



EDJ co-anchors Jim Moret and Janet Zappala

executive producing chores to Art Letofsky, a former *Los Angeles Times* entertainment editor. Knoedelseder is making Letofsky managing editor of *EDJ* (pronounced "edge"), as well as hiring *L.A. Times* contributors Bryn Freedman and Pat Broeske as consultants.

Erdel said that Knoedelseder intends to "balance" *EDJ*'s content at being 40% "hard" entertainment news and 60% "featurish" news (gossip, celebrity interviews and profiles, commentary, etc.). Erdel also says that Twentieth sales people have informed client stations of the retitling and reformatting and are encouraging stations to upgrade the show from its late fringe and early morning time periods. Renewals for the

half-hour strip stand at 91 markets, representing 76% U.S. coverage. According to John von Soosten, vice president and director of programing, Katz Communications, during the May sweeps *Personalities* averaged 3 rating/9 share (NSI) for the top 100 (ADI) markets measured, showing very little improvement over the Persian Gulf war-interrupted Feb. sweeps, where it accounted for a 2/9 measuring among the same markets. (However, since Zappala and Sternoff took over the anchoring reigns from original host Charlie Rose last fall, Erdel says the show has shown a 22% improvement in household ratings from November 1990 sweeps to May 1991 sweeps.)

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NARDINO MAKES IT OFFICIAL WITH LORIMAR

Gary Nardino, chairman and chief executive officer, Orion Television Entertainment, signed a long-term independent production agreement with Lorimar Television last week, signaling the end, at least for now, of Orion as a producer of television programing. Nardino, who joins Lorimar on July 8, will be involved in creating, developing and producing all forms of television for the studio. The move unites Nardino with friend Leslie Moonves, president, Lorimar Television (BROADCASTING, "Closed Circuit," June 10).

"I'm thrilled to be joining Lorimar, after trying to make the best of the situation at Orion," he said. Nardino oversaw Orion's sale of product to Lorimar, which will continue to produce *American Detectives* for ABC, *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* for Fox and *Jack of Hearts*, which has a six-script commitment from CBS. The shows, like other Lorimar-produced series, will be distributed worldwide by Warner Brothers. Joining Nardino at Lorimar are producer/writers Thomas Carter, Robert Townsend, Paul Stajonovich, Clifton Campbell and Deborah Joy Levine. Carter, executive producer of Orion's *Equal Justice*, is currently working on a half-hour pilot for ABC. Possibly joining the former Orion contingent at Lorimar is Gary Randall, president, production, Orion, who has been offered a position at Lorimar, according to Nardino. "I'm hoping Gary will join Lorimar, but he has a number of options and he's considering all of them," he said.

Nardino joined Orion in 1989, and while there oversaw the development and production of *WIOU* and *Equal Justice*. Previous stints include five years of independent production prior to joining Orion and a six-year tenure as president, Paramount Television Production, in 1977-83, during which time he oversaw the development of *Family Ties*, *Taxi* and *Cheers*.

THAYER NAMED PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSAL TV

MCA Inc. last week announced that MCA Television Entertainment (MTE) President Tom Thayer has been named president of Universal Television, filling the vacancy created by Kerry McCluggage's resignation two weeks ago following Tom Wertheimer's appointment as chairman of MCA Television Group and executive vice president of MCA Inc. (BROADCASTING, June 24).

Tied with Thayer's move was Wertheimer's announcement that Dick Lindheim has been named executive vice president of program strategy for MCA Television Group. Both appointments were effective immediately.

McCluggage, who had been head of Universal's network production arm since 1986, apparently tendered his resignation from Universal believing he was an heir apparent to the MCA TV Group chairmanship after Al Rush announced his anticipated retirement, according to one MCA TV source. The source estimated that McCluggage has over two years left on his contract, but an MCA spokeswoman declined to confirm if the studio will take legal action against McCluggage, who could not be reached for comment on the story.

MCA also confirmed that Ned Nalle, executive vice president of creative affairs for the MCA TV Entertainment cable production arm, will be joining Thayer from that division to take over operations of Universal Television. Barbara Fisher, MCA TV Entertainment's vice president of creative affairs since 1990, succeeds Thayer as head of the cable production division. Bob Kelly, senior vice president of business affairs, was named executive vice president.

Thayer, who joined Universal in 1978, was MCA TV Entertainment's founding president in 1988, and during his tenure the fledgling cable production unit has had over 60 telefilms and two regular series, *Dream On* (on HBO) and *Swamp Thing* (USA Network).

Since 1987, Lindheim has been executive vice president of creative services at Universal Television, and from 1984-87 was senior vice president of series development at Universal.

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