendy white gadget.

In the past several years, podcasts of music and opinion have sprouted up. It is only recently, however, that mainstream, old-media companies started hopping on the trend. NBC News and ABC News, for example, unveiled plans last week to podcast segments from their news.

Surprisingly, KFVS, in the not very media-centric Paducah, Ky.-Cape Girardeau, Mo., market, was the nation's

Fox's Greatest Hit

'Idol' propels network to first-ever 18-49 season victory

By Allison Romano

For the first time ever (but as expected for weeks), Fox finished the 2004-05 TV season as ratings champ in the coveted 18-49 demographic. *American Idol*, of course, was the network's most valuable player, propelling Fox from a fourth-place standing before *Idol* premiered in January to the top spot when the season officially closed last Wednesday.

How big was *Idol*? So big that Fox didn't even need last week's two season-finale episodes to cinch its win. It started the week with a 4.1 rating/11 share and finished with the same numbers when sweeps ended on May 25.

Idol gets the headlines, but new Fox Entertainment President Peter Liguori says other shows helped Fox start putting itself back together. One major success was *24*, which increased 20% even though it no longer had *Idol* as a lead-in. The new beneficiary of that lead-in was medical drama *House*, which became a surprise hit. Then animated favorite *Fam-*

ily Guy returned and prospered. "That's really the foundation of how a winning season was bred," Liguori says.

But the race went down to the wire, with the spread between the winner and suddenly fourth-place NBC narrower than it has been in years. Fox edged out CBS' 4.0/11 with 18-49s. ABC improved on its fourth-place finish last year, moving to third with a 3.7/10. NBC tumbled from the top with a 3.5/9, compared with last year's 4.3 rating, according to Nielsen. NBC, coming into the season, had been tops in 18-49s for eight of the past nine years. (It lost to ABC in 2000-01.)

CBS was the winner in adults 25-54 and total viewers, averaging a 4.9/12 in 25-54s and 12.92 million total viewers. Fox and ABC tied for second in 25-54s, followed by NBC. Fox also nearly tied ABC for second in total viewers, averaging 10.04 million to ABC's 10.05 million. In 18-34s, Fox came out ahead, followed by ABC. ■

Additional reporting by Anne Becker

2004-05 SEASON ROUNDUP

WHAT WORKED

ABC's Sunday night: With *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, *Desperate Housewives* (left) and *Grey's Anatomy*, "ABC became the hot place to be on Sunday nights," says Shari Ann Brill, VP/director of programming for Carat.



Blue-chip reality: Of Nielsen's top 20 for the season, five were established reality franchises: *American Idol*, *Survivor*, *The Apprentice* and *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, along with flourishing *The Amazing Race*.

Psychic and thriller dramas: ABC's island thriller *Lost*, NBC's psychic drama *Medium* and Fox's *House* riveted viewers. Success breeds imitators: Next fall's schedule includes seven new dramas with supernatural twists.

WHAT DIDN'T

New sitcoms: The networks failed to produce even one breakout comedy hit and had some notorious failures, including CBS' *Listen Up!* and NBC's animated stab *Father of the Pride*. Two high-concept but ratings-challenged shows, Fox's *Arrested Development* and NBC's *The Office*, managed to survive.

Humiliation TV: Viewers were turned off by mean-spirited reality shows and

anything that smelled cynical, such as CBS' short-lived *The Will* and even ABC's *The Bachelor*, which was particularly catty this season.

Boxing shows: Punches starting flying last year after NBC unveiled its Mark Burnett-produced *The Contender* and Fox followed suit with its version, *The Next Great Champ* (right). Nielsen's decision: They both lost. *The Next Great Champ* posted dismal ratings, and *The Contender* managed a small though loyal following. Asked what went wrong, NBC Universal Television Group President Jeff Zucker offered, "At the end of the day, it was about boxing."



MIXED RESULTS

Spln-offs: Despite decent ratings, NBC cancelled *Law & Order: Trial by Jury*, its fourth Dick Wolf drama. *Friends* offspring *Joey* steadily lost ratings throughout the season. It is getting a tune-up for this fall. CBS had better luck with its *CSI: NY*, which out-rated NBC's original *Law & Order* on Wednesday nights. ABC's follow-up to *The Practice*, David E. Kelley's *Boston Legal*, performed well, but it will be tested this fall when it moves to Tuesdays at 10 without *Desperate Housewives* as a lead-in.

first station to podcast. Late last year, the CBS affiliate in the nation's 79th-largest market a began making its 5 p.m. news available for downloading. Now



Jamy Pombo's Web-site feature for WCVB can be downloaded.

big-market stations are jumping in. WMAQ offers 22 different podcasts each week, including a custom five-minute newscast hosted by two of its Web-site editors, its morning newscast, health reports and entertainment news from NBC-produced *Access Hollywood*.

The content menu varies by market. WCVB Boston doesn't offer any newscasts for downloading. Instead, it sticks to features, including *The Click*, technology reporter Jamy Pombo's daily dish on interesting Web sites, as well as medical news and consumer reports. "We're trying to observe how people will use the feature," says Assistant News Director Neil Ungerleider. "Right now, we're concentrating on content that has a shelf life."

WCVB sister Hearst-Argyle station WBAL Baltimore, however, is pushing its newscasts. It makes the morning, 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. news available for downloading, as well as health and consumer reports. Scripps Howard-owned WCPO Cincinnati similarly repurposes its newscasts.

"If the demand is high enough, then maybe we'll do some original programming in the future," says WCPO Internet Director Liz Foreman. She says she will be pleased with several thousand downloads a week.

These pioneering stations are just beginning to promote their podcasts. And they need sponsors. "Advertisers see it as groundbreaking. It is something new and hip," says Whittaker, whose podcasts still run without commercials.

So far, stations say they haven't had to invest much in the new feature. They use existing staff and technology to create and maintain the podcasts.



How Advertisers Can Learn To Love the DVR

OMD's DeSocio tells CAB panel his agency has a plan **By Joe Mandese**

What is happening in television now is nothing less than "a personal-media revolution," says David DeSocio, director of strategic marketing for the U.S. division of OMD New York, the world's largest media-buying agency. And OMD, he made clear at the Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau's local ad sales conference in Chicago last week, wants to be one of the revolutionaries.

OMD is now embracing digital video recorders (DVRs) and asking a provocative question: What if the commercials played over TiVo-like units were designed to deal with consumers' fast-forward tendencies?

While he declined to be specific, DeSocio said that, over the next few weeks, OMD will begin testing a new type of media buy that would deliver what he termed "fast-forward commercials," or ads that would appear in conventional speed while DVR users are zipping through those scheduled in the recorded TV programming.

"EMBRACE FRAGMENTATION"

"We're telling [advertisers] to embrace fragmentation," DeSocio says, something they and the agencies have been struggling to work around in years past.

OMD's DVR mellowness is especially remarkable considering that, by OMD's own math, DVRs are now in about 10% of U.S. households and that DVR users tend to skip through most of the commercials they are exposed to.

As much as that is challenging the

way media agencies like OMD operate, DeSocio said, it also is creating new opportunities to think "beyond the 30 [-second commercial]" and develop new ways of engaging consumers. The best way, he said, was by delivering the kind of relevant advertising messages that DVRs and VOD can afford, aligning the content of advertising messages with the content individual consumers are accessing.

DeSocio wouldn't give details on how OMD is developing the means to deliver ads to consumers who are "in the avoidance mode," as DeSocio refers to viewers who fast-forward their DVRs through commercials.

But he alluded to techniques being developed by TiVo that would run audio ad messages, superimpose a "billboard" ad or run commercials in a picture-in-picture screen while viewers are in fast-forward mode.

Otherwise, the CAB crowd was clearly just enjoying the sheer force of ideas behind what cable advertising can do that broadcast can't. "It's the Internet on steroids," proclaimed Larry Fischer, president of media sales at Time Warner Cable, dur-

ing a particularly enthusiastic session in which the industry's top local cable sales executives spoke not just about how they were managing the sales of local cable advertising avails, but also about their migration into "new media."

MADISON AVENUE QUESTIONS ITSELF

"It's the new Internet," chimed in Anne Ragsdale, VP of advertising, Bright House Networks Group.

What Fischer, Ragsdale and their colleagues were touting during the CAB conference's President's Panel wasn't so much their ability to deliver local advertising messages to viewers of conventional cable programming, as it was about new ways they are exploiting their set-tops to deliver digital, consumer-controlled media, including DVRs, video-on-demand (VOD) and broadband access to the Web.

Those emerging technologies, they suggested, are transforming the way cable operators think of their

relationships with both consumers and advertisers, at a time when Madison Avenue is also readdressing its own fundamental business model. Things

are changing as consumers gain control over the programming and commercial content they are exposed to via the Internet, DVRs and VOD.

Even though the OMD still spends 66% of its clients' advertising budgets on conventional TV advertising, and only 3% on new digital media, DeSocio said, the agency has radically shifted its approach to media planning.

NOT A THREAT

There was more news about DVRs during the three-day cable sales conference: During the opening session, Ed Gordon, director of local and affiliate research at ESPN, revealed findings of a study that indicated that DVRs are not nearly the threat the industry's "Chicken Littles" have been making it out to be.

Among other things, Gordon said, the study found that so-called late adopters—people who have not yet acquired a DVR—may not be interested in the devices in any case. More than half (57%) of the households that were given DVRs as part of ESPN's study returned their DVRs before the research was completed, citing reasons ranging from installation hassles to such problems as the DVR's clashing with their home furnishings.

But Madison Avenue is taking it for granted that devices like DVRs and technologies like VOD and broadband access are fundamentally altering the way consumers access and control media content.

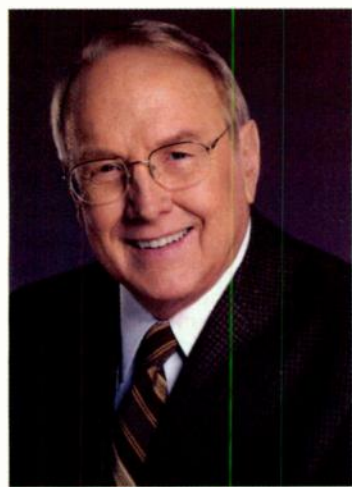
Indeed, DeSocio says, OMD has a name for these new hubs for content: The ad agency dubs them the 21st century "media concierges." ■

AD INFINITUM By Joe Mandese



David DeSocio: No DVR fear

"We're telling [advertisers] to embrace fragmentation."
DAVID DESOCIO, OMD



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News Svengalis

HOW CONSULTANTS SHAPE NEWSCASTS, FROM STEERING THE COVERAGE TO CHOOSING EYELINER. BY DEBORAH STARR SEIBEL

“YOU’RE JUST NOT AS FABULOUS AS YOU could be or need to be.”

Usually, informing an attractive and ambitious young TV reporter that she suffers from a fabulousness deficit might cause bruised feelings or invite an angry reply. But when the edict comes from appearance consultant Katherine Carey, reporter Katie Wiedemann takes it in as readily as any of Carey’s other blunt critiques. After all, Wiedemann’s bosses at KCRG Cedar Rapids, Iowa, have hired the company Carey represents, Frank N. Magid Associates, specifically for this sort of assessment—and for Magid’s detailed advice on how to fix the problem.

In a tableau repeated countless times in markets across the country, the appearance consultant sits with the TV journalist in the news director’s office, watching a playback of the reporter’s recent work and pitilessly dissecting it. Wiedemann, 24, runs KCRG’s one-person Dubuque, Iowa, bureau; she shoots, writes and edits her own stories for the 5, 6 and 10 p.m. newscasts. Despite this total-immersion job description, there is no getting around Wiedemann’s lack of experience. She’s just a year into the business, and it shows on a tape of her report the day before: a live shot from the middle of a car dealership on how gas prices are affecting sales of monster SUVs.

Wiedemann’s long red hair—whipping in her face as

she talks to the camera—has got to go, Carey says. The reporter’s drab, shapeless wardrobe: Change it. Makeup: Find the right kind, learn how to apply it, and use it—religiously. Wiedemann is pretty, Carey says, but she’s not camera-ready. “When stations send for somebody like me, it means two things,” Carey tells her pupil. “It means that they care about you and want to keep you around. They want to invest in your look and make sure

“If there was a terrible tragedy, would you say to yourself, Oh, my God, I wore the wrong thing that day?”

KATHERINE CAREY,
FRANK N. MAGID ASSOCIATES

you have all the tools you need to do a great job. But it also means this is the last chance for romance: You may not have a job if you don’t grasp these concepts.”

Wiedemann hangs on Carey’s every word.

Although consultants are now a behind-the-scenes fixture in TV news, Magid Associates traces its history to what is generally acknowledged as the birth of the news-consulting industry: the moment in the

1970s when Frank Magid, a former professor of sociology at the University of Iowa, decided to start offering TV news operations advice as an offshoot of his product-marketing research services. Magid canvassed local populations, asking what viewers liked and disliked about the local news and the people presenting it. Ultra-competitive but harried station managers and news directors, Magid found, welcomed his reports.

Watching the television watchers

In the beginning, news consultants’ mission was largely to advise stations on how to design better sets and make their anchors more appealing. But over the years, their role expanded to the point where, in most markets, it’s not just the look of the news that’s under the microscope, it’s the content: types of stories, number of stories per half-hour, transitions, live shots, graphics, happy talk.

“Americans are expert at watching television,” says John Quarterer, Magid VP of research and consultation innovation. “But we’re expert at watching them watch television. That’s our job.”

It’s also the job of other industry heavyweights, such as Broadcast Image Group, Audience Research & Development, and Crawford, Johnson & Northcott, as well as many smaller operations and the in-house news-groom-



Clockwise from far left: Appearance consultant Katherine Carey works with KCRG reporter Katie Wiedemann; communication consultant Tricia Uhlir films KCRG anchor/reporter Diane Pathieu; Katherine Carey; Uhlir discusses her findings with KCRG News Director Becky Lutgen Gardner.



here and abroad. In the U.S., Magid has exclusive consulting contracts in about 120 of the 210 Nielsen markets, charging annual fees of about \$28,000 in small markets (see box) and \$50,000 in midsize markets. Even more lucrative is the market research offered to the larger players.

But despite consultants' now thorough penetration of the business, there is also a long-standing wariness within the industry of news coaches who, in

their zeal for contract renewals, tend to grab whatever fires up the ratings in one market and tout it to stations across the board. "You don't want them to come in and say, 'This is sweeping the country, and you should do it, too.' It works against your localism," says Steve Schwaid, VP of news for NBC's station group. "But there is value in the external advice. It's like calling your mom and dad and saying, 'What are your thoughts?'" Only a few of NBC's stations work with consultants on research, he says, and there are no major projects or group-wide consulting deals.

Getting "Magidized"

Magid is hardly oblivious to local market demands. KCRG News Director Becky Lutgen Gardner credits the company with engineering the station's climb from third place a decade ago to its current top spot in the ratings. MAGID research essentially said, "It's the weather, stupid. Get the satellite truck, get Doppler Radar, employ no fewer than four meteorologists (a staggering number for a market of this size), and, whatever you do, stay on the air until the last vestige of any bad weather has passed. KCRG became the go-to news channel for the 21 eastern-Iowa counties the station covers, an area prone to severe snowstorms and tornados.

Magid takes a particular interest in KCRG's fortunes; the station is located only about 10 minutes from the company's headquarters in Marion, Iowa. Since Magid consultants and researchers live in the area, the station has become something of a testing facility for the country's best-known news consultants. KCRG signs up Magid for a certain number of consultations per year, but the company's consultants also drop by to review tape with Gardner at no charge.

"When I came here four years ago," Gardner says, "I thought, 'Oh, oh, I'm going to Magid country.' But it's been a fun relationship. I get pulled in so many directions, I don't always have time to say, 'I don't like your hair or the way you did that live shot.'"

And so, over two days this spring, Wiedemann and a half dozen of her reporter and anchor colleagues were "Magidized"—that is, given 90-minute to three-hour private sessions with the appearance and communication consultants. The cost is on a sliding scale depending on the length of the station's contract (typically one to three years), market size, number of visits per year and whether the station signs up for any or all of Magid's services, including news, talent and appearance coaching, and research analysis.

Although both parties decline to disclose what KCRG pays for Magid's services, a typical station its size could easily spend tens of thousands of dollars annually on consultants. For its money, KCRG will get four or five on-site consulting days from a Magid team comprising overall news consultant Quarderer, communication consultant Tricia Uhlir, and—at an

à la carte fee—appearance consultant Carey.

Is it worth it? "Yes," says Gardner. "If you get too complacent, too comfortable, that's when the station's numbers start to sag."

But that doesn't mean the consultants are greeted with open arms. "Sometimes," says Uhlir, who spends much of her life on airplanes traveling to 15 different markets, "they refer to us as 'insultants' instead of consultants. At least, until they get to know us." Indeed, advising professionals about their appearance can be tricky. In January, The Weather Channel was sued for age and sex discrimination by a fired female meteorologist who cited an in-house seminar that critiqued the way on-air talent looked.

What not to wear

In a KCRG conference room with a wall of playback monitors, Uhlir counsels reporter John Franzman, a 27-year station veteran. "In the beginning," she says later, "I know that they're sitting there, smiling politely and thinking: Oh, God, how did I land this as my fate today? The Magid woman."

But Uhlir has a way of disarming even the most skeptical on-air talent. After a few minutes of chatting, she asks Franzman, "Has anyone talked to you about demonstrative gesturing?" The sense of being on TV, "in a box," she says, is so constricting that "we stop using our hands." He agrees to try using a lavalier microphone more often in the field.

Sometimes, the juxtaposition of image consulting and the sober aspects of news events can be jarring, as when Carey talks to Wiedemann about wardrobe selection. "Who would think that a terrible thing would happen in a small place like Oklahoma City, where they had all the bombing?" Carey says. "You have to ask yourself: If there was a terrible tragedy in my area and that footage went all around the country—which could very well happen—would you be embarrassed? Would you be ashamed? Would you say to yourself, Oh, my God, I wore the wrong thing that day?"

If a high-priced anchor wears the wrong thing, others at the station might shy away from mentioning it, but that's part of Magid's job. Carey recalls a female anchor who liked to wear an expensive suit, unaware that its tight pattern vibrated on camera. "I pointed out that I couldn't hear a word she was saying because I was so distracted by what she was wearing. And when she saw it on the monitor, she was horrified."

Although Carey works most often with women, she has plenty of advice for male on-air talent, too. She critiques KCRG's 10 p.m. anchor, Bruce Aune, advising a younger-looking haircut and a switch to three-button suits from dated-looking two-buttons. "You're something of a chick magnet," she says. "You might as well work it."

Carey has taken over KCRG's women's bathroom, her large suitcase bulging with what seems a million lipsticks, eye shadows, blushers and the all-important concealers. She instructs Wiedemann in trying to look like herself (and not, as the reporter dreams, like NBC's Katie Couric). The application of subtle lining and color make Wiedemann's eyes suddenly prominent. Her cheeks glow with warm blush. But the reporter worries that she won't be able to duplicate the effect. Carey whips up a diagram and a list of products to buy. Confident at last, Wiedemann smiles. ■

Additional reporting by Allison Romano

it Work

ing operations of some major-market stations. Crawford, Johnson & Northcott was founded a few years ago by ex-Magid executives who left the company after founder Frank Magid (who was inducted into the B&C Hall of Fame in 2003) turned the reins over to his son, Brent.

Though facing stiffer competition than ever, Magid Associates remains a worldwide operation, working in dozens of countries, maintaining a slew of offices

MAGID CASE STUDY

SMALL SOUTHERN MARKET (150TH RANGE)

MAGID FEE: \$28,000

SERVICES:

- Two visits yearly by Magid consultant
- Regular review of station's news tapes
- Brand management and consultation (Doppler 7 Radar, Live at 5, etc.)
- Monthly critique of newscasts
- Two talent searches yearly (for on-air talent)
- Sharing ideas from other markets
- Magid research on this station's market

EXTRA FEES:

- Appearance coaching
- Magid Institute Workshops (1-3 days at Magid headquarters in Marion, Iowa, for intensive coaching sessions for anchors, reporters and news directors)

"You don't want them to come in and say, 'This is sweeping the country, and you should do it too.'"

STEVE SCHWAID, NBC STATION GROUP, ON NEWS CONSULTANTS

WASHINGTON WATCH

Bush Eyes Barrales for FCC

Senior White House official **Ruben Barrales** is the latest **Oval Office** favorite on the short list for one of the two open FCC seats.

Barrales, 42, director of inter-governmental affairs, is **President Bush's** liaison to state governments and other local officials. Barrales is Bush's likely alternate choice if former Texas utility regulator **Rebecca Klein** turns down a commission seat, say industry sources following the FCC commissioner hunt. Klein, who is Hispanic, has long been viewed as Bush's pick for the FCC, but she may instead choose to become the nation's power czar as chair of the **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**.

If Klein chooses FERC, Barrales would allow the president to still appoint a Hispanic to the TV industry's main regulatory agency, which currently has four white members and no racial minorities.

Barrales is the son of Mexican immigrants. Before joining the **White House** in 2001, he was CEO



Ruben Barrales

of **Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network**, an organization promoting the high-tech region's businesses. In 1992, Barrales became the first Latino elected to the San Mateo County board of supervisors.

The other open FCC slot appears guaranteed to **Christine Kurth**, telecom aide to **Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Ted Stevens**.

Lawmakers Back Trust Fund for Public Broadcasting

A bipartisan group of lawmakers is fighting to build a trust fund for public broadcasting from some of the proceeds from upcoming auctions of TV channels and other items in the communications spectrum.

Bills introduced in both the **Senate** and **House** would create a "Digital Opportunities Investment Trust" that would be used to help stations roll out distance learning and other new services made possible by the transition to digital

Dual Carriage Revisited

Draft bill sets digital transition for 2009 **By Bill McConnell**



Rep. Joe Barton wants a hard DTV deadline.

House Commerce Committee Chairman **Joe Barton** (R-Texas) has reignited one of the bitterest fights of the transition to digital TV: whether cable operators can be forced to carry both analog and digital versions of a local station's signal.

The renewed battle over cable carriage is just one of several disputes he must resolve before he has enough votes to pass a DTV bill though his committee, but it is likely to be the most contentious. Last week, Barton unveiled a draft of legislation that would set a "hard deadline" for the switch to all-digital broadcasting, requiring broadcasters to shut off their old analog channels Dec. 31, 2008.

Under current law, no station has to shut off analog service until 85% of the homes in its market are equipped for DTV, an open-ended standard unlikely to be completed nationwide until 2015 or later. Recognizing the need for legislation, Senate Commerce Committee Chairman **Ted Stevens** (R-Alaska) said his side of Capitol Hill will begin working on its version of DTV legislation after returning from the Memorial Day break on June 3.

BROADCASTER OPPOSITION

The House bill's cable-carriage provision could push a cable operator's programming capacity to the limit by obligating it to carry two versions of every station in its market, a digital one and an analog one. The "dual must-carry" provision was added to soften broadcasters' opposition to an accelerated DTV deadline.

Winning carriage rights has been little more than broadcasters' pipe dream since January 2001, when the FCC "tentatively" concluded that making cable operators carry two versions

of channels would unjustly force operators to bump some cable networks from their lineups. The FCC conclusively rejected a dual-carriage mandate four months ago.

Broadcasters insist that cable operators must carry both digital and analog signals until the DTV switch is completed, to encourage as many viewers as possible to buy digital sets now while not disenfranchising viewers who can't afford or don't yet want to buy a digital set.

"Allowing cable systems to 'down-convert' to analog, as long as they also carry stations' digital signals, will mean that subscribers with only analog sets won't be cut off," says **Jim Yager**, CEO of **Barrington Broadcasting**, representing the **National Association of Broadcasters**. "That's good for consumers."

CABLE'S PROPOSAL

Cable operators, on the other hand, say dual carriage would be a waste of their channel capacity. Rather than carry two signals for every station in town, cable operators want to provide dual carriage for top-rated stations only. Less popular stations would have to settle for carriage in one format or the other.

The cable industry thought its victory was sealed in February when the FCC rejected dual carriage. The commission also turned down broadcasters' demand that operators carry all of the six or so "multicast" programming streams that they can cram into their digital transmissions.

Dual carriage would impose an "untenable burden" on cable operators and programmers, says **Kyle McSarrow**, president of the **National Cable & Telecommunications Association**. Barton's legislation aims to overturn cable operators' FCC victory by making it nearly impossible for them to deny dual carriage to any station.

To get his committee's Democrats on board, Barton must agree to subsidize the converter boxes necessary to keep consumers' analog sets working in the all-digital world. He has favored a minimal approach costing no more than \$500 million for one box to each low-income household.

"We should not take action to shut off millions of television sets without a workable remedy for consumers," say Reps. **John Dingell** (D-Mich.) and **Ed Markey** (D-Mass.), respectively the ranking Democrats on the House Commerce Committee and Telecommunications Subcommittee. ■

Broadcasters insist cable must carry both digital and analog signals until switch is completed.

broadcasting. It would also be earmarked for digitizing information in libraries, museums and universities.

John Lawson, president of the **Association of Public Television Stations**, has been pushing for the creation of a trust that would be roughly \$500 million, but by slating 30% of the billions in revenue expected to be generated by spectrum auctions, the legislation could ensure a dramatically larger fund. The money would not replace the annual appropriation to public broadcasting from **Congress**.

Paxson, NBC Row Lands at FCC

The fight between **Paxson Communications** and business partner **NBC Universal** may now be up to the FCC to decide.

Paxson last week complained to the FCC that NBC is trying to take "illegal control" of the 57-station TV group rather than accept financially struggling Paxson's abrupt decision to cancel their joint sales agreement and rethink its programming strategy.

Paxson is seeking a declaratory ruling from the FCC's Enforcement Bureau, barring NBC from influencing Paxson programming. Paxson also asked the agency to impose "whatever additional monetary forfeitures it deems appropriate."

NBC says Paxson's complaint has no merit.

Paxson's petition is a reaction to NBC's May 12 request for binding arbitration by private negotiators to determine whether Paxson violated their 1999 joint sales agreement with NBC.

Deaf Deride 'Idol' Caption Snafu

Looking to bolster its case for tougher FCC captioning rules, **The National Association of the Deaf** is expressing "disappointment" with **Fox's American Idol** for displaying incorrect voting phone numbers in captioning during the May 10 singing competition.

Fox, which had problems posting correct phone numbers earlier in the season, concedes that it put the wrong phone number in closed captioning for every contestant on that episode but one. However, Fox said, the phone number, available to all viewers on screen, was correct. (Fox says lip readers would have gotten the correct number as well.)

The Next Wave

B&C's Annual Salute to Women Who Make a Difference

Christy Kwon Kreisberg
Samie Kim Sarah Fain

Liz Craft Tyra Banks
Toby Graf Lisa Hackner

Shonda Rhimes Kathleen Finch
Lara Logan Anne Zehren
Gina Mazzaferri

Every year, B&C picks the Next Wave of outstanding female executives from the media world. And they always have some things in common: They're all women who are gathering influence, changing attitudes and challenging the stereotypes as their careers are ticking forward. This year, we whittled down a long list to a dozen women

who are making a difference in a rapidly changing media world. Our Next Wave this year includes writers, producers, a reporter, programming executives, a public-affairs specialist and even a fashion model expanding her career. On these pages, we chronicle the feats of women whose names you'll be reading about for years to come.

W

riting partners Sarah Fain and Liz Craft weren't thinking about penning television scripts while working on their high school newspaper in Kansas City, Mo., in the late 1980s.

In fact, neither Fain nor Craft, who earlier this month wrapped up their first season as writers and co-producers on FX's Emmy-winning *The Shield*, were sure how to parlay their interest in writing into careers when they graduated from Pembroke Hill High School in 1989.

"I always wanted to be a writer, but it seemed like a crazy, impossible thing for a Midwestern girl," says Fain. "I thought I wanted to write books, because that was the only type of writing I was familiar with."

Fain and Craft, both in their early 30s, took divergent paths after high school and wouldn't reconnect as writing partners for several years. Fain went to Williams College in Massachusetts, while Craft headed to New York's Columbia University. After graduating, both women found work in what Fain calls the periphery of writing: Fain taught English in North Carolina for AmeriCorps' Teach for America, and Craft went into publishing.

It was only in the late 1990s that both women began to consider writing for television. Fain says she was inspired by her creative-writing students to turn her passion into a career; she dabbled in writing screenplays. Craft wrote young-adult books, such as *What We Did Last Summer*, and edited others, including the *Sweet Valley High* series. She also tried unsuccessfully



Liz Craft



Sarah Fain

From the Old School

Shield scribes go way back By Kevin Downey

to land a job writing for a soap opera.

In 1998, Fain and Craft reconnected over beers in Kansas City and put plans into place that would rapidly transform the self-described polite Midwesterners into Hollywood writers working on edgy network programs like The WB's *Angel* and *The Shield*.

MOVED ON A WHIM

"Sarah was talking about how she was moving [to Los Angeles] in a few weeks, and I decided on a whim that I would move, too," says Craft. "What happened was that we had one other friend out here who was an agent at Innovative Artists. He introduced us to this woman who is no longer an agent and said, 'This is going to be your agent, and she'll tell you what to do.'"

What they were instructed to do was write speculative scripts for programs like HBO's *Sex and the City*, ABC's *Once and Again* and HBO's prison drama *Oz*.

"Our thinking in writing the *Oz*

script was that, as women writers, we didn't want to get pigeonholed into only writing soft drama," says Craft. "So we decided that we were going to write the edgiest spec script anyone had ever seen. That way, we had the range of *Once and Again*, which is a very family-oriented show, and *Oz*, a very violent, edgy show."

Those scripts caught the attention of some women in Hollywood who Fain and Craft say were instrumental in launching their television careers.

"The first jobs we got were because we were really championed by female executives," says Fain. Among these women is Nicole Norwood, who was working at The WB at the time. (She is now at Touchstone Television.) Craft says Norwood made a point of helping them find a job.

Within two years of landing in Los Angeles, Fain and Craft got their first TV jobs writing Saturday-morning programs like *All About Us*. By 2002, they began working with Kevin Wil-

liamson, creator of The WB's *Dawson's Creek*, on his short-lived *Glory Days*. They next worked on The WB's *Angel*, where they occupied the former office of Shawn Ryan, creator of *The Shield*.

This season was Fain and Craft's first on *The Shield*, which through mid May has posted a 29% increase over last year in its household rating. The show is best-known for bringing to basic cable the type of intense violence and rough language once limited to premium networks like HBO.

"We get a kick out of messing with people's perceptions of what women should be writing," says Craft. "You have to get over that mental barrier. If you don't totally go for it, you're not going to write as well as you need to for the show."

Glen Mazzara, co-executive producer on *The Shield*, says they were hired because of their *Oz* spec script and have had no trouble writing about cops in violent and sexually graphic situations.

"They do everything the male writers do," he says. "They talk about action, the dynamics between the guys, and they come up with crime stories. They have a caustic, wry sense of humor, which—more than anything—would allow somebody to be a writer on the show."

COOLING OFF

Fain and Craft are on break from *The Shield* until its fifth season goes into production, probably in July. As they have for much of their Hollywood career, the two friends are flipping between writing intense scripts and working on something decidedly softer: a novel for publisher Little Brown about a group of friends during their first year out of high school.

Says Fain, "While we're working on *The Shield*, which is obviously a gritty drama, it's nice to have the story of four girls to go to for a respite." ■

Two for the Show

Banks and Hackner pair up on new program By Paige Albiniak

With her daytime talk show set to launch this fall, supermodel Tyra Banks hopes to hit the TV jackpot, Oprah-style. Guiding Banks' way is Lisa Hackner, senior VP of development for Telepictures Productions, the arm of Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution that is producing the show.

"There is really not a talk show on the air right now that is geared toward a younger female audience who are beginning that journey in life," Hackner says. "Because of Tyra's background and her ability to speak out about a broad range of subject matter and topics, she can speak to these younger women about the things she cares about."

In the show's pilot, Banks gives viewers a glimpse of what she looks like without all the tricks of the trade, in an attempt to close the gap between reality and Hollywood glamour.

"Tyra asks a lot of questions and then listens to what people have to say," says Hilary Estey McLoughlin, executive VP and general manager of Telepictures. "She homes in on what people are thinking and gets them comfortable enough to tell her."

Part of what attracted Banks to daytime television, she says, is the oppor-

tunity to help women. As the executive producer and host of *America's Next Top Model*, "I got a chance to really mentor all the girls in the house and get deeply involved in whatever conflict was going on. That's turned into me wanting to do it on a daily basis."

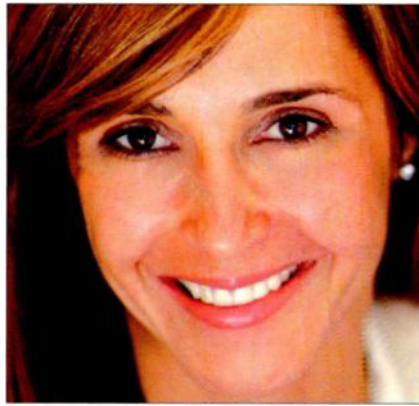
DIFFERENT KINDS OF BEAUTY

Banks has more experience working with girls than just on *Top Model*. Using her own funds, she hosts a summer camp for underprivileged girls called Tzone, where she personally works with them on such issues as self-esteem and independence. She has also written a book, called *Beauty Inside & Out*, that focuses on being beautiful by being yourself. While on tour to promote that book, Banks learned that many women want her advice on how to better themselves.

Banks, 31, and her team chose Telepictures to produce *The Tyra Banks Show* because the production company understood the show's concept without even having to be told.

"It was exactly the right fit," says Banks' agent Nancy Josephson, president of ICM Talent Agency. "We walked in, and they pitched us a show that was exactly the show we were going to pitch them before we even said a word."

And Banks immediately took to Hack-



Lisa Hackner



Tyra Banks

ner, who is helping build the show from the ground up. "Lisa has a great feel for the demo we are going after. She is so passionate, and she is an amazing brainstormer," says Banks. "She has a great spin on how to make people think they are seeing something they've never seen before."

As for Hackner, 43, she is impressed with how involved Banks is: "She comes to meetings with a notebook full of ideas and with things typed out, ready to present. She doesn't just have an opinion; she comes fully prepared."

Although Banks is a celebrity, the show will feature everyday people talking about real issues.

Telepictures had been chasing Banks to do a talk show for years, McLoughlin says: "We've had her eyes on her for a pretty long time, even predating her Oprah appearances. She seemed very

comfortable, had a real point of view and was willing to share her life, which is one real key to talk-show success.

"At first, she didn't feel like she had enough to talk about, but now she's older. She's succeeded in a lot of different facets of the business, and she's lived more."

Next Top Model's success, which is playing a key role in rebuilding UPN, is a big selling point for Telepictures. Banks and her producing partner, Ken Mok, pitched the show to networks themselves after her then-agent didn't think it would work. *Top Model* debuted on UPN in 2003 and quickly established itself as the highest-rated show in UPN's history.

"On the set of *Top Model*, every day was at first a fight because some people thought I was just a model posing as an

Continued on page 24

On Top of the Town

Mazzaferri has a key to Tribune TV By Ken Kerschbaumer

Sears Tower may be the tallest building in Chicago and the United States, but when it comes to media power, the Tribune Tower rules the town. Gina Mazzaferri, Tribune Broadcasting's VP, strategy and administration, since March 2004, plays a big role keeping Tribune on a roll.

In 1996 she was working for Weigel Broadcasting's WCIU, the feisty independent station that is as little in Chicago as WGN is large.

But "in Chicago, you always want to work in the Tribune Tower—so when the opportunity came up, it was a thrill," says Mazzaferri, who at first signed on to administer operations for six smaller stations Tribune had just acquired.

RISK AND REWARD

Today, she finds herself at the center of Tribune Broadcasting's future, helping to figure out what business plans and developments make the most financial sense for the company, and also making sure Tribune's 26 stations—among them, WGN Chicago, WPIX New York and KTLA Los Angeles—have the resources needed to maintain top-level news and broadcast operations.



Gina Mazzaferri

With wireless services, mobile-phone video, and even HDTV and multicasting gaining traction, Mazzaferri finds herself constantly challenged to keep up with an ever growing slate of revenue opportunities and risks.

"These are fun, scary times where people are at a crossroads of a lot of new wireless technologies," says Mazzaferri. "Now we just have to figure out how people will use those technologies and find the business model that works. Consumers will want those products: Now we have to build the long-term business."

Navigating those technologies can

be tricky for anyone. Mazzaferri, however, finds herself in the enviable position of working closely with Ira Goldstone, Tribune's director of broadcast operations, considered by many to be one of the top technology minds.

"Ira comes up with the great ideas, and then he asks me if we can put a business around it," says Mazzaferri. The two work closely together, developing new ideas like a centralized graphics facility so that stations can share graphics, making it easier for the TV stations to access photos taken for Tribune-owned newspapers.

Both of those help improve the local-news product Mazzaferri believes is more important than ever.

"With viewers having so many options with how to spend their viewing time, stations need to make sure their programming is a little unique. And at the end of the day, there are only a few places a viewer can get local news," she says. "It's about reaching out and providing to the community."

MAKES TECH MAKE SENSE

For that reason, she says, Tribune doesn't take on projects like centralized news operations that may save money (and make her job easier) but aren't essential to the success of a local broadcaster.

Mazzaferri, who turns 41 in July, graduated from Ohio University in Athens with a communications degree.

Her first job out of college turned out to be a perfect example of the wrong fit: She sold radio spots for WBBG Cleveland, an AM radio station that played nothing but Big Band music. Tired of selling spots (and the music), Mazzaferri headed for an MBA and joined Price Waterhouse in 1988 as an audit manager. After seven years, she moved to Weigel Broadcasting and then to Tribune two years later.

Tribune Broadcasting President Pat Mullen says Mazzaferri soaks up technological information and has the skill to summarize it for him in an understandable way. "She has a tremendous grasp on all areas of the business," he says. "She certainly comes with a financial and strategy background, but she has a very broad view of the entire business."

Her career philosophy is simple: "I always try to feel a little trepidation when I take a new position," she says. "If I feel like I already know how to do the job, it would be boring."

Her strategy at work is to try to make the person she is working for succeed and, in turn, give those who report to her a chance to succeed. "Communication and bringing people together is important," she says. "This position also requires me to do my homework, stand up for the things I believe in, and listen and ask for help. You always need to find the people who can help you navigate the landmines." ■



tyra & lisa
banks hackner

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World Radio History

Why 'Grey' Seems So Bright

Rhimes never meant to be a TV writer **By Paige Albinak**

The most amazing thing about ABC's *Grey's Anatomy* is not that a serial medical drama managed to break out and become one of this season's biggest hits. It is that its creator, head writer and showrun-

ner is a 34-year-old woman who, prior to this, had never written, run or even worked on a television series in her life.

Shonda Rhimes already had several feature films under her belt. She penned *Crossroads*, starring Britney Spears;

The Princess Diaries 2; and HBO's *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge*, starring Halle Berry. But working in series television never occurred to her.

"I always thought I would write movies. But I adopted a baby, and you can never leave the house again when you have a baby. So I was home in the evening, and I was falling in love with shows like *Felicity* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*."

Rhimes' first shot at a TV pilot revolved around female war correspondents—a bunch of feisty women covering an imaginary war while having a lot of sex and fun along the way. "But then the real war broke out," she says, "and that wasn't such a good idea anymore."

Her next attempt kept the intensity but changed the setting: surgical interns making their first rounds in a teaching hospital. "My sisters and I had always been addicted to surgeries. I'd be watching one on Discovery Health, and inevitably the phone would ring. It would be one of my sisters saying, 'Are you watching this?'" The inadvertent research paid off. *Grey's Anatomy* was born.

"SOMETHING SEXY ABOUT SURGERY"

"There's something very sexy about surgery," Rhimes says. "You actually have your hands in someone else's body."



Shonda Rhimes

That's a rare and amazing job. And it is like war correspondents: They are both groups of people who work and play together in an unbelievably competitive and intense environment."

Part of what works so well about *Grey's* is the show's sex appeal. The cast members are individually charismatic, but they have great chemistry. The show was written as cast-color-blind, so Sandra Oh's hyper-competitive Christina Wang initially had no last name, and "the Nazi," played to gruff perfection by African-American Chandra Wilson, was first conceived as a petite blonde.

"It never occurred to me to do it in any other way," Rhimes says. "My age group is post-civil-rights, post-feminist babies, and we accept that we live in a diverse and interesting world. We don't sit around talking

Continued on page 24



Grey's Anatomy, a surprisingly different medical show.

A Commitment to Commitment

From the White House to Lifetime, Toby Graff is a do-gooder **By Sharon Edry**

Few job candidates were as qualified for a role in public affairs for a women's network as Toby Graff: She was previously deputy press secretary to then-First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

When she joined Lifetime in 2000, she was concerned how different the world of politics in Washington would be from media in New York. As it turns out, not that much. Graff works on many of the same women's issues with the same organizations that she had worked with in her government days. She concedes that leading a women's network is a bit "less intense" than working in the White House for the wife of the president.

Today, as VP of public affairs for Lifetime Entertainment Services, Graff oversees the network's initiatives on a variety of issues to inform and support women, including movements to end violence against women, to encourage women to vote and run for office, and to promote quality child care. She is also responsible for the network's charitable giving and participation in various industry and community events.

Her experience in Washington prepared her well for the challenges of her

current position, says her boss, Meredith Wagner, executive VP of public affairs and corporate communications at Lifetime. "Nothing scares her. I'll be hyperventilating about some writing deadline, and she calmly types. When you work for the most powerful person in the world, you get used to the pressure."

After graduating from Boston University in 1992 with a political science degree, the Summit, N.J., native landed an interview with the Clinton/Gore campaign and was quickly inserted as an assistant press secretary in Kentucky. "That showed how desperate they were for bodies," she laughs. "But I was fortunate that it snowballed into other opportunities."

WORKING FOR CHANGE

With so many other campaign staffers fighting over jobs in the new administration, Graff felt lucky to score a position working on health-care and welfare reform, as a special assistant for public affairs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, before heading to the White House, where her role working for Clinton meant being available 24/7. While the job was "amazing," she admits she was ready for a less round-the-clock position: "It was one of my



Toby Graff

happier days when I gave in my White House pager."

Several years of government experience taught Graff how slowly change comes in Washington and that it can come in a variety of ways. She also discovered the power of television as a medium. "It's great to be with a network that is working for change," she says. Every department at Lifetime is involved in the campaigns in some way, she explains, including writers, producers and programming executives who raise awareness through programming, marketing, ad sales and affiliates.

Her proudest moment since coming to Lifetime, says Graff, came through what was called the Debbie Smith Act, named after a rape survivor who participated with the network in two years of lobbying and delivering more than 110,000 signatures to help pass legislation that would eliminate the backlog of DNA evidence and put thousands of rapists behind bars. "There were just so many up and down moments," Graff says. "When the bill was actually passed and signed into law, it was the greatest achievement we've had."

BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION

Graff has returned to the White House a few times, as part of legislative work that the network supports. "We make sure that it is bipartisan legislation, since we know our viewers represent all sides," she says, noting that there are Lifetime staffers who worked in the prior Bush administration.

Continuing to raise awareness about women's issues is Graff's main goal going forward, she says, including the upcoming 11th annual campaign for breast-cancer awareness and a new miniseries on human trafficking that will involve a great deal of outreach. "We just want to stay out there and make sure women's voices are heard in the houses of power," she says. "Lifetime really listens to them and does take their messages to Capital Hill and to the White House." ■

Television for Women®

Lifetime salutes
the Next Wave of Women
including our own Toby Graff
for their stellar achievements
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Up the Ladder

For Turner's Kreisberg, success comes naturally
—one step at a time By Anne Becker

Christy Kwon Kreisberg hunts for hits for TBS. But her own story about getting into the biz sounds a lot like the big Steven Spielberg limited series airing this summer on sister net TNT: *Into the West*.

Kreisberg, VP of original programming/series at Turner's TBS, was reared in St. Louis and never thought she would end up in Los Angeles. But after graduating with a degree in English from Boston College, she followed a TV job lead from a friend of a friend out west.

"It was completely one of those things where I just headed west," says the comedy guru and mother of two. "I came out here and fell in love."

After stints as a segment producer and researcher for Kushner-Locke Co. and coordinator for sports agency IMG, she moved on to assisting the VP of television production at Dick Clark Productions from 1992 to 1994. Working on shows like *The Golden Globe Awards*, she met a treasure trove of VIPs—executives at ABC, NBC, CBS—and her husband, who is a TV director.

NBC IN ITS PRIME

She was recruited for a junior-executive position at NBC Entertainment and,

after a year of interviewing, she joined the network at its prime as director of specials, prime time series and late night. In her small department, Kreisberg played a big role in overseeing including *The 50th Annual Emmy Awards*. She also got to help produce such shows as *Seinfeld*, then considered an alternative program for its heavy reliance on standup.

A few years later, she jumped to cable. She joined TBS in Los Angeles in 1999 as director of original programming/series at a time cable originals were still fairly few and far between.

"I did a little homework and thought it might be a great opportunity to start in the cable business, especially if I could be there at the beginning," Kreisberg says.

LOOKING FOR LAUGHS

The risk paid off. After an initial foray into originals with *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* and *Outback Jack*, both of which Kreisberg helped develop and produce, TBS has found a niche with comedy, and top talent, such as David and Courteney Cox Arquette, now seek out the network to produce their shows.

New projects include the second installment of *The Real Gilligan's Island*,



Christy Kwon Kreisberg

July's reality series *Minding the Store* and this fall's docu-spoof *Daisy Does America*, from Coquette Productions.

"In cable, you take more risks than in broadcast," Kreisberg says. "We're more able to change and move and make decisions after we see what the product brings."

Kreisberg, 39, takes three pitch meetings a day—one in the morning and two in the afternoon. In her search for strong comedic concepts or characters, she has seen proposals as strange as a highly conceptualized special on the history of duct tape.

"I remember thinking there was a hidden camera in that meeting," she jokes. "But over the years, I've learned I'd rather see a producer be really passionate—get it, breathe it, know the story—than come in with 17 projects when it's just volume to them."

Says her boss Steve Koonin, executive

VP/COO for TBS and TNT, "Christy has been a driving force behind TBS' success with original series. We are very lucky to have her in our corner as she continues to take TBS to new heights."

Kreisberg says balancing the job with being a mom to daughter and son, ages 4 and 7, respectively, is a constant struggle—but she wouldn't have it any other way. She regularly drives morning carpool, taking work calls from the car.

In fact, Kreisberg has found Turner to be a mom-friendly place to work. Her children visit the office often, and the company's working moms trade tips on how to balance family and work.

"We commiserate and share our triumphs and struggles," she says. "I have an incredible support system."

"JUGGLING ACT"

"I probably wouldn't know what to do if I wasn't working because I love my job," Kreisberg says, "but it's a constant juggling act."

Her advice to women comes from her own mentor, Linda Mancuso, the late head of programming for ABC Family and an NBC veteran programmer.

"She always said to me, 'Don't ever think you can't have a job a man has or get paid as much as a man even though people will tell you can't,'" Kreisberg remembers. "Bite the bullet in the beginning if it means being a runner or a production assistant for a week, six months, a year. Do it, meet a ton of people, and keep going and going and going. People do succeed." ■

Hooked on the Tube

Kim was destined to be a TV executive By Jim Benson

When Samie Kim arrived at the Fox network in 1999 as manager of current programming and began her fast-track rise up the ranks, she entered a department occupied by seven men.

Yet she still has a hard time seeing the business as being "male-dominated."

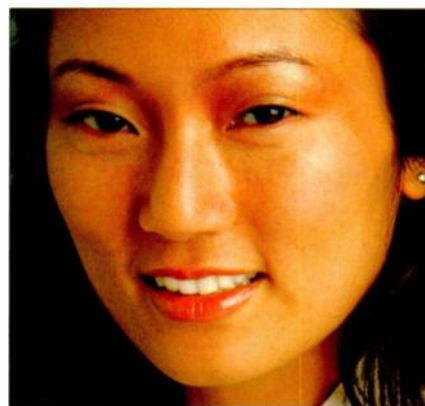
"All of them were a bunch of metrosexuals before they even had metrosexuals," says Kim, now the VP of comedy development. She recalls fondly one colleague who told her he was going for a manicure "because he hadn't had one in three weeks."

Kim, meanwhile, was busy with more manly pursuits like "trying to figure out who's who in baseball."

If that sounds like a sitcom, it is quite fitting. Kim today laughs at the role-reversal, reflecting an eye for the funny that makes the highly regarded, easy-going, quick-witted 30-year-old executive a natural in Fox's comedy arena.

LEFT TO HER OWN DEVICES

Kim, who was a page at NBC just nine years ago, was upped to director of current programming in 2000, but her primary goal was to get into comedy development "despite everyone saying



Samie Kim

it's dead." She made the move in 2003, when she was named to her current VP post, and has overseen such series as *The Bernie Mac Show*, *That '70s Show* and *King of the Hill*.

Born in Boston and reared in Philadelphia, Kim, a Korean-American, comes from a "great" and large family comprising six stepsisters. There's another catch to that situation: All of them are from different parents. One of her siblings is a blonde, another is Latina, and a third is half-Jewish. She is the oldest of her mother's children and a middle child to her stepfather.

Got it?

She attributes her love of television to her family, which was so huge "we were left to our own devices ... and were allowed to watch a lot of TV." By fourth grade, Kim knew she was "genetically engineered" to be a television executive after she pulled her first all-nighter watching a *Moonlighting* marathon.

To make it in TV, Kim needed to be where TV was made and wanted to go to college in California. Her tradition-bound East Coast parents, however, "thought that was absurd." Ultimately, they agreed to let her go west—but only as far as Ohio, to Kenyon College, where she earned an English degree. When she graduated in 1996, she steered her 1984 diesel Mercedes toward L.A.

A PAGE TAKES A TURN

Landing as an NBC page, Kim quickly tired of dressing up like a flight attendant, giving 10 studio tours a day ("people wanted to see the *Friends* set, but that was at Warner Bros.") and seating audience members for Jay Leno's *Tonight* show. Then NBC promo guru Vince Manze, a funny guy in his own right, offered Kim a job as his assistant.

"It was an amazing time and place," says Kim, whose desk was in close proximity to Preston Beckman's; he, like Kim, later left NBC for Fox, where today he is executive VP of strategic planning.

While Kim was grateful to learn about branding and marketing, she wanted to move into programming. She tried her

hand at TV movies—a mistake—then went to work for Fox Television Studios, handling several shows for the catchall company-wide production unit that dealt with all divisions, including FX and Fox Sports.

Kim also spent time at Regency Television, which then was developing *Malcolm in the Middle*, before Craig Erwich and Lance Taylor, then heading Fox's current programming department, brought her over as manager. For four years, Kim worked on a majority of Fox's scripted series, including *24*, *The Simpsons* and *Ally McBeal*.

She learned that, "just when you have something pegged, something comes along and messes up your whole game plan"—including how an entire demographic consisting of young men "could walk away and buy videogames."

Television's changes—the new technologies and all the viewing alternatives—are exactly what makes Kim prefer working for TV rather than film: "There's no way to guess what will happen on a given day."

She admits it is tough staying optimistic in a business with such a high failure rate, but she credits her fiancé, Justin Falvey, co-head of DreamWorks Television, with brightening her outlook. She sums him up in a way that would not make sense in almost any place other than Los Angeles: "He's the most optimistic person and least jaded person I've met in the business who is not delusional." ■

very funny
how you've made
the b&c list.
you've always been
on our a-list.

congratulations to
christy kwon kreisberg
vp, tbs original programming.
we've always known you're
a woman to watch.



Going up the Food Chain

She's no chef, but Finch still knows cuisine **By Anne Becker**



Kathleen Finch

Kathleen Finch knew precious little about cooking when she joined the Food Network. This senior VP of prime time programming and special projects boasts a Stanford degree and a meaty background in local and national programming, but as a native New Yorker who lived near the nation's greatest restaurants, she didn't hang out in the kitchen.

"We ate out all the time," she says of her childhood. "I had to admit I knew nothing about food."

That has been no impediment to her productivity at the Scripps network.

She joined Food in 1999 as director of programming and assumed her current position last year. In the process, Finch evolved the channel from airing instructional fare to showing broad-skewing programming for gourmands and kitchen couch potatoes, catapulting shows like recent smash hit *Iron Chef America* into the pop-cultural stratosphere.

Finch's string of successes began with comfort-food series *Unwrapped*, a look at the making of America's favorite foods, which she pitched after her young daughter suggested a show on candy; inspired, Finch trolled the aisles of her local supermarket, notepad in tow, jotting down interesting products to profile.

The show, which has now filmed more than 200 episodes, joins *Roker on the Road*, *Paula's Home Cooking* and *Semi-Homemade Cooking* on her list of hits.

PUTTING TOGETHER THE INGREDIENTS

Finch's penchant for television began at age 9, when she sat in the studio audience for the filming of local game show *Wonderama*, which aired on New York's WNYW before it was Fox—an experience made all the more sweet by the fact that she was otherwise banned from watching TV as a child.

Now 43, she recalls, "It was mesmerizing, magic. I looked around at all the

people working on the show and thought never in a million years could somebody have a job as cool as this. TV was this forbidden fruit that made it so fantastically fascinating that I lusted after it."

While attending college, Finch interned at the station, ending up overseeing production for a then-new relationship-themed talk show hosted by Dr. Ruth Westheimer. The show's producer left the day the program started, and Finch took over segment production, audience coordination and scriptwriting.

After college, she returned to New York, worked in local TV and joined CBS News, where she worked for 12 years as a producer.

That was fun and exciting, and helped Finch make friends and contacts, but it didn't exactly provide optimum conditions under which to nurture a stable family life. (She and her husband, journalist Peter Finch, have three daughters, ages 9, 14 and 18.)

"I had my passport in my purse and my beeper on 24 hours a day," she says. "I'd take phone calls in the grocery store from my boss asking how close I was to the airport because I needed to go."

But soon, this avid runner took a step back, joining then-Food Network President (and former CBS News President) Eric Ober to help create

the story-driven documentary/reality-style shows Ober wanted.

COOL AS A CUCUMBER

She now oversees the prime time schedule, including the weekly *Food Network Challenge* specials the network sponsors, on which she sometimes makes guest on-air appearances; *Food Network Star*, this summer's upcoming reality hunt for a TV chef; and recent broad-skewing hit *Iron Chef America*, which regularly attracts hundreds of thousands of viewers, even on competitive Sunday nights.

"A lot of people look at [Food Network] as niche, narrow programming, and it's not. This audience proves that," Finch says. "If we can do well against *Desperate Housewives* on a Sunday night, we can all rest pretty easy."

Food Network President Brooke Johnson calls Finch "the ultimate cool-headed chef in the kitchen—deftly managing the creative, logistical and financial details of our prime time strategy."

Finch has two pieces of advice to up-and-coming women in the industry: Find a mentor—she coaches young grads through her alumni association—and don't be afraid to start small, even if it means making coffee.

"Take a job that gets you in front of the people who make decisions—and impress them," Finch says. "A lot of women are afraid to take secretarial work, but if you do it well and with a smile on your face, you won't be doing it long." ■

Taking It to the People

Marketing Gore's channel is a challenge **By Paige Albiniak**

Anne Zehren is no stranger to marketing brand-new concepts in brand-new ways. In 1998, she launched *Teen People*, making it the fastest magazine in publishing history to become profitable. Before that, she was the associate publisher at *Glamour*, transforming the magazine's marketing department into a profit center, an idea that had never even been considered before.

Now she has taken on the challenge of doing the same thing for Current, the new, highly publicized cable channel that former Vice President Al Gore and entrepreneur Joel Hyatt are launching to 20 million viewers this August.

Current's blueprint combines a video blog with MTV sensibility: It plans to accept video submissions from amateur filmmakers and videographers nationwide, who will post them on a Web site. There, the online community will gather to pick and choose what they want to watch. The channel is targeting viewers 18-34. (Zehren is 43.)

To get an idea of how Current is going to market its novel programming concept, here's a snapshot of April 4, 2005. On that day, Current held a street party for 5,000 at the intersection of San Francisco's Second and King Streets. While Gore couldn't resist the opportu-

nity to give his brand of stump speech, hip-hop star and actor Mos Def hosted; movie star Leonardo di Caprio showed up; and up-and-coming bands Crown City Rockers, Goapele, Michael Franti and Spearhead each played sets.

To get a crowd, the Current crew started TakeBackTV.com to let people know they were seeking video submissions. They got 6,000 hits, and, Zehren says, the site "got people talking."

"The first day we posted this, things started to snowball," says Zehren. "That, to me, was a pretty big clue that we're on to something. We've already done a little call for submissions and received more than 3,000."

VIRAL MARKETING

Zehren and her marketing team also sent "evangelists" out into the community to get the word out.

"We hope it's very viral and that the network will market itself," Zehren says. That said, she also hopes to use other forms of neo-marketing—such as guerilla marketing, where non-traditional campaigns are run in innovative ways—to bring viewers to the nascent cable channel.

"Basically, it's real simple. Involve the viewer every step of the way," Zehren says. "The whole network is created along the fact that we're going

to be co-creating the content, as well as some of the ads, with our viewers. The *raison d'être* of our network is to involve them."

That doesn't just mean airing viewers' home videos. The network plans to cull out the best pieces for air, and it has already hired Lisa Ling's little sister, Laura, and Deepak Chopra's son, Gotham, to host segments.

"We hope we develop some really big talent," Zehren says.

But, like many new to the TV business, Zehren hopes to revolutionize the TV advertising industry, with viewers also working with companies to create homemade advertisements.

TEAMING VIEWERS WITH ADVERTISERS

"Winterfresh is doing it. Converse is doing it a little bit," Zehren says. "I would love it if every single one of our partners would start working with our audience and our agencies to create our ads."

Other ad people like it, too.

"All advertisers need to expand their horizons, because it's not just about reaching people anymore or having a frequent and single-minded message. It's about how a marketer can be interesting to an individual or to a segment of 10, 100 or 1,000 in a compelling and interesting and immediate way," says Carla Hendra, president of advertising agency Ogilvie & Mather.

"That's what brands are going to have to figure out how to do. Traditional media approaches are not going away, but they are getting further and further fragmented."



Anne Zehren

Adds Jon Cropper, executive creative director and senior VP of channel strategy for Young & Rubicam Brands, "Current is extremely progressive and aggressive, and it requires marketing that's equally progressive and aggressive. That they are exploring grassroots ways to build attention for the channel and promote it in nontraditional ways makes sense, because that's reflective of the product itself. I think it's a really special opportunity to have a channel that's basically a product of the audience."

But Zehren realizes that she has to get her audience on board—and fast.

"For me, having worked in the youth market for eight or nine years, you have one shot with these young people," she says. "If you don't play it right, sometimes you don't have a second chance. You really have to be honest and real. You have to show a lot of respect and do it on their terms." ■

Not all great creations happen in the kitchen. Thanks, Kathleen.

Food Network congratulates SVP of Programming Kathleen Finch
and B&C's *Next Wave of Women* honorees.



Battle Tested

CBS' Lara Logan goes to war By John M. Higgins

The darkest moment of Lara Logan's career had nothing to do with the usual downers—getting fired or passed over for a promotion. The CBS correspondent was forced to sit out the United States' initial 2002 attack on Iraq for 2½ weeks in Jordan rather than report from Baghdad as she had hoped to do.

As the impending bombing of the Iraqi capital loomed, Logan had decided a day earlier that she was not sufficiently equipped to report for the duration of the attack and reluctantly joined a convoy of foreign journalists to safe haven.

"I had not prepared to do a war on my own," says Logan. "No food, no supplies, no access to CBS drivers." She needed just one day to gather the goods and get the right contacts. "It was the lowest point of my entire career, stuck on the border of Jordan while this war was going on."

That's characteristic of Logan's career. For more than 15 years, she has bounced around hot spots in Africa and the Middle East as a producer and correspondent, first performing grisly reporting duties as a teenager.

Three years ago, she scored a plum gig as correspondent for *60 Minutes Wednesday*, which lured the South African-born Logan away from Britain's ITV with an

assignment and a salary far richer than European networks typically offer.

TABLOID FODDER IN LONDON

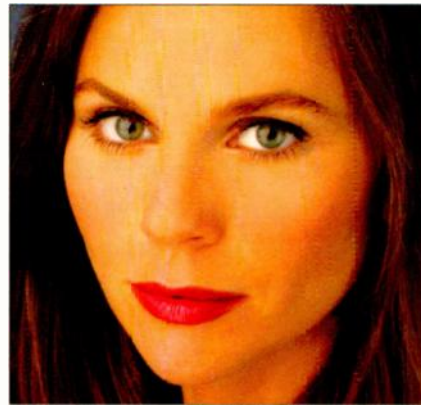
The bad news is that she could be facing another, more traditional dark moment. Two weeks ago, CBS cancelled *60 Minutes Wednesday*.

"It was a huge shock," says Logan, who returned to New York from overseas last November. "It's a show, something you've been part of for years. There are a lot of people who won't be jobless, but these are the jobs we love."

She rose to prominence covering the U.S. war in Afghanistan for England's equivalent of the *Today* show. Her beauty made her sudden fodder for the British tabloids, which flayed her in ways that make the *New York Post* seem tame. British newspapers blasted her supposedly overnight arrival as based on her looks.

They ignored her years of hard-news background abroad. Logan started working as a journalist when she was 18, toiling for a newspaper in South Africa doing the weekend "body count," visits of local morgues and hospitals. (Around 100 per weekend during those violent times, she recalls.)

After college, Logan spent several years working as a TV producer reporting stories from various African hotspots,



Lara Logan

from the townships to wars in Angola and Mozambique. She worked for Reuters Television and freelanced for ABC, CNN and CBS Radio.

"It's so strange when people look at me as some piece of fluff that just landed on TV," says Logan, 34. "All those years of work, that had nothing to do with it."

She hit her stride with the wars in the Middle East. Covering Afghanistan and Iraq first for ITV, then for CBS, she embedded herself first with Northern Alliance warlords, then later with Navy SEALs. In 2003, with CBS, Logan was in a military convoy when the armored Humvee she was traveling in hit an anti-tank mine and blew the vehicle open.

"It went 12 feet in the air and 8 feet forward," Logan says. She was immobilized, trapped under the tangle of a dozen soldiers and other passengers.

Her face and the inside of her mouth were cut, and Logan was a bit in shock. A CBS colleague, Jeff Newton, saw bleeding and her eyes locked wide open. "I heard him say, 'No, I think she's dead.' I thought, 'Oh my God, they're going to leave me because they think I'm dead.'"

They didn't, though two soldiers were badly injured. But because Newton's camera was rolling before they hit the mine, Logan had another gripping story for CBS' *The Early Show*.

Logan didn't see the footage until she was in New York months later. "I felt sick. You start out and think you're invincible. But the older you get, the more friends you lose, you realize that's not true."

Jeff Fager, the *60 Minutes* executive producer, praises Logan. "She will go into any war zone, no matter how dangerous—and she has been in many of the most dangerous—without any hesitation. And she always comes out with a story."

Naturally, when the Iraq War broke out, Logan was the first U.S. correspondent to leave Jordan and get into Baghdad.

CBS is still sorting out what to do with the staff of *60 Minutes Wednesday*. Logan says she's being assured she'll have a place. Her contract runs out in August.

She doesn't know what she wants to do next. But she doesn't want to be "on the sofa" as a news anchor. "I wanted to be a correspondent because I wanted to control my own stories," Logan says. "There's nothing in the world like being on a big running story." ■

Two for the Show

Continued from page 16

executive producer," Banks says. "People who had positions lower than mine didn't accept me as their boss. After a while, a couple of them apologized for doubting me so much. I had the power to fire those people, but I just wanted to prove them wrong."

'NO' IS A CHALLENGE

Banks takes that same attitude into syndication, even though she is well aware of the failure rate. "I'm very inspired by the words 'no' and 'can't.'"

"Tyra is one of those amazing people who is so multi-talented," says Dawn Ostroff, UPN's president of entertainment. "She was able to make *Top Model* a compelling television show by recognizing what would make women want to see these young women struggle and then hopefully achieve their dream and aspirations."

Banks also will serve as an executive producer on *The Tyra Banks Show*, which will prove a much bigger challenge. UPN buys 13 episodes of *Top Model* at a time; Telepictures plans to produce 175 episodes of *The Tyra Banks Show* each year.

Hackner is serving as one of the show's main wizards behind the curtain. She returned to Telepictures in July 2004, after serving as executive VP at Universal Domestic Television, which was acquired by NBC the previous March. Hackner got her start at Telepictures in 1990 as a



Naima is named America's Next Top Model on UPN.

receptionist and climbed the ranks.

She prides herself on developing daytime shows, such as *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, that capitalize on the personality of the host. For Tyra, Hackner wants to show a "real" Banks but will obviously employ the runway that is emblematic of the model's career. "We're not trying to fit a square peg into a round hole," Hackner says. "Tyra is an incredible talent and we're building the show around her." ■

Why 'Grey' Seems So Bright

Continued from page 18

about race, so *Grey's* doesn't feel particularly fresh or special to me. It feels like the world."

Actor Isaiah Washington initially auditioned to play Dr. Derrick Shephard, love interest of title character Meredith Grey (played by Ellen Pompeo). When Patrick Dempsey won the role, there was no part for Washington. It left him "sick," he says. But Rhimes kept Washington in mind, and when the actor originally cast as surgeon Preston Burke fell out, Washington got a callback. "I knew I could never be wrong in my heart about something so good and so genuine," he says. "Her writing just seemed very complex, very honest."

BIG NUMBERS OUT OF THE GATE

Steve McPherson, president of ABC Entertainment, discovered Rhimes early, giving her a deal at Touchstone when he was still running the studio. And he championed *Grey's Anatomy* from the beginning, purposely holding it to midseason so the pilot could be perfected and ABC could launch the show with the network's full marketing arsenal behind it.

In March, *Grey's* posted big numbers in its first outing, airing after mega-hit *Desperate Housewives*; it finished the season bigger than ABC's other hot show, *Lost*. "*Grey's* was similar to *Desperate Housewives*," McPherson

says. "Both shows are about the human condition, and they are accessible. They also both appeal to female viewers, and research shows that women respond earliest and then bring other audiences with them."

"SHE UNDERSTANDS STORY"

Adds Debra Chase, producer of *Princess Diaries 2* and other films, for whom Rhimes interned while getting her master's degree at USC Film School, "She understands story. She understands how to handle emotion, action and humor and how to meld all of those pieces into one. She understands structure, which is critical to development, and she's good with dialogue. Most writers can't do all of that. But Shonda just gets it."

The success of *Grey's* has changed much for Rhimes, who just signed a two-year development deal with Touchstone and is penning two movies for Disney. "I went from sitting at home and writing in my pajamas to going into an office every day and working with a team of writers." Besides writing and editing *Grey's* scripts, she makes decisions in all areas of the show, from costumes and hairstyles to editing and music.

"When some writers come out of features, they are blindsided by the pace of TV," says James Parriott, a TV vet who shares show-running responsibilities with Rhimes. "Shonda thrives on it." ■

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HD's True Believers

Why TV stations are spending big now to go high-def
By Ken Kerschbaumer



WUSA Washington is the latest station to begin producing local newscasts in high-definition.

There's no denying that high-definition programming has come a long way in eight years. HDTV-set owners can settle down in their living room and find hundreds of hours of HD programming each week: prime time programming from the major networks, sporting events from ESPN and regional sports networks, nature documentaries from Discovery, and motion pictures from HBO, InHD, HDNet and others.

But local news, the backbone of revenue for many TV stations, continues to lag behind. Only six stations in the U.S. provide local newscasts in HD. And only one network news program, ABC's *Good Morning America*, intends to go HD by this fall.

Gannett's WUSA Washington is the latest of the six stations, having begun HD newscasts earlier this month. "This is part of our strategic plan to provide viewers with better product," says General Manager Darryl Green. "First, the HD experience is an improvement over analog, and, second, we believed it was time for our station to move in this direction."

ON-AIR IN 59 DAYS

WUSA's transition was a Herculean effort. Director of Technology Terry Smith says the station placed its purchase orders on March 3 of this year and, 59 days later, on May 2, was on the air. And the station installed the gear—which included Sony cameras and production switcher, Grass Valley routing switchers, Miranda conversion gear, and Omneon servers—itsself.

So why do stations balk at HD news? The obvious factor is cost. "For some stations, it's a more expensive proposition than for others," says Roger Ogden, general manager of Gannett's KUSA Denver, which made the move to HD news last spring. "This can add up to a lot of money for some stations."

The resistance, however, involves more than dollars and cents. Right now, Nielsen doesn't distinguish HDTV household viewing from other types. Changing that "can't happen soon enough for us," says WUSA's Green. Nielsen has already begun measuring local digital-video-recorder viewership; more-complicated national measurement won't start until January 2006.

Without Nielsen viewing data, stations like KUSA

"This is part of our strategic plan to provide viewers with better product. First, the HD experience is an improvement over analog, and, second, we believed it was time for our station to move in this direction."

DARRYL GREEN, WUSA WASHINGTON

and WUSA, Fox's WJW Cleveland, and Capitol Broadcasting's WRAL Raleigh, N.C., have to rely on anecdotal evidence of viewership. "Clearly, our newscast will be the one that people who have HD sets will be inclined to watch," says Ogden, "but there's no way to measure it numerically."

Nielsen will be able to distinctly measure HDTV on its advanced people meters starting in July, although it

may not report it unless there's demand. For stations, knowing that data would help attach a dollar figure to high-def. If HD causes viewers to switch stations, competitors would take the plunge sooner.

After all, local news is a classic keeping-up-with-the-Joneses business. If one station in town gets a helicopter, for example, all the stations in town quickly follow.

Since most stations are the lone provider of HD news in a market (only Seattle has more than one HD newscast, with KOMO and KING going head to head since 1999), visions of pulling in 100% of the local HD ratings are tempting. "When our sales people think about [HD Nielsen ratings], they salivate," says Tom Creter, director of engineering for Cleveland's WJW.

There are hidden costs in HD conversion and field production, as well as technical hurdles that make it difficult for stations to use HD gear to shoot stories in the field. While it's true that both Sony and JVC have introduced low-cost camcorders based on the HDV format (which isn't quite full HDTV resolution but is still much sharper than SD), those \$5,000-\$6,000 camcorders have to be complemented with a new editing, switching and production environment that can add hundreds of thousands of dollars to the cost. "Those cameras are only one piece of the system," says Don Perez, director of engineering for KUSA. "But the cost of those other pieces needs to be considered before making a final judgment."

INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLACE

At KUSA, those costs will delay HD field acquisition for a couple of years, according to Ogden. Creter, however, says WJW will make the move sooner rather than later. One reason? WJW has much of the HD infrastructure already in place. Later this

Continued on page 30

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