

BROADCASTING CABLE

APRIL 9, 2001

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DEAR NAB: WE QUIT

The rift between stations and networks widens as CBS pulls out

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ONCE IN A LIFETIME

The cable network for women is now cable's ratings leader

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MEETING OF THE MINDS

Big Picture confab includes a conspiracy theorist, some big bears—and a bull named Mel

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SPECIAL REPORT

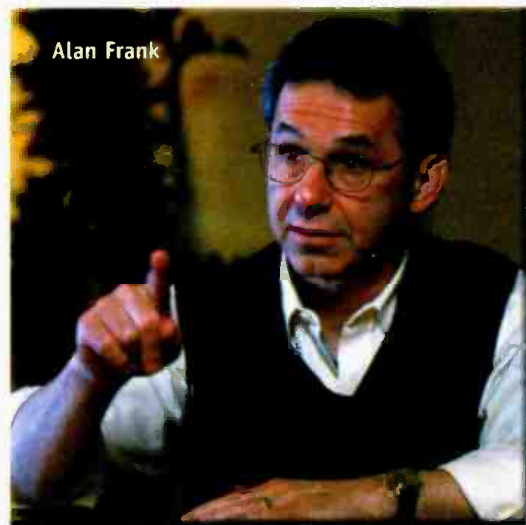
NEW MEDIA, NEW HOPE

The Road to the NAB, Part I, looks at how new-media suppliers are changing with the times

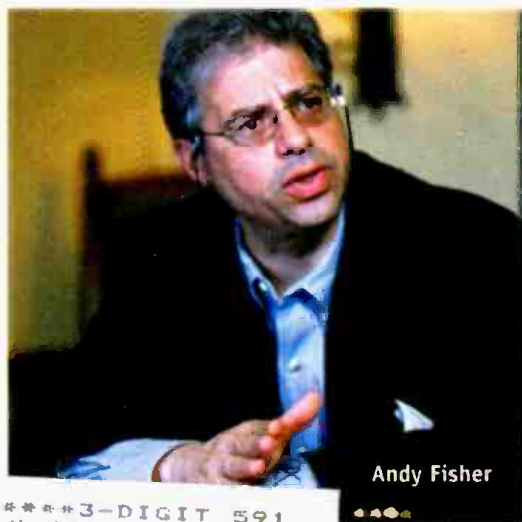
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Ringleaders

Post-Newsweek's Alan Frank and Cox's Andy Fisher head the 600-strong coalition



Alan Frank



Andy Fisher

of broadcast affiliates that want to stem the power of the networks

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BCEYE

SYNDICATION

Business proposition

BusinessWeek is coming to TV. South Carolina-based syndicator Litton is relaunching BizNet TV's existing weekly finance show, *Money Talks*, this fall with publisher McGraw-Hill. *BusinessWeek*, the TV show, will be produced at the conclusion of Friday trading. Jill Bennett, host of *Money Talks* in its first two seasons, will host. The series will tap editorial content and executives from *BusinessWeek* and Standard & Poors. "We are going to aim this at the average investor and at its highest levels; we will be talking to the Jack Welchs and Bill Gates of the business world," says Dave Morgan, Litton president and CEO. *BusinessWeek* is already cleared on WABC-TV New York, WLS-TV Chicago and on McGraw-Hill stations in San Diego, Denver and Indianapolis.

NETWORKS

Mickey says, 'So long'

ABC staffers last week received letters outlining the details of Disney's proposed buyout package. Employees serving less than two years get 12 weeks severance pay, while those serving two to three years get 16. Four years and up gets worker bees eight weeks plus an additional week for each year of service up to a maximum of 60 weeks, while directors and higher get eight weeks and two additional weeks for each year served up to 60 weeks. Employees have three weeks to decide. Two weeks ago, Disney said 4,000 staffers would be cut by July.



ADVERTISING

Reiss replay

In the "where are they now" category, ex-Request TV CEO Jeffrey Reiss is launching a venture to help new cable nets secure distribution. Reiss and ex-NBC executive Brian McGuirk (brother of TBS Vice Chairman Terry) are expected to announce TVFusion, which will handle affiliate and ad sales for startups. Reiss, who helped start Showtime and Cable Health Network (one of the predecessors to Lifetime) has been pretty much MIA in cable since TCI-backed PPV distributor Request TV was sold to rival In Demand in 1992, then essentially folded. For a while, Reiss ran a TCI-backed business training company, CareerTrack. The big question: Can Reiss save our favorite startup, The Puppy Channel?

ERIN BROCKOVICH TO THE RESCUE

Look for Erin Brockovich to land on TV. NBC, CBS and ABC are said to be interested in *Challenge America With Erin Brockovich*, a series of six hour specials featuring Brockovich rescuing people in "down on their luck" situations. Say, for example, that a family's home is swept away by a flood, says a source. Brockovich would rally the nation's Home Depot-type companies to build them a new house.

OLYMPICS-FEED FRACAS BREWS ON WEST COAST

NBC has told affiliates it wants to provide just one live prime time feed of the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics at 7:30-11 p.m. (ET). West Coast stations, which would get the feed at 4:30-8 p.m., aren't thrilled about the prospect. It would blow out local news. And they fear the local Olympics ad time wouldn't be worth as

much if the feed doesn't air in West Coast prime time. But NBC fed a single prime time feed from Atlanta in 1996 and got huge ratings. Nothing has been finalized.

THE FINAL (COMPARATIVE) WORD

An FCC judge last week ordered the operator of WTVE (TV) Reading, Pa., to give up its license. The owner, Reading Broadcasting, pledged to appeal the decision. Reading's case was the last outstanding renewal pending under an old FCC policy that allowed challengers to compete for licenses up for renewal. The comparative process was abolished in 1996, but pending cases were allowed to continue. Reading's president was found to have made misleading statements to the FCC and to have taken unauthorized control of the station, which offers home shopping.

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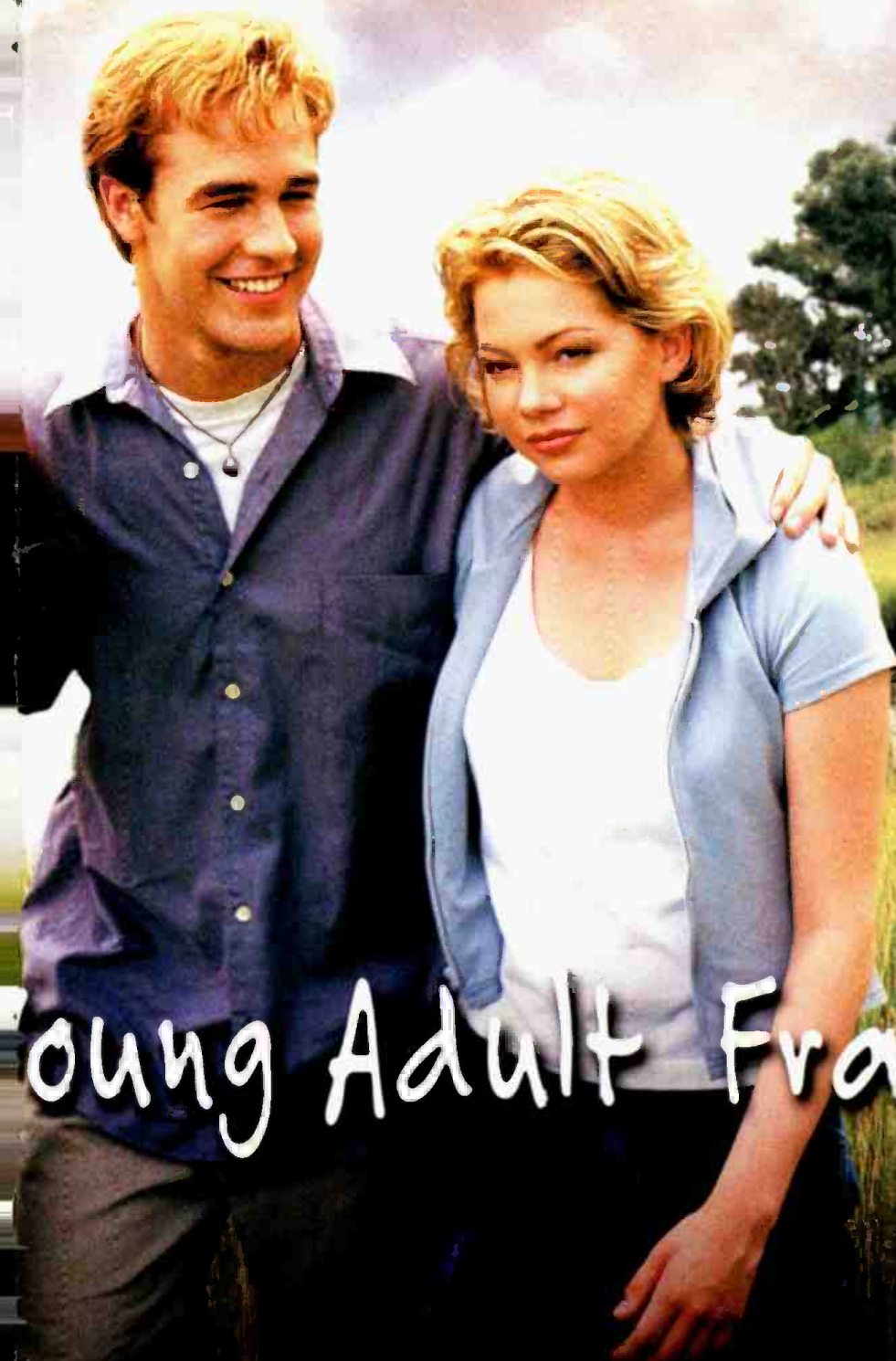
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Nets vs. affils: Another round

Viacom/CBS joins NBC, Fox in exiting NAB; ABC remains

By Paige Albiniak

Viacom/CBS' exit from the National Association of Broadcasters last week is only a symptom of the Grand Canyon-size rift that has opened between the networks and their affiliates.

The fight is centered on one simple rule: Congress has limited broadcasters to owning only as many TV stations as cover 35% of the nation's 100 million TV homes. The networks want to own more—up to 50%—while affiliates want to limit the networks' power by keeping the cap where it is.

But that's just one reason affiliates and networks are at war. As they told the FCC in a petition filed last month, affiliates are angry at networks for forcing them to air programming they don't want, like the XFL and baseball games instead of presidential debates. They also don't appreciate network threats to revoke affiliation agreements if they don't approve of a station sale.

For their part, networks say they aren't profitable on their own—they make money from their owned stations—and that it's only fair that they should be able to own a sizable part of the distribution when they are taking all the financial risks on the programming.

With its decision to leave NAB (and take about \$1 million annual dues with them), Viacom/CBS, its 35 TV stations and 180-plus radio stations joined Fox and NBC. Both left last year over the same issue.

"We must reject an agenda that is inconsistent and misguided, and which fails to address the very real competitive and technological challenges to our industry's future," wrote CBS Television President



Viacom President Mel Karmazin (l), seen here chatting with FCC Chairman Michael Powell at The Big Picture conference last Tuesday in New York, pulled CBS out of the NAB in protest of the association's continuing support of the broadcast ownership cap.

Leslie Moonves and Infinity Broadcasting President Faird Suleman in their letter of resignation.

"I'm very disappointed that this issue should rise above every other issue ahead of us," said Andy Fisher, executive vice president of Cox Television and a member of NAB's television board.

Of the Big Four networks, only Disney-owned ABC plans to stay.

"ABC will remain a member of NAB and work from inside the organization with the twin goals of restoring broadcast industry unity, and embracing consistent and principled deregulation of broadcast ownership rules," said Preston Padden, executive vice president of government

relations for The Walt Disney Co. in a prepared statement.

Some onlookers think the NAB will remain a force in Washington because of the sway local broadcasters have with their mem-

bers of Congress, but would be better off with the networks on board.

"I think generally speaking it weakens broadcasters collectively when it comes to lobbying successfully on a wide range of issues before Congress," said Ken Johnson, spokesman for House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Billy Tauzin (R-La.). "When

you consider the ramifications of campaign finance alone, this is not a good time for broadcasters to be estranged."

NAB's loss of CBS 'weakens broadcasters collectively when it comes to lobbying successfully on a wide range of issues before Congress.'

—Ken Johnson, spokesman for House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Billy Tauzin

Broadcasters have a broad range of issues on which they want Congress to act, from killing a bill passed by the Senate two weeks ago that would require stations to give politicians deep discounts for ad time, to helping broadcasters make the transition to digital.

CBS' departure was preceded by three key and related events:

■ The U.S. Court of Appeals at the D.C. Circuit last month struck down a 30% national audience limit on ownership of cable operators, saying the number seemed to be "plucked from thin air," and suggesting that 60% might be a more appropriate limit.

That let Viacom/CBS know it might be able to hang onto all the stations it acquired when the two companies merged, bringing its station reach to 41%. The D.C. court last Friday granted Viacom a stay of the May 4 deadline that the FCC had set for Viacom to divest, while the court considers a petition from Viacom, NBC and Fox as to whether the 35% national broadcast cap is constitutional.

■ In early March, the Network Affiliated Stations Alliance (NASA) filed a thick complaint with the FCC, outlining a long list of abuses affiliates feel they have suffered at the hands of the networks. Viacom/CBS execs were shocked by the petition, and upset they weren't given fair warning that it was going to be filed. (See BROADCASTING & CABLE'S Q&A with two of the leaders of the protest, Cox's Andy Fisher and Post-Newsweek's Alan Frank, page 18).

■ The last straw for Viacom/CBS came when NAB's television board last week voted to file together with NASA against raising the 35% cap at the D.C. Court. It probably didn't help that the same lawyer who wrote the NASA brief—Covington and Burling's Jonathan Blake—is involved in writing the NAB/NASA petition for the court.

The complexity of the situation is also changed because Republicans are now in charge of Congress, the FCC and the administration, and Republicans are much

more inclined toward deregulation than the Clinton Democrats were.

FCC Chairman Michael Powell has made clear he favors less regulation in broadcasting, and if the court follows the same logic it used to scrap the cable cap, Powell will have all the justification he needs to make similar changes to the broadcast rules.

"You've got to stop focusing about the allegations of the businesses and start thinking about the consumer," Powell said

last week during a press briefing. "Will the government's role be different if one-third of Americans are still receiving news, entertainment and information over the air than it would be if 95% of them are receiving it over cable? My own view is the government role would probably be different."

Even if all the networks ultimately leave, most broadcast executives don't think the networks will form their own lobbying group. "We can work together without having an association," one exec said. ■

Bush taps three for FCC seats

Martin, Abernathy and Cops will be submitted once FBI clears them

By Paige Albinak

Republicans Kevin Martin and Kathleen Abernathy and Democrat Mike Cops are President George W. Bush's choices to fill the three open seats at the FCC. The fourth seat remains Gloria Tristani's, but last week House Democratic leadership backed Andy Levin, counsel to Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.), for the post when Tristani departs.

The White House announced its choices last Friday. The nominations will not be sent to the Senate for confirmation until the FBI completes background checks on them.

Martin comes right from the FCC's ranks as a former aide to Commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth. Martin also led the White House's FCC search. Abernathy is currently a lobbyist for the Broadband

Office and a former partner at the Washington law firm of Wilkinson, Barker, Knauer. As a former aide to former FCC Chairman James Quello, she also is no stranger to the FCC.

Cops is a former staffer for Senate Commerce Committee ranking member Fritz Hollings (D-S.C.) and more recently had been assistant secretary of commerce in charge of trade.

Tristani hasn't said when she plans to leave the commission, but forces are lining up to replace her. Last week, House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt and House Minority Whip David Bonior (D-Mich.) put their weight behind Levin. Dingell, who wields power both as ranking member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee

and the House's longest-serving member, strongly supports Levin.

"Andy is widely viewed, both on and off Capitol Hill, as a superb candidate to address those challenges as an FCC Commissioner," they wrote in a letter to Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.). "That is why we ask the Senate Democratic Leadership to join us in recommending him for the second Democratic seat."

Levin also has the support of key House Commerce Committee members Billy Tauzin (R-La.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Fred Upton (R-Mich.). ■



Democratic nominee Mike Cops is a favorite of Senate Commerce Committee member Fritz Hollings (D-S.C.).

No ill wind blows

Fear of a Hollywood strike could be upfront boon to cable

By John M. Higgins

The more that advertisers fear an actors strike, the better cable will do in the upfront. That's about the only generally agreed-upon assessment of cable networks' leverage in the market as the upfront advertising season looms.

Otherwise, expectations and forecasts are all over the map, from cable executives generally predicting modest growth in a weak market to some analysts forecasting a savage downturn for everyone.

The question is, in a bad economy, do cable networks gain because they're relatively cheap, or do advertisers put their reduced budgets in what they generally consider the best outlet, broadcast networks?

"At this point, it doesn't look like there will be any inflation," said Chris Geraci, senior vice president, national broadcast, for Omnicom Group's BBDO Worldwide. "The one thing about cable is, it's still a relatively low-cost base, so it could show some gains. But the runaway inflation in cable over the past couple of years won't be seen again."

In his annual forecast of the upfront market, Discovery Network's ad-sales chief Bill McGowan predicted that the slowing of the economy will spark a "major correction" for the broadcast networks, with spending falling 5%, from \$7.8 billion last year to \$7.3 billion this year. He believes that the \$500 million difference will shift to cable nets, whose sales should rise 11%, to \$5.2 billion.

McGowan contends that, with basic cable's ratings going up and broadcasters' falling, a recession should break the network's leverage over ad buyers. "The price/value relationship is not there." He has an obvious ax to grind but also has a good track record in forecasting upfronts.

So at the end of the day, McGowan expects advertisers' combined upfront commitments to cable and broadcast to be about the same as last year.

Discovery Network's Bill McGowan expects cable networks' sales to rise 11%, to \$5.2 billion.

Morgan Stanley media analyst Richard Bilotti, however, paints a bleaker picture, predicting that the overall market will plunge 15% as advertisers hesitate to spend in a crumbling economy. "Advertisers that have been hurt most by the slowing U.S. economy may opt against long-term contracts to increase the

flexibility of their advertising budget."

The good news is that cable's ratings are up strongly. An analysis crunched by Turner Broadcasting System research chief Bob Siebert shows that basic cable networks' household viewership increased 9%

during the first quarter ended April 1. Among the broadcast networks, CBS posted a 5% increase, Fox a 2% increase; the other major services dropped, though, with ABC losing 18% of its audience. The three largest broadcast networks lost an average 8%; the four largest, 7%.

The one thing that offers leverage to cable is a strike. If a strike shuts down production of TV series, industry executives believe, viewers are unlikely to watch stale reruns on NBC and CBS.

Cable networks, on the other hand, already thrive on reruns and old movies. Also, some of them have original series already in the can. TNT, for example, has its new urban action series *Witchblade*, which begins this summer, and the second season of Wall Street series *Bull*, which was so poorly received it probably won't emerge unless there is a strike.

"Cable networks are going to play into the fear of the strike, and that will probably cause some shift in spending," said an executive with one ad agency. "The broadcasters will counter with reality stuff in the fall, but some advertisers aren't comfortable with reality shows." ■

If talent strikes, ratings get hit

A labor strike in Hollywood will hurt the major broadcast networks' ratings across the board.

That's according to a report from media buyer TN Media, which projects an almost-10% decrease in both household and adults 18-49 ratings at the six major networks during the fourth quarter of 2001—if the Screen Actors Guild and/or Writers Guild of America take to the picket lines this summer.

The study projects Fox and ABC to be in the best position in the fall if there is a strike, due to an abundance of professional sports and original programming at both networks.

On the other hand, CBS will probably have to devote one-third of its prime time schedule in the fourth quarter to repeats, while NBC would have 20% of its schedule in reruns. The report also says UPN would have 25% of its lineup in repeats, while The WB would only have to air previously shown fare about 15% of the time.

On the ratings front, TN Media projects that The WB would likely lose 19% of its adult 18-34 audience and 15% of its 18-49 viewers. NBC will also take a 15% hit in adults 18-49 and 16% decrease in adults 25-54.

With a strike, CBS and UPN would actually gain in the 18-34 demo and Fox would gain in viewers 50-plus. The report is based on fourth-quarter estimates and also factors in a 4% decrease at all networks due to increased competition from the Internet, cable and other outside forces.

—Joe Schlosser



Lifetime hits No. 1

Women's network on top for an entire quarter for the first time

By John M. Higgins

The champagne literally came out when Nielsen declared Lifetime Television the top cable network in prime time for the first quarter—the first time the network was in that slot for an entire quarter.

Lifetime finished the three-month period ended Sunday, April 1, with a 2.0 household rating, averaging 1.59 million homes a night. That beat out the typically top-ranked USA Network's 1.9 rating and 1.54 million households, a 21% attributed to the loss of WWF wrestling shows to TNN.

Scoring the top household rating offers mostly bragging rights since networks sell ad time based on viewership by particular demographic groups.

But it's certainly a sign of strong momentum. At 3:30 p.m., Lifetime staffers on both coasts popped the corks on President Carole Black's preferred champagne Veuve Clicquot and nibbled chocolate-covered strawberries.

"That's how women celebrate," Black said.

The ranking comes 10 days after Black's two-year anniversary at the network. When Black first arrived, she declared at a staff meeting that the network would go to No. 1, and staffers chuckled. "We were like, 'No. 1 what?'" said one Lifetime executive.

The network gets most of its viewers from movies—new originals, reruns and theatricals. But it has also enjoyed success with new series *Any Day Now* and *Strong Medicine*.

When Carole Black first arrived, she declared that the network would go to No. 1, and staffers chuckled.

USA just edged out TBS Superstation, which also scored a 1.9 household rating but lagged a hair with just 3,000 fewer viewers. TBS' rating was up 6%. Fourth-ranked Cartoon Network also increased 6%, to a 1.7. Big gainers include Travel Channel, up 67%, to a 0.5; TNN, up 57%, to a 1.1 on the strength of its WWF-led overhaul; and Bravo, up 33%, to a 0.4.

Losers include The Weather Channel, which dropped 25%, to a 0.3 (the result of that muffed New York City blizzard forecast, no doubt); ESPN, also down 25%, to a 0.9; and TV Land, off 13%, to 0.7. ■

Time Warner breathes life into Oxygen

By John M. Higgins

Amidst deep skepticism of its ability to survive, Oxygen Media has scored big by securing a distribution deal on AOL Time Warner cable systems.

The deal will give Oxygen the bulk of the systems on the second-largest MSO. That, in addition to a planned move to a more favorable tier on DirecTV, is expected to help lift the women-targeted network from 14 million homes today to 42 million by the end of 2002.

AOL Time Warner also increased its existing minority stake in Oxygen, injecting an undisclosed amount of cash, and cut a new deal to market and promote Oxygen's Web sites.

The deal marks a new direction for Time Warner Cable, which has long been slow to offer carriage even to networks owned by Time Warner. "Who's my worst customer?" asked an executive at one network in the AOL Time Warner family. "Joe Collins," chairman of Time Warner Cable. Various CNN spin-offs long had a tough time getting carried by Time Warner Cable.

Oxygen Chairman Geraldine Laybourne has no complaints about Time Warner Cable. "They had the standard resistance that anybody has," she said. "It was mostly the price," since Oxygen is charging around 19 cents per sub, high for a startup.

Still, AOL Time Warner COO Bob Pittman is putting a much higher priority on having the company's divisions support each other, and, with AOL an early investor in Oxygen, that means longtime Pittman pal Laybourne is getting carriage quickly. The deal assures Oxygen of temporary carriage on the company's digital tiers this summer, reaching around 2 million subs.

By fall of next year, AOL will carry Oxygen on systems serving 10 million, or 80% of its 12.7 million subscriber base. ■

IN BRIEF

**3RD ROCK AXED,
SHOOT ME RENEWED**

NBC pulled the plug on veteran sitcom *3rd Rock From the Sun* and gave *Just Shoot Me* a two-year renewal. Six-year-old *3rd Rock* will exit with a one-hour finale on May 22. NBC renewed *Just Shoot Me*, from Universal Studios through the 2002-03 season for just under \$2 million per episode, sources say.

REALITY TV'S LOST

NBC has ordered six episodes of a reality series coined *Lost* that drops contestants off in the middle of nowhere and challenges them to make their way to the Statue of Liberty. The series is from Windfall Films, produced by Conan O'Brien's production company Conanco and NBC Studios. The series could be ready by fall.

ROGALA LEAVES WFLA-TV

Rick Rogala, general manager at Media General-owned WFLA-TV Tampa, is leaving the station to become vice president and general manager at Tribune-owned WXIN-TV Indianapolis.

RATHER APOLOGIZES

CBS Evening News anchor Dan Rather apologized last Wednesday for attending a Democratic fundraiser event that his daughter was involved with in Austin, Texas. At the time, Rather said he was unaware it was a fundraiser but acknowledged he should have known and didn't ask. The story was first reported in *The Washington Post*. "I made an embarrassing and regrettable error in judgment," Rather's statement said. A spokeswoman said, correspondents aren't allowed to participate in political fundraisers. "This was an honest oversight on his part," she said. No disciplinary action will be taken.

Indecent proposals

FCC issues guidelines on enforcement of raunchy material

By Bill McConnell

Editors' note: Some language in this story may offend you. We print it as a matter of record.

Nearly seven years behind schedule, the FCC is giving broadcasters some help predicting what programming will get them in trouble.

The FCC agreed in 1994 to prepare indecency guidelines as part of a settlement with then-Evergreen Media's WLUP(AM) Chicago. The guidelines were due in 1995, but, while the FCC for years has been reviewing indecency cases under policies nearly identical to those issued last week, a comprehensive guideline had never been published.

By offering a formal policy, new FCC Chairman Michael Powell is making good on his promise to clear a backlog of agency rulemakings and other obligations.

"The guidance we offer—a restatement of existing statutory, regulatory and judicial law—establishes a measure of clarity in an inherently subjective area," said Commissioner Susan Ness.

Under a 1995 court decision, broadcasters are forbidden to air or "indecent" content between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Pinpointing what is indecent has always been tricky. Technically, indecent programming "describes or depicts" sexual or excretory organs or activities in a way that is "patently offensive by contemporary community standards."

What does that really mean? The FCC offered case-by-case examples of broadcasts ruled indecent in recent years.

Some examples blatantly violated the guidelines, the FCC said. WSUC-FM Cortland, N.Y., was fined for airing a rap song including the lyrics "the only thing that was on my mind, was just shoving my dick up this bitch's behind."

But less explicit material, including innuendo and double entendre, also may be ruled indecent. For instance, KGB-FM San Diego was fined for lyrics such as "pulled out my Whopper" for a "Sweetart" to go "down on my Tootsie Roll."

Even if part of the material is difficult to understand, stations can be sanctioned, the FCC said. For instance, WWKX(FM) Woonsocket, R.I., was fined though it bleeped out "fuck" and "dick." The sanction was justified, the FCC said, because the words were "recognizable, notwithstanding the editing."

But the FCC passed on a TV broadcast of a sex-ed class which demonstrated birth control methods and relied on realistic models of sex organs and an Oprah Winfrey program about female masturbation.

The guidance was found wanting by critics on both sides of the issue.

"What I don't see in the guidelines is any way to treat something that might be considered a close case. If you have doubt about programming you might put on,

these guideline don't help you much," said Washington attorney Robert Corn-Revere. Corn-Revere noted that the FCC has dismissed many complaints about broadcasts that more closely scrape bounds of indecency rules than the exonerated examples.

Commissioner Gloria Tristani, on the other hand, complained that the guidance doesn't satisfy the 1994 agreement and "perpetuates the myth" that standards have been too vague. Finally, she complained that drafting the guidance distracted the agency from an "ongoing problem of lax enforcement." Tristani has repeatedly objected to FCC dismissals of indecency complaints.

Readers wishing to read the guidelines can see them on the FCC's Web site by going to www.fcc.gov/eb/Orders/2001. ■

'What I don't see in the guidelines is any way to treat something that might be considered a close case.'

—Robert Corn-Revere, attorney

Back to the banks

With ad slowdown, station groups seek to restructure debt

By Steve McClellan

Call it the year of debt restructuring for the broadcasting industry. The slowdown in TV ad sales is making it difficult for many broadcast borrowers to meet the terms of their loans, so they are seeking amendments from lenders or are redoing agreements altogether.

Sinclair reportedly has asked J.P. Morgan Chase to restructure a loan package that is in danger of default. The company wants the lender to reduce the principal from \$1.75 billion to \$1.1 billion, with more time to pay it back, in exchange for a higher interest rate.

Financial types say it's unusual for a lender to reduce the principal on a loan, unless it's sure it won't get paid back and doesn't want to go through the trouble of taking possession of the defaulter and liquidating. Sinclair CFO David Amy didn't return calls for comment.

Sinclair's restructuring request came just weeks after Goldman, Sachs & Co. came to the rescue of what a Wall Street analyst called Granite Broadcasting's "financial distress" with a new \$205 million credit facility. NBC, too, modified the terms of a 10-year \$362 million reverse-compensation obligation that kicks in next year.

Last week, Ackerley Communications acknowledged in an SEC filing that it would have been in technical default on a loan if its \$200 million sale of the Seattle Supersonics basketball team didn't close by April 15. The sale closed last week, giving Ackerley some financial breathing room.

Lenders usually require broadcasters to agree to covenants, or promises to meet certain revenue or earnings targets, to maintain certain debt to cash flow ratios, or even not to buy or sell certain assets. If those promises are broken, the loan goes into technical default, and the lender can force the borrower to pay up on the spot. What usually happens, though, is a borrower who is close to

violating one or more covenants will seek waivers to avoid default. According to its SEC filing, Ackerley amended its agreement seven times before closing its Supersonics sale last week.

Acme Communications, the WB station group controlled by The WB TV Network founder Jamie Kellner, and Benedek Broadcasting have also asked for waivers to certain loan covenants to avoid being in technical default on their loans.

And Wall Street has an eye on Young Broadcasting, which has more than \$1 billion in debt and recently advised analysts that first-quarter earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) would dip 25% to 29%. Young has acknowledged that earnings for KCAL-TV Los Angeles are down significantly, as are most of the market's stations, which has been particularly

hard hit by the soft advertising climate.

Young Broadcasting CFO James Morgan said the company remains within existing covenants of its loans. But he declined to discuss whether it has plans to restructure its debt anytime soon.

Don't be surprised to see lots of other TV and radio stations amending their loan agreements, said Bishop Cheen, broadcast analyst at First Union Securities. "This is a tough year. Can you name one broadcaster whose debt-to-EBITDA ratio is going down this year? I can't." There may be an exception or two, he added.

Banks are under pressure from the Fed to "screen the quality of their credit a little more," he said, noting that banks see broadcasting as a riskier business to lend to now than 18 months ago, so interest rates to stations will rise.

Lee Westerfield, broadcast analyst at UBS Warburg, says lenders have been lowering broadcast-station valuations for six months now—something he finds ironic "given the likelihood of deregulation" by the current FCC. ■

Banks see the broadcasting business as a riskier business to lend to now so interest rates to stations will rise, says First Union Securities' Bishop Cheen.

IN BRIEF

TURELL HEADS PUBLICITY AT TURNER

Jamie Kellner has invited another WB Network associate to join him at Turner Broadcasting System. Brad Turell, who has headed up The WB's publicity and marketing efforts since its launch six years ago, has been named executive vice president of communications for Turner Broadcasting System. Last month, Kellner, chairman and CEO of TBS, named former WB and NBC programming head Garth Ancier executive vice president of programming at Turner Networks. The heads of publicity at all the Turner Broadcasting networks and businesses will now report to Turell.

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

New low-power FM stations already must be two channels away from the next closest station, but the FCC ruled last week that a specific minimum distance needs to be established. The revised LPFM order is in response to a bill passed by Congress last December.

"This action will enable us to move ahead and grant construction permits to eligible LPFM applicants who meet the standard for protecting third adjacencies, the same level of interference protection currently required for full-power stations," said FCC Chairman Michael Powell.

ECO-CHALLENGE WINS

Viewers did not find it a challenge to watch USA's first-time coverage of *Eco-Challenge*, produced by *Survivor's* Mark Burnett. Over its four-day arc starting Sunday, April 1, the leech-infested race averaged a 2.0 household rating (1.7 million households), beating the averages of all other basic cable programming up against *Eco-Challenge's* time slots, Sunday-Tuesday 8-9 p.m. and Wednesday 8-10 p.m.

FINANCIAL WRAP-UP

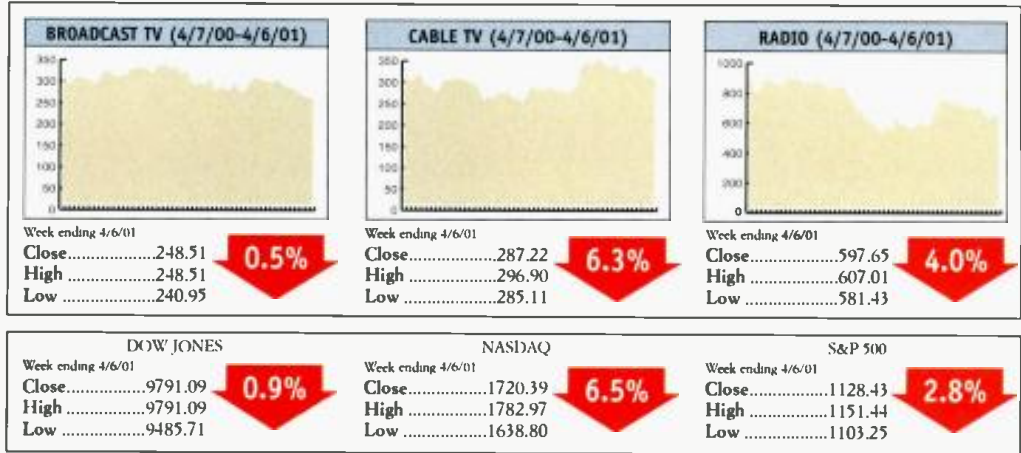
Week of April 2-6

WINNERS

	4/6	% change
Granite Brst.	\$2.00	36.17
Cumulus Media	\$6.75	16.76
Liberty Satellite	\$1.88	11.11
Shop At Home	\$1.61	7.37
Young Brst.	\$33.50	6.77

LOSERS

	4/6	% change
Classic Comm.	\$.58	(71.88)
Unitedglobalcom	\$9.00	(31.43)
Big City Radio	\$3.00	(25.00)
Cablevision	\$19.90	(23.46)
Liberty Digital	\$.50	(20.00)



It's still no deal

But Murdoch says SkyGlobal can do fine without DirecTV

By John M. Higgins

Even ruthless industrial and media moguls have needs, and Rupert Murdoch's snagged attempt to take over DirecTV still leaves all sides scrambling for fulfillment.

News Corp. Chairman Murdoch's needs are the least immediate. For years, he has longed for a U.S. DBS operation to match the Asian and European operations controlled by his SkyGlobal unit.

But the needs of DirecTV's masters are more urgent. Nominal parent Hughes Electronics will need \$2 billion in cash this year, by one estimate, to cover expansion at DirecTV and its other units. And ultimate parent company General Motors needs a few billion dollars to calm debt holders worried about the car manufacturer's operation in the face of a recession.

Then, of course, there are the Wall Street deal makers, who badly need a fee fix amidst the near shutdown of the merger market. "This one's the only game in town," said the head of investment banking for one Wall Street firm.

Sources involved in the deal said that GM has given Hughes Chairman Michael

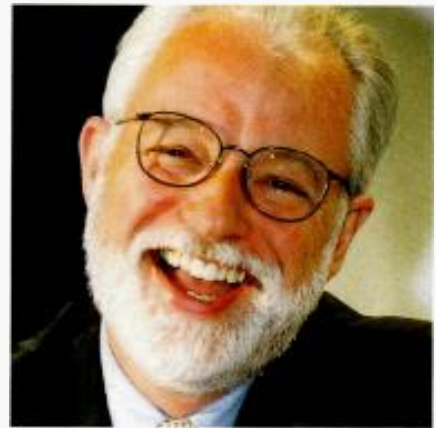
Smith until the end of the month to come up with a workable way for the car company to extract cash out of the satellite operation. That includes a sale, a spin-off that would let GM "monetize" its 30% stake, or bringing investors in for partial stakes. He has tested the interest of General Electric Corp., which just agreed to sell its own satellite operation and telco SBC Corp. Murdoch and his backers, Microsoft Corp. and Liberty Media Corp., are other targets.

Smith critics contend he won't sell because he wants to control the operation himself. Supporters question why anyone but Murdoch wants GM to sell when the market is in the tank, with Hughes stock off 40% in the past year. "Isn't it buy low, sell high?" asked one investment banker.

Smith defended himself at a recent investment conference, saying that accusations that he's looking out for himself are "absolutely false and untrue." His only commitment is to maximizing value for shareholders.

"The worst for Hughes' stock would be if they don't do anything," said Merrill Lynch & Co. satellite analyst Marc Nabi.

After taking the standard "cautiously



News Corp.'s year-long attempt to buy Hughes and its DirecTV unit, led by President Eddy Hartenstein, is on the rocks.

optimistic" stance for a month or so, Murdoch now openly acknowledges that his year-long attempt to buy Hughes and its 10-million-subscriber DirecTV unit, led by Eddy Hartenstein, is on the rocks. Speaking at the SkyForum in New York last Thursday—an appearance that News Corp. once expected Murdoch would use to tout a DirecTV deal—the media baron waxed rhapsodic about SkyGlobal's international operations and its sizable stake in interactive program guide vendor Gemstar.

"Is SkyGlobal viable without a U.S. presence?" Murdoch asked. "Of course it is. That's a bit like asking whether the Louvre could exist without the Mona Lisa ... We, like the Louvre, have plenty of other treasures." ■

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IN BRIEF

WE CAN'T SEE YOU

Satellite interests are concerned about independent tests being conducted by Mitre Corp. on Northpoint's proposed competing terrestrial wireless delivery system, they wrote in a letter to the FCC.

DirectTV, EchoStar and the Satellite Broadcasting and Communications Association say neither the FCC nor Mitre is being open enough about the tests, which were mandated by Congress last December and are meant to determine whether Northpoint's spectrum-sharing system will interfere with incumbent satellite services. "The lack of transparency in the testing process has resulted in DBS operators' having no idea whether field tests are being conducted and, importantly, whether such tests are being conducted properly," they wrote.

PEEPING TIVO?

Key Democratic lawmakers have asked the FTC to investigate whether personal video recorder company TiVo is inappropriately collecting information about its customers. "The charges against TiVo are serious and certainly raise questions as to whether they violate the prohibition ... against 'unfair or deceptive trade practices,'" wrote Reps. John Dingell (D-Mich.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Edolphus Towns (D-N.Y.).

TiVo argues that it imports customer data, including serial numbers, but severs the two so that demographic information can be collected without linking specific information to the identifying number. The lawmakers are concerned about TiVo's having access to the information in the first place.

Creek bubblin' green

'Network-maker' drama to get \$1M+ per episode in syndication

By Joe Schlosser

Next up on the suddenly hot off-network-drama block: *Dawson's Creek*. Columbia TriStar Television Distribution is taking The WB drama into the off-network syndication market this month, looking to land a weekday cable home and possibly simultaneous local station airings for the weekend.

Dawson's Creek, which debuted on The WB in January 1998, will be available for fall 2002, according to CTTD executives. And sources say there is interest from a broad range of national cable outlets, including USA Network and TNT/TBS.

Other networks in the hunt are Fox Family Channel, MTV Networks, Lifetime and possibly Oxygen. Former WB executives Jamie Kellner and Garth Ancier, who now run Turner Broadcasting System, may have a special interest in the series—after all, they nurtured it. A Turner spokesman had no comment.

What Columbia TriStar will get for the series—which is popular with young adults—is unclear. However, the stakes on the off-network drama front have gone up dramatically over the past month.

Within the past four weeks, *The West Wing*, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* have all contracted deals with cable networks involving more than a million dollars per episode. *The West Wing* went to

Bravo for \$1.2 million per episode, *SVU* is headed to USA Network for \$1.4 million and *CSI* garnered over \$1.5 million from TNN, sources say. Syndication executives expect

Dawson's Creek to command over \$1 million per episode as well.

Columbia TriStar Television Distribution President Steve Mosko wouldn't speculate on what kind of money the series will make but was quick to point out *Dawson's* strong track record on The

'When Dawson's debuted in 1998, it really brought The WB to the next level.'

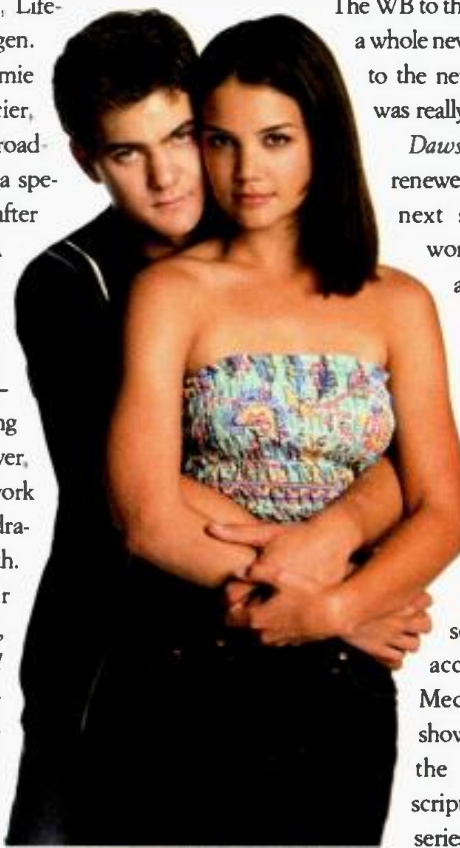
—Steve Mosko, Columbia TriStar Television Distribution

WB.

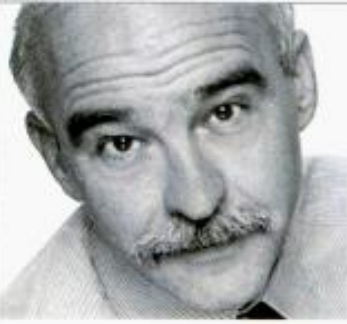
"If you look back historically at The WB, they went on the air in 1995, and UPN beat up on them for some time," Mosko recalls. "When *Dawson's* debuted in 1998, it really brought The WB to the next level, bringing in a whole new group of young adults to the network. It's a show that was really a network-maker."

Dawson's Creek, which is renewed on The WB through next season, was the network's highest-rated series among young adults in both the 1998-99 season and the 1999-2000 season.

This year, *Dawson's* is averaging a 2.9 rating/9 share among viewers 12-34, remaining The WB's highest-rated series in the demo, according to Nielsen Media Research. The show's Web site receives the most traffic of any scripted TV series, and the series has also spawned a clothing line, among other things. ■



Joshua Jackson and Katie Holmes help draw the 12-34 demo to The WB's *Dawson's Creek*.



What do men want?

Television's answer isn't a pretty one

Television used to be so much better before the networks began paying attention to men. We are only a little less than half of the American population, but most of the worst stuff on television these days is made in our honor, even though, historically, there are more women viewers and more advertisers that want to reach them.

I don't want to ask the question, but I will: Is this what men want?

To some extent, cable television is captivated by wrestling men, first on USA and now on TNN. The World Wrestling Federation telecasts consistently rank at or near the top of cable's Nielsen ratings, put there by millions of boys and young men.

At the best, I once thought, WWF was a badly done morality play. Then I realized that its appeal is much less than that. In fact, the WWF and most other shows that appeal to men thrive on deliberately low intentions. Either that's because that's what men want, or it's because of who men are.

WWF isn't just sexist and violent and vile and crude. It's also bad-looking, badly done, overlit, overwrought, overloud. Wrestling isn't

alone. Remember *The Man Show*? It looked like a local talk show, and, what's more, it was supposed to. Indeed, from Tom Green on MTV to *South Park* on Comedy Central, the idea appears to be that the cheaper television looks, the more authentic it must be. And the more authentic it is, the more likely there will be really gross flatulence jokes.

Those are very important.

Television men are unusually interested in bodily functions that are way beyond sex, which they don't get, in both senses of the phrase. In fact, announcing *Jackass*, MTV's Web site enthused, "This fall, MTV prepares to paint the world an absurd shade of brown." Yes, indeed. Johnny Knoxville, the

main jackass on the show, was, according to the Web site, "upended in a porta-potty chock full of poo and pee for one skit entitled 'The Poo Cocktail.'"

Since then, a New York City magazine, *Time Out*, has called *Jackass* "the most brilliant show on television—not because it is smart (it is relentlessly dumb) but because it is a pure distillation of exactly what America wants to watch."

Would that be poo? Yes. *Jackass* is full of it.

Or it could be more-cerebral stuff, like the other skit *Time Out* mentioned. Another cast member announced, "Today, I'm going to beat up my dad." Then he did.

It is a joke. I get a joke. I don't mean to scold. But televi-

sion shows for men are mainly television shows that are against someone else. Watch Howard Stern (on finer CBS O&Os everywhere), and, yes, you'll see he'll make fun of himself. But he will thoroughly humiliate others.

(You will also get some flatulence jokes. I swear, they're everywhere.)

Cable television sold itself to Americans, in part, on the idea

get hurt. (Even the team nicknames suggested death—Hitmen and Maniax, for example.)

That was the whole idea behind the "smash mouth" branding and the incessant reminders that rules that protect players in the NFL were eased or eliminated in the XFL. But after the first week, with no sign of significant carnage, male viewers began to check out. The scary moral is

As cable has pushed the envelope, so have NBC, ABC, CBS and Fox. There's not much of that damn envelope left.

that it was liberated from the conventions of broadcast TV.

It's a great distinction, but, as cable has pushed the envelope, so have NBC, ABC, CBS and Fox. There's not much of that damn envelope left. (Want proof? In the mid '90s, a character used the word "sucked" on a horrible CBS sitcom, and critics pounced. Since then, the slang has become so commonplace that, last year, Mel Karmazin said CBS "sucks less" than the other networks in terms of its relationship with its affiliates. Time marches on!)

But nowhere is television more repugnant than when it's going after men. NBC's experiment with the XFL was hyped on the idea—barely beneath the surface—that players were going to

that maybe the XFL didn't go far enough to succeed.

The other, even more scary thing is that television producers will have to go further to gross out guys, and, as they do, the industry will move with them. A couple weekends ago, for example, The WB premiered *The Oblongs*, a cartoon show about a dad who's a quadrapalegic; a mom who's a cancerous alcoholic; their conjoined twin sons who have three rear ends; and the family's youngest, an emotionally scarred little boy named Milo. Man, that just sounds funny. But I'm that kind of guy. ■

Bednarski may be reached at pbednarski@cabnars.com or at 212-337-6965.

COVER STORY

The relationship between the major broadcast affiliates has been severely strained for the past several years. Still, it came as a surprise to the networks, as well as to outsiders, when the combined affiliate bodies of ABC, CBS and NBC—the National Affiliated Station Alliance—asked the FCC to investigate the networks for allegedly strong-arming affiliates, often in violation of long-standing FCC rules.

Pressing the case in Washington and elsewhere have been NASA Chairman Alan Frank (left in photo), of Post-Newsweek, and immediate past Chairman Andy Fisher, of Cox. Here, in an interview with BROADCASTING & CABLE Editor in Chief Harry A. Jessell, they defend the petition as a last-ditch attempt to maintain control over their stations.

Photo: Randy Tunnell Photography



It's come to this

Frank and Fisher say only Washington can save the affiliates from their networks

How did we get to the point?

ALAN FRANK: We started a few years ago through various affiliate boards that we were part of. We would hear from the groups, the affiliates: Isn't there something we can do? Is there anything we can do to put balance back between the affiliates and

the network?

ANDY FISHER: I think there is an irony as well, by the way. All three of the main affiliate boards had pressed very hard over the last 12 months with their respective networks to back away from some of their practices. There were some pretty impas-

sioned pleas made. I participated in one set, with one network, and there were others made to the other networks.

There was a great reluctance from many of us to have to go this route. We really believed that, if the argument could be framed persuasively, the networks would—on their



own—decide that they did not need to go down the paths that they were going down.

So what's the gist of your complaint?

FISHER: I would put these into three categories. The first category is the interference in transactions. The second category is the interference in the historical right to preempt [programming] without draconian financial consequences. And the third would be the reach for the not-even-yet-born digital age.

And what surprised me was some of the reactions of the networks. To me, there shouldn't be much emotion attached to this. Either the events alleged in the petition happened or didn't. If they're legal, there's no reason for anybody to be distressed. If they are illegal, then it should be easy enough for the FCC to say so, and the networks will have to stop the practices.

Some folks have said that the affiliates have signed these contracts and should live

with them. Well, in this country, the reality is that just because two people agree to do something doesn't mean that it's legal. There are all kinds of business decisions that are made by two businesses where the government steps in and says you can't do that.

The government says it's not in the public interest, even if both of you wanted to, and in this case, quite clearly, a lot of owners are saying we didn't want to. We just didn't see an alternative. Well, in the area of the digital spectrum, there is a significant legal question whether or not the networks have the right to, in essence, option their ability to wrest control of all your digital space.

In your filing, you talk about how NBC tried to scare off other potential bidders for KRON-TV in San Francisco. How big a problem is that kind of thing?

FISHER: For 40 years, people could sell a station, from Person A to Person B, and the

only issue the network had was, will my contract be fulfilled?

It was only in the last two years that one and then two and then three networks began to say, "Just a second. If you want to sell your property, we want to either have the right to buy it at discount or we want it to make that transaction subject to some additional requirements."

That's every network but CBS, right?

FISHER: CBS is the only network that does not engage in that practice, correct.

FRANK: Let's go to the first point, the right-to-reject rule, which is clearly the bedrock principle of localism and diversity.

One of the things the networks have done successfully is actually persuading people that you only preempt for breaking news for public affairs. Well, that's simply not true. You preempt for whatever reason is appropriate because you hold the license. The local station holds the license. The local station is licensed by the government. Not the networks.

The local station is responsible, and it's the local station that has to determine what they put on and how they schedule it. And we've gone from maybe one hour a week of prime time preemption to what they want now—four to five hours a year. That's a big, big difference.

Do you want the FCC to step in here and fine or somehow penalize the networks?

FRANK: No, we don't want them fined.

What do you want?

FRANK: We were very clear that we believe the networks should be financially healthy. We are for strong network-affiliate relationships. What we want is the FCC to take a look at the current practices—some that we think are illegal and some that we think they need to investigate over and above that—and say these are the rules and the networks have to follow these rules.

You just want the FCC to reassert the rules?

FISHER: Either the rules matter or they don't. You can't have a society in which

there are rules which people can decide on their own whether to observe. Everybody has to know whether there are rules or not. Otherwise, what you have is chaos, and you have pirates. And that's not a business. That's not the way the public interest is served in a federally regulated entity. If you don't like the rule, challenge the rule. Don't just ignore it. It's inappropriate.

FRANK: One of the things mentioned in our filing is that, a number of years ago, NBC blocked books per night. They said, if you want to take *ER* on Thursday night, you have to clear all Thursday nights. If you want *Law & Order* on Wednesday night, you have to clear all Wednesday night. That's illegal.

Some network executives say that your petition is intended to discourage the government from relaxing the 35% ownership cap, which would allow the networks to buy more stations and increase their leverage. Is that true?

FISHER: It's unrelated. I mean, if the cap rises or if the cap doesn't rise or if the cap were lowered, all of these rules still are at issue—a preemption being absolutely foremost among these. If you're a network today, your goal is to have a dumb pipe—that is, to have a contract which gives you total control of the local affiliates' airtime.

But that is not what has been the law and practice of this country. And what's at stake here is a social issue. And the social issue is something that the government will have to decide. The social issue is whether or not the historic ability of local stations and a broad variety of companies of all sizes—small, medium, and large—are going to be permitted to make independent decisions that deal with a very narrow margin of the time, or whether the networks have the right to say in their contractual negotiations that we have basically ownership of certain chunks of your day over which you will have virtually no control and from which you can never deviate.

If the answer is let the marketplace prevail, then a certain style of broadcasting that was born in this country and flourished in this country will continue to be curtailed. If

it is, in fact, the will of Congress and the regulators that no, the historic difference between U.S. local broadcasting and the rest of the world needs to be maintained, much like zoning laws prevent the pure marketplace from deciding how property is going to be used, then these regulations would be enforced, and the networks would be forbidden from getting that last 3% or 4% of a station's airtime.

Your timing may be bad. We now have a Republican administration with a deregulator at the FCC.



Photo: Randy Tunnell Photography

'If you're a network today, your goal is to have a dumb pipe—that is, to have a contract which gives you total control of the local affiliates' airtime.'—Fisher

FRANK: We believe that Chairman Powell believes in the law. This is clearly the law of the land, and so we actually think this is a very good time to be heard.

FISHER: That's what he said: He may not create such rules, but he will enforce them.

Over the past 25 years or so, most broadcasters, I would say, have pushed for more freedom from government meddling, government regulation. Now you seem to be inviting government to come in and enforce some rather archaic rules.

FRANK: We're not asking for regulation.

All we're asking for is an enforcement of the laws that are on the books. That's all we're asking for. We're talking about the heart of the American broadcasting system, which is different from any system in the world and is an ingenious system: It's the only local system that the world has. We're talking about the essence of that system, which is the local diversity.

And you think you need the government in order to ensure that you don't get run over by the networks? Big old companies like the Washington Post Co. and Cox?

FISHER: I mean our deals are not up for some years to come, but there are some big companies that have been in negotiations and have found the going to be very difficult in the areas where they believe the law should be clear. I must tell you, I find it to be repulsive that an argument should be made that says I know there are regulations but you shouldn't ask for them to be enforced. That's not the rule of law. Either you get rid of the regulation, or you live by it.

Look, there's something you can do. You don't like the networks? Leave. There's

no law that says that you have to have a network affiliation. You walk away.

FISHER: Your view is that, because somebody asks for something that's illegal, you shouldn't ask for the cops to come in and stop them. That's ridiculous. If it's illegal, it should be stopped. The concept that there's something wrong with asking for the law to be enforced is to me kind of bizarre.

I'll get back to my question. If you love localism so much, why don't you become all local tomorrow or as soon as your current network contract ends?

FRANK: Because our system has been a combination of local and national and it's worked. That's been the system. Local and national, and it's worked. And we have worked hard over the years to make it work. The affiliate associations have worked very hard over the years to put in procedures to help the networks to get where we are. We don't want to abandon that system. We can't say this strongly enough.

The whole principle of localism is what's up for grabs. This whole filing is about preserving localism. Yes, you can do it without a network relationship, but the broadcast system we have, the system of local stations with a national network, that's up for grabs. Except in this particular case, there's a law, and we're simply asking that that law which determines the balance between distribution clout and content clout be fought.

Instead of trying to get the FCC to crack down on the networks, why don't you work to get rid of the rules that limit your size: the newspaper-broadcast crossownership ban and the small-market-duopoly ban. If companies like yours consolidate, they just naturally have more clout.

FRANK: Let me say, as opposed to some other companies, the Washington Post Co. has never taken a position on newspaper crossownership.

FISHER: Also, I might add that Cox has never taken that formal position. We believe that newspaper crossownership is a silly rule, but we have not gone and lobbied extensively on this issue.

Okay, but my question still stands. Why not go that route? Try to get bigger? Just try to get bigger?

FRANK: There are some of us who believe that our system of fairness in this country is not necessarily based on the fact that you have to be big to be treated fairly, and we really think the rules serve this country best by enabling small broadcasters to continue to thrive, to continue to operate in their communities.

What assurances can you give me that, if the FCC steps up and starts enforcing these rules, that we're going to see more local programming? Frankly, I don't see too much. So what are we really fighting for here?

FRANK: You're right. The trend is less, but I do believe one of the reasons is the network pressure. What happened is, the network started applying more and more pressure on certain preemptions, and stations that weren't predisposed to do it stopped it. A lot of us who are predisposed to do it are continuing to do it, but not in the same quantity we used to because it's just painful. It is just painful.

Networkwise?

FRANK: Yes.

FISHER: I'll give you specific examples. Local sports, even if they're professional teams, have essentially disappeared from affiliate television. I don't know if that's good or bad, but the reality is that what used to be a type of event that was available for free now requires pay television.

Do you think that's a direct result of the networks?

FISHER: Oh, absolutely. I could tell you with one network that was a principal deal point. They wanted baseball from one of our television stations. And it was a two-year negotiation.

Didn't your San Francisco Fox affiliate just re-up with the Giants?

FISHER: We have re-upped with the Giants. We had to take an arrangement in which it is now going to be shared with pay

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KZJL-TV
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from
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Kent Lillie
President and CEO
to
**Liberian
Broadcasting, Inc.**
Lenard Liberman
Vice President
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Elliot B. Evers
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television. Fewer games will be over the air, and, in significant part, that is the result of the negotiations with Fox.

Again, if this is all about localism, why do you run to the syndicators to fill your access hours? How much *Jeopardy* does America need?

FISHER: Syndicated programming on a strict basis is the only thing that has been successful. Very, very few locally generated shows have the economics that can survive. Syndication is a way of sharing expenses.

networks, because of their vertical integration, because their ownership of syndication, have changed the picture is dramatic.

Allow me to play the devil's advocate a little more. Aren't you simply trying to gain a little leverage against the networks by threatening the government intervention?

FISHER: This isn't a threat. This is a request for the government to review the rules. Only if you work inside Washington do you believe that everything is a matter of

Is this about compensation? Are you worried about the loss of network compensation?

FRANK: You know what? Compensation is not mentioned. We feel strongly that those are contractual discussions that different companies have with their affiliations. You make a choice—it's what I said before—you make a choice to do a contract or not do a contract. As long as it's all legal, you can choose one way or the other. Terms can be distasteful. But if it's legal, then you can choose to enter that agreement or not.

FISHER: No. I can't imagine how the government can get involved in compensation discussions. There's never been an historical basis, there's no legal basis. This has nothing to do with compensation.

I am aware that Fox made a big grab for the digital TV stations. But I'm not aware that the other networks did?

FISHER: Yes. They indicated a desire to have control of certain levels of the bandwidth of the stations. They're unhappy with the concept that any of the digital spectrum would be utilized by local broadcasters for content other than network content.

You complained about the vertical integration of networks and studios, but the affiliates supported the networks in getting rid of the financial-interest-and-syndication rules so they could become vertically integrated? Do you regret that support now?

FISHER: For what it's worth, no. I have no regrets over the compromise that was made years ago. It was a good compromise, but the deal, the handshake, was, the network would get fin-syn and a slight raise in the ownership cap, and they would let us do our business.

What was disturbing was that, after the deal was made, none of the extra cash flow ever got reported to the network and, within two years, they were once again saying, "Well, we still don't make any money, and, therefore, it's not enough. At that point, unfortunately, the compromise, the handshake, began to break apart. ■



'We're not asking for regulation. All we're asking for is an enforcement of the laws that are on the books.'—Frank

But the beauty of syndication has been that there were so many vendors. That's another change that has occurred over the last five to seven years: the vertical integration of the studios and the networks. Today, as a result, there are a small fraction of the shows being successfully launched each year as there were just 10 years ago.

It's a serious issue, and the networks enjoy saying, but look how many vendors there are on the floor of NATPE. But at the end of the day, the smallest number of shows are being launched in syndication in the history of the business. That is a sharp reduction in diversity. The way in which the

looking for an edge or pressure or that it's dealmaking or it's negotiating. Actually, for a lot of folks who don't live in Washington, when you ask for somebody to tell you whether something is illegal or legal, that's actually what you're asking for.

Come on.

FISHER: No, no, no. No come on. This is not a negotiating point. If it were a negotiating point, it would be framed as a negotiating point. When you call for an FCC review, that is not a matter of negotiations. Only in Washington could some people perceive that. But not in the real world.

Belt-tightening hits NATPE

Some syndicators say their space will be smaller, others may take hotel suites

By Susanne Ault

King World, a company you can typically count on to make a splash at NATPE, says it's leaning towards setting up a smaller booth on the 2002 Las Vegas exhibition floor.

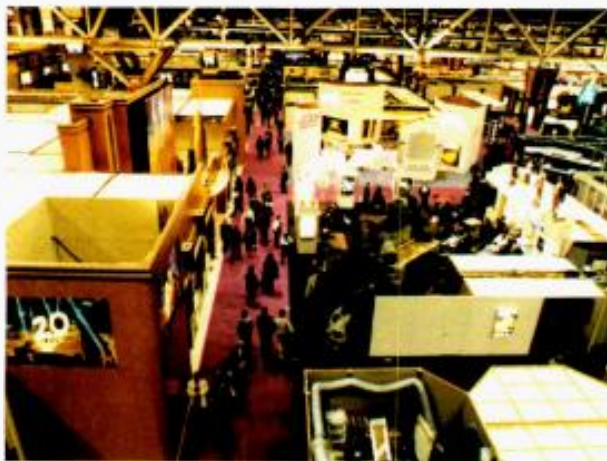
While the syndicator, a part of the Viacom family, hasn't made a final determination, King World chief Roger King has also talked about gathering all the major domestic distribution units for a separate NATPE-style conference.

King World's attitude adjustment comes after last week's announcement that Warner Bros.' domestic distribution unit is moving out of its historical convention home in 2002, relocating its digs to a suite at the Venetian Hotel. Warner Bros. Domestic Distribution Chief Dick Robertson, at an industry panel, warned last January that he was leaning heavily toward leaving Las Vegas. Over the years, so have other syndicators, but their claims were often dismissed as bargaining ploys.

Now it's probable that Carsey-Werner's domestic syndication unit will scale back its presence. Also, sources say Paramount Domestic Television, another big market player and a part of Viacom, is currently pondering whether to change its role there.

"Now that Warner Bros. took the first step, there will be others," says King. "I'd hate to see NATPE collapse, but I tell you I think it is on the cusp of collapsing. We're in a tougher economy, and the NATPE people should sit back and think how to cut back on our expenses."

A large exodus from the annual January show would certainly hurt. NATPE has annual revenue of just over \$12 million; last year \$9.5 million came from NATPE



In 2002, Warner Bros. will leave the NATPE floor for the Venetian Hotel. King World is considering having a separate conference of major domestic distribution units.

exhibitors. After expenses, the nonprofit organization netted just over \$4 million from the Las Vegas January extravaganza.

King is aware of NATPE's need to broaden its approach to international exhibitors and new media: Station and studio consolidation have taken chunks of business away from the convention. "But the main distributors are the reason people go. It's not about international," he insists. Still, "it costs millions of dollars for us to go, and we're not doing this for the sake of shaking hands."

King says he "would certainly think" of trying to set up a separate, earlier convention in November or early December because it "would be a better time for the networking of smaller markets, producers and advertisers."

NATPE CEO Bruce Johansen says that, although he has heard this suggestion several times before, he hasn't heard any serious proposals.

"It might make sense," says one syndication executive. In the 1980s, "there used to

be November screenings, where some of the station groups like Chris-Craft would get together and take a look at some of the new stuff."

Carsey-Werner syndication head Bob Raleigh described Warner Bros.' exit from the floor as "validating our stance that there are all different sorts of ways" to match customers with programmers, but he doesn't have a firm exit strategy in mind.

NATPE's Johansen claims the organization has done loads in helping the syndicators cut costs. "We ate a lot of the additional costs when we moved to Las Vegas, and we did not pass them onto the exhibitors."

Other major syndicators think the show is on the right track. "NATPE will absolutely evolve and change," says Steve Mosko, of Columbia TriStar Television Distribution. "Bruce [Johansen] has done it with international, he's done it with new media, and he's done it with advertising. I think people need to work with him, rather than try to cut him off at the knees."

Dick Askin, of Tribune Entertainment, says it may make sense for syndicators to cut back on expenses, but it makes no sense to abandon the exhibit floor. NATPE is more than clearing shows for the fall, he says. It is the one place the industry can gather to trade ideas and discuss common problems. "Without it, the industry would be in a much more difficult position." ■

'I'd hate to see NATPE collapse, but I tell you I think it is on the cusp of collapsing.'

—Roger King, King World

IN BRIEF

NBC WILL JOIN FAMILY FRIENDLY FORUM

The network announced it is joining The WB, ABC and CBS in the Family Friendly Programming Forum's script-development initiative. NBC will receive funding from 14 major advertisers, including Johnson & Johnson, IBM and Procter & Gamble, for development of scripts aimed at programming for the entire family. The networks are given full control over the process in terms of which scripts are made into pilots and possibly prime time series, the advertisers say.

NBC will participate in the script initiative next season. The WB was the first to join forces with the advertisers two years ago, and *Gilmore Girls*, which debuted this season, is the first series to emerge from the initiative.

NCAA GAME BOOSTS RATINGS FOR CBS

CBS' coverage of the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship game between Duke and Arizona gave the network a shot-in-the-arm ratingswise.

The April 2 game showed across-the-board ratings improvement over last year's, including a 9% jump in total viewers, to 23.9 million. The NCAA game was also up 11% in households, with a 14.1 rating/23 share, and 22% in adults 18-49, with 10.0/25, according to Nielsen Media Research.

BERTINELLI SPREADS NEW ANGEL WINGS

Valerie Bertinelli is joining the cast of CBS' *Touched by an Angel*. Bertinelli, who starred in the former hit CBS sitcom *One Day at a Time*, will play a new-to-Earth angel on the Sunday-night series. Her first appearance will be April 29.

Safety first for *Runner*

ABC being cautious with series that sends viewers on manhunt

By Joe Schlosser

ABC is prepping what will likely be the most expensive and ambitious reality series to hit network television yet. It also might be the most dangerous if not executed properly.

The Runner, pitched to network executives a year ago by Oscar winners Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, is headed to ABC in the fall and will bring viewers actively into a nationwide manhunt. One contestant will cross the country while trying to avoid being caught by viewers. ABC plans to launch the series in September, likely at least twice a week. Live break-ins during ABC's prime time schedule each week will give clues to where the runner is.

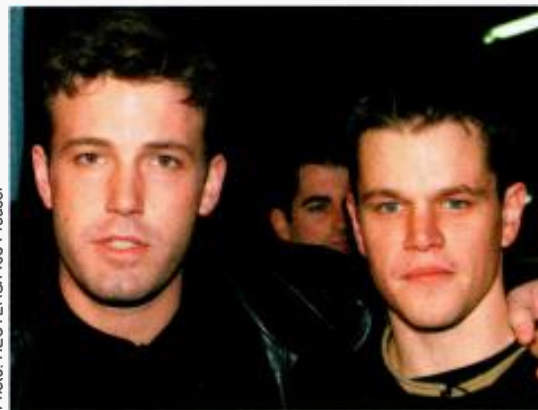


Photo: REUTERS/Fred Prouser

Having conceived the premise, Ben Affleck (l) and Matt Damon will be only behind the scenes at *The Runner*.

Network executives say they are still very much in the development process. The show will combine the Internet, taped and live television, and, they hope, millions of viewers who want a chance to win up to \$1 million. If the runner completes the trek without getting caught, he or she will win \$1 million.

The show's producers, LivePlanet (Affleck and Damon's production company) and Disney-owned Touchstone Television, are not rushing the process for one important reason: safety. The thought of crazed viewers' breaking laws and possibly being injured trying to catch the runner has ABC executives fretting.

"I would say this is going to be the most

difficult show we've ever tried to do at the network," says Andrea Wong, ABC's senior vice president of alternative series and specials. "And we are not going to do this show unless we can make sure it's safe."

LivePlanet's Sean Bailey says, "We are building this with safety as a paramount concern. We have set it up so that a viewer who approaches the runner cannot win. There will be very little incentive to ever touch or even approach the runner."

Media buyer Tom DeCabia, of Schulman-Advansers NY, doesn't see a downside from his perspective. "They are going to have to take some real safety precautions so it doesn't get out of hand. I think, if it's done right, it could really turn into water-cooler material."

Paul Montgomery of ABC affiliate WRTV-TV Indianapolis says, "When I heard the concept, I thought everybody could be literally on the hunt for this person, and that could be scary."

The Runner was rumored to be dead until Roger Goodman was brought in a few months ago. A 36-year network veteran who produced *ABC 2000*, among other things, he is now running the show and is executive producer alongside LivePlanet executives. They are currently casting five or six runners and setting up the cross-

country course. If one runner is caught, ABC will release another from a new starting point.

Once the race begins, viewers will be able to sign up via the Internet to be an agent, which means that they can officially catch the runner and win at least \$50,000. The Internet will also be used to announce clues and allow viewers to play along.

As for Damon and Affleck, don't look for them to host *The Runner* or appear on camera during any of the episodes. "They are co-creators of this show, they are executive producers, and they are very creatively involved," says LivePlanet's Bailey, "but they are not going to be on camera." ■



C-Span's Susan Swain (c) worked with Plymouth Plantation's Kathleen Curtin and Harvard Professor Rev. Peter J. Gomes on the series.

C-Span's literary road trip

Exploration of the lives of American writers links locales with their history

By P. Llanor Alleyne

If you tuned into C-Span on Monday morning, March 19, you probably saw footage of a pilgrim strolling a chilly knoll replete with tiny wooden homes. Though not as glossy as a PBS documentary, the exploration of the life and times of *Mayflower Compact* author, William Bradford, was the first program for *American Writers: A Journey Through History*, the live 10-month series C-Span has launched.

The series, sometimes hosted by Susan Swain, C-Span's executive vice president and co-chief operating officer, will eventually feature 40 American writers whose works continue to be relevant to the nation's history. Viewers are encouraged to call and quiz two guests who are knowledgeable about the author.

Conjuring America's past via live feeds from landmark towns and costumed actors is becoming a habit of the 22-year-old network.

Beginning with 1995's *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, C-Span has been supplementing its coverage of Capitol Hill events with special history projects, including *The Alexis de Tocqueville Tour* and *American Presidents: Life Portraits*.

"There was this moment, about midway through the *Lincoln-Douglas* series, as hundreds of people came out in period costume to re-create the debates, when I think we all knew we were hooked," Swain said. "We were watching communities become engaged with their history before our cameras and listening to our audience respond through phone calls, and it was, frankly, exciting. It just became clear to us that C-Span could have its own role to play in history programming."

Swain, in collaboration with executive producer Mark Farkas, staff and expert guests, whittled down a list of 350 writers to reach the featured 40, a virtual cultural mosaic of politicians, essayists, poets and activists. In the coming weeks, profiled writers will include James Fenimore Cooper (*The Last of the Mohicans*, April 23), Mary Chesnut (*A Diary of Dixie*, June 11), Langston Hughes (*The Weary Blues*, Sept. 24) and Jack Kerouac (*On the Road*, Nov. 19).

With a two-week window to prepare for each episode and an overall budget of \$4.5 million, the re-creation of each author depends on available resources, including museums, artifacts and preserved locales—such as the Plymouth Plantation featured in the Bradford episode. The pace and scope is daunting, Swain admits, with C-Span in the midst of 38 straight weeks of on-location production in 20 states.

The series has already sparked some communities to reclaim their literary past. In Plymouth, Mass., the day before the show, a marathon reading of William Bradford's diary, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, was staged at the town's library. And in New Rochelle, N.Y., residents under the umbrella of the Citizen Paine Restoration Initiative are working to obtain the scattered bones of *Common Sense* author Thomas Paine. When C-Span came to town, the kids invented a game show: "Who Wants to Be a Revolutionary?"

Most significant is the series' accessibility and value to classrooms. With schools and educators a stated audience target, C-Span will post portions of each of the authors' works on the Web and make available downloadable curriculum tools for teachers. In partnership with Merriam-Webster, it has published *Dictionary of American Writers*, containing 1,600 entries including the biographies of featured writers. ■

IN BRIEF

MIDSEASON DRAMAS GET CHOPPED

NBC has yanked its midseason legal drama *First Years* from the schedule. The series, which aired only three times, averaged a 4.7 rating/7 share in its final Monday-night effort, according to Nielsen Media Research. NBC executives say repeats of *Law & Order* will fill the 9 p.m. ET/PT Monday void for the time being.

At CBS, *The Big Apple*, from producer David Milch (*NYPD Blue*), has been pulled after five episodes. The episodes, which aired in the prime post-*Survivor/CSI* slot, averaged 9.7 million viewers and a 3.4 rating among adults 18-49, according to Nielsen Media Research. CBS executives have returned newsmagazine *48 Hours* to Thursdays at 10 p.m.

HABER TO HEAD USA'S TRIO

Bill Haber has been named president and CEO of Trio, USA Networks' arts-and-entertainment-themed digital/satellite channel.

In his new position at Trio, which is under USA's Emerging Networks unit, Haber will continue to serve as adviser to the president and board member of nonprofit organization Save the Children.

TALK OR WALK GETS A GO

Tribune Entertainment has officially declared its daytime strip *Talk or Walk* a "firm go" for a fall 2002 launch.

The show, in which a studio audience votes on whether feuding guests should talk out or walk away from their differences, has been cleared in 154 markets, including 48 of the top 50, representing 92% of the U.S.

Programming

BroadcastWatch

COMPILED BY KENNETH RAY

MARCH 26-APRIL 1 Broadcast network prime time ratings according to Nielsen Media Research

Week	abc	CBS	NBC	FOX	PAX TV	U/PIN	WB		
26	11.2/17	8.8/14	4.7/7	8.2/12	1.2/2	2.0/3	2.9/4		
8:00	10. ABC Monday Night Movie—South Pacific 11.2/17	33. King of Queens 8.3/13	71. Crocodile Hunter 5.1/8	37. Boston Public 7.9/12	127. Miracle Pets 0.8/1	93. Moesha 2.0/3	85. 7th Heaven 3.4/5		
8:30		36. Yes, Dear 8.1/12				93. The Hughleys 2.0/3			
9:00		14. Ev Lvs Raymd 10.8/16	82. First Years 3.6/5	31. Ally McBeal 8.5/13	124. Touched by an Angel 1.0/1	91. The Parkers 2.1/3	88. Gilmore Girls 2.4/4		
9:30		21. Becker 9.3/14				91. Friends 2.1/3			
10:00		34. 48 Hours 9.3/16	68. Third Watch 5.3/9			119. Diagnosis Murder 1.2/2			
10:30									
	10.9/18	8.4/14	7.6/12	6.7/10	1.3/2	2.7/4	1.9/3		
8:00	4. Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? 12.9/20	20. JAG 9.9/15	48. Fighting Fitzg 7.0/11	48. That '70s Show 7.0/11	127. Mysterious Ways 0.8/1	87. UPN's Movie Tuesday—Demolition Man 2.7/4	93. Buffy the Vampire Slayer 2.0/3		
8:30			62. DAG 5.7/9	52. Titus 6.6/10					
9:00	21. Dharma & Greg 9.3/14	39. 60 Minutes II 7.7/12	16. Frasier 10.4/16	52. Dark Angel 6.6/10	114. Doc 1.4/2		97. Angel 1.9/3		
9:30	18. What A/Joan* 10.1/16		44. Three Sisters 7.4/12						
10:00	17. NYPD Blue 10.3/18	39. Judging Amy 7.7/13	42. Dateline NBC 7.5/13			119. Diagnosis Murder 1.2/2			
10:30									
	7.3/12	6.1/10	9.7/16	7.4/12	1.0/2	1.9/3	1.8/3		
8:00	27. My Wife and Kids* 8.8/14	56. Ev Lvs Raymd 6.3/10	27. Ed 8.8/14	63. That '70s Show 5.6/9	137. Twice in a Lifetime 0.6/1	97. 7 Days 1.9/3	103. Dawson's Creek 1.8/3		
8:30		70. Some/Friends* 5.2/8		64. Grounded/Life 5.5/9					
9:00	38. Drew Carey 7.8/12	56. CBS Wednesday Movie—Twilight 6.3/10	24. The West Wing 9.2/14	24. Boot Camp* 9.2/14	119. Touched by an Angel 1.2/2	97. Star Trek: Voyager 1.9/3	103. Jack & Jill 1.8/3		
9:30	52. The Job 6.6/10								
10:00	60. Once and Again 5.9/10			10. Law & Order 11.2/19		117. Diagnosis Murder 1.3/2			
10:30									
	9.4/15	7.9/13	12.5/20	3.1/5	1.1/2	4.9/7	2.0/3		
8:00	78. Whose Line Is It 4.3/7	1. Survivor II 16.6/26	5. Friends 12.1/19	86. Fox Thursday Night Movie—Wag the Dog 3.1/5	119. It's a Miracle 1.2/2	75. WWF Smackdown! 4.9/7	97. Gilmore Girls 1.9/3		
8:30	66. Whose Line 5.4/8		21. Weber Show 9.3/14						
9:00	8. Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? 11.3/17	3. CSI 13.8/21	12. Will & Grace 10.9/16				125. Touched by an Angel 0.9/1	89. Charmed 2.2/3	
9:30			18. Just Shoot Me 10.1/15						
10:00	30. Primetime 8.7/15	64. Big Apple 5.5/9	2. ER 16.3/27		117. Diagnosis Murder 1.3/2				
10:30									
	7.5/13	5.9/10	7.8/14	4.4/8	1.1/2	1.5/3	1.8/3		
8:00	82. Two Guys a Girl 3.6/7	55. Diagnosis Murder 6.5/12	26. Providence 8.9/16	74. World's Wildest Police Videos 5.0/9	131. Encounters With the Unexplained 0.7/1	108. The Parkers 1.5/3	89. Sabrina/Witch 2.2/4		
8:30	84. Norm 3.5/6					108. The Hughleys 1.5/3	93. Popstars 2.0/4		
9:00	15. Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? 10.5/18	71. The Fugitive 5.1/9	50. Dateline NBC 6.9/12	81. The Lone Gunmen 3.7/6	131. Touched by an Angel 0.7/1	108. Gary & Mike 1.5/3	105. Popular 1.6/3		
9:30						114. Gary & Mike 1.4/2			
10:00	31. 20/20 8.5/15	58. Nash Bridges 6.2/11	39. Law & Order: Special Victims Unit 7.7/14		125. Diagnosis Murder 0.9/2				
10:30									
	7.2/13	10.3/16	1.5/3	5.7/10	0.7/1	KEY: RANKING/SHOW TITLE/PROGRAM RATING/SHARE • TOP TEN SHOWS OF THE WEEK ARE NUMBERED IN RED • TV UNIVERSE ESTIMATED AT 102.2 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS; ONE RATINGS POINT IS EQUAL TO 1,022,000 TV HOMES • YELLOW TINT IS WINNER OF TIME SLOT • (NR)=NOT RANKED; RATING/SHARE ESTIMATED FOR PERIOD SHOWN • *PREMIERE • PROGRAMS LESS THAN 15 MINUTES IN LENGTH NOT SHOWN • S-T-O = SEASON TO DATE • SOURCES: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH, CBS RESEARCH			
8:00	47. ABC Saturday Night Movie—Disclosure 7.2/13	7. NCAA Final Four Game 2—Ouke vs. Maryland 11.6/21	108. NBC XFL Football—Chicago Enforcers vs. New York/New Jersey Hitmen 1.5/3	71. Cops 5.1/9	131. Miracle Pets 0.7/1				
8:30				60. Cops 5.9/10					
9:00				59. AMW: America Fights Back 6.0/10	127. Touched by an Angel 0.8/1				
9:30									
10:00						131. Mysterious Ways 0.7/1			
10:30	79. Kings of Queens 3.9/8								
	8.5/14	9.2/15	4.8/8	6.3/10	1.0/1	0.7/1	1.6/3		
7:00	66. Wonderful World of Disney—Flubber 5.4/9	12. 60 Minutes 10.9/20	57. NBA Basketball Game 2 3.6/7	79. Futurama 3.9/7	131. Candid Camera 0.8/1	131. UPN XFL Football—San Francisco Demons vs. Las Vegas Outlaws 0.7/1	108. Jamie Foxx 1.5/3		
7:30				77. King of the Hill 4.5/8	119. Candid Camera 1.2/2			114. The Oblongs 1.4/3	
8:00			34. Touched by an Angel 8.2/13	76. Dateline NBC 4.7/8	42. The Simpsons 7.5/12		108. Doc 1.5/2		97. Steve Harvey 1.9/3
8:30				44. Malcolm/Middl 7.4/12	46. The X-Files 7.3/11				105. The Oblongs* 1.6/3
9:00		6. Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? 11.8/18	27. CBS Sunday Movie—And Never Let Her Go, Part 1 7.0/11	68. NBC Sunday Night Movie—Semper Fi 5.3/8			127. Pax Big Event Sunday—Lily in Winter 0.8/1		97. Nikki 1.9/3
9:30							105. The Oblongs 1.6/2		
10:00	8. The Practice 11.3/18								
10:30									
WEEK	8.7/14	8.7/14	6.9/11	6.0/10	1.1/2	2.1/3	2.0/3		
S-T-O	8.7/14	8.6/14	8.0/13	6.3/10	0.9/2	2.5/4	2.6/4		

SyndicationWatch

MARCH 19-25 *Syndicated programming ratings according to Nielsen Media Research*

TOP 25 SHOWS

Rank	Program	HH AA	HH GAA
1	Wheel of Fortune	10.2	10.2
2	Jeopardy	8.4	8.4
3	Judge Judy	6.2	6.8
4	Entertainment Tonight	5.7	5.8
5	Oprah Winfrey	5.7	5.7
6	Friends	5.6	5.4
7	Frasier	4.9	5.5
8	Seinfeld	4.6	4.6
9	Live With Regis and Kelly	4.1	4.1
10	Hollywood Squares	4.0	4.0
11	Judge Joe Brown	3.7	4.7
12	Jerry Springer	3.7	4.1
13	Drew Carey	3.6	3.9
14	Entertainment Tonight (wknd)	3.6	3.7
15	The X-Files	3.4	3.7
16	3rd Rock from the Sun	3.2	3.5
17	Maurly	3.1	3.2
18	Divorce Court	3.0	3.8
19	Extra	3.0	3.1
20	Seinfeld (wknd)	3.0	3.0
21	Xena	2.9	2.9
21	Montel Williams	2.9	2.9
23	Friends (wknd)	2.8	3.7
24	Andromeda	2.8	3.0
25	Inside Edition	2.8	2.8
25	Rosie O'Donnell	2.8	2.8

TOP FIRST-RUN WEEKLIES

Rank	Program	HH AA	HH GAA
1	Entertainment Tonight (wknd)	3.6	3.7
2	Xena	2.9	3.0
3	Andromeda	2.8	3.0
4	Stargate SG-1	2.6	2.7
4	VIP	2.6	2.7

According to Nielsen Media Research Syndication Service Ranking Report March 19-25, 2001

HH/AA = Average Audience Rating (households)

HH/GAA = Gross Aggregate Average

One Nielsen Rating = 1,008,000 households, which represents 1% of the 100.8 million TV Households in the United States

NA = Not Available

Big names keep advertisers happy



CF Entertainment's Byron Allen says stations are listening to his pitch for upgraded time slots for his six series.

It doesn't usually work this way. But late-late-night clearances and national ratings that rarely climb above a 1.0 haven't prevented CF Entertainment's six series from getting renewed for next season.

Also seemingly crazy, come fall, *Entertainers With Byron Allen* will reach the 200-episode milestone after eight seasons; *American Athlete*, going on year five, will pass 100 episodes; and *Kickin' It With Byron Allen*, heading into year four, will surpass the 100 mark.

How can CF Entertainment keep financing production of shows that other syndicators might have benched long before now? "This whole company is run by about 12 people," explains President and CEO Byron Allen, who says that, to keep production and distribution costs

down, "it's important for people to have multiple responsibilities. This is a great challenge for them."

Also helpful, says Allen, is that his stable of magazine shows, mostly half-hour weeklies—the other three are *Every Woman* (going into year three), *Global Business People* (year three) and *EntertainmentStudios.com* (year two)—may not technically score high points, but they still catch a premium price from advertisers. With big-name personalities profiled each week—recently, *Entertainers* spotlighted Michael Douglas; *Kickin' It*, Madonna; *American Athlete*, Michael Jordan; and *Every Woman*, Maya Angelou—blue-chip advertisers like Coca-Cola or Procter & Gamble "say that we want to be a part of these ... shows that are family and socially friendly."

Allen is currently pushing stations to upgrade his shows from their typical post-midnight slots. *Entertainers*, for example, runs Fridays at 2 a.m. on both WNYW-TV New York and KABC-TV Los Angeles. Stations are listening to his pitches in today's consolidating syndication marketplace, with "a lot of weekly shows going away and not getting replaced," he says, referring to canceled *Xena*.

Art Moore, programming director for WABC-TV New York, has taken the pitch to heart. *Athlete* "is really compatible with our sports-related network content at that time," he says. "And he gets the biggest people in sports anyway." A-list talent participate because "people respect what he does. He's not cornering them into doing something they don't want to do." —Susanne Ault

The Power Is On In Baltimore

Best Household Share In Four Years!



Source: NIELSEN, SCAN, Feb 01 & Nov 00 prog. avg., all other ratings back to Feb 97 TP avg., Feb 01 vs. Feb 00 % change, Share

StationBreak

BY DAN TRIGOB OFF

COMMUNICATIONS BREAKDOWN

An internal flap at WBZ-TV Boston went public when a memo written in an apparently angry moment by General Manager Ed Goldman was leaked to both local papers. The memo suggested that a wall was being erected between WBZ(AM) radio and its co-owned TV station.

At issue in the memo had been the appearance at the radio station of New England news icon and competitor Natalie Jacobson from rival WCVB-TV. The TV station execs apparently were embarrassed that they had not been told in advance of Jacobson's visit—she was discussing her 25th anniversary in the market—and were thus not able to greet her properly. They also felt it was awkward that WBZ-TV anchor Joe Shortleeve delivered a radio promo for his upcoming late newscast with Jacobson sitting in the booth.

A WBZ-TV spokesman said that, despite the memo, which referred to the radio station's "callousness and lack of respect for the ch. 4 newsroom," there would be no lasting rift between the CBS-owned entities and that there have been no changes in policy regarding cooperation with the radio station.

■ Josh Binswanger, co-host of The History Channel's *This Week in History*, has returned to local news as a weekend anchor at WBZ-TV. He left a morning host slot at Fox's WTTG(TV) Washington last

year, he says, when the station told him he couldn't do both its morning show and the cable show. Binswanger is a Boston native and was a reporter-anchor for WBZ in 1994. The CBS-owned Boston station sees no conflict, he says. He will anchor weekends at WBZ-TV at 6 and 11 p.m., in a schedule change that also sees Jack Williams changing from Monday-Thursday and Sunday to Monday-Friday.

WWJ-TV LAUNCHES NEWSCAST

At long last, CBS-owned WWJ-TV launched its new newscast, sort of. Although the newscast is new to WWJ-TV, which hasn't seen news in years, it shares anchors, management, staff and equipment, as well as ownership, with WKBD-TV. "While the show is new, the team is not," the station says. "Veterans Rich Fisher and Amyre Makupson, both native Detroiters, will anchor the 11 p.m. newscast. Meteorologist Jim Madaus has First Warning Weather and Chuck Garfein has Sports."

The Monday-night launch,

following the NCAA finals between Arizona and Duke at about 11:45 p.m., drew a 5.2 rating and a 13 share. Tuesday night was the first real competition at 11 p.m., and the numbers were 3.4/8. WKBD was third of the three 11 p.m. newscasts both nights. General Manager Mike Dunlop says, "We were pleased. But it would have been much better if Michigan State had made it to the final game."

FRIENDLY FIRE

KPHO-TV Phoenix reporter Donna Rossi was hurt covering the melee that took place Monday night after the University of Arizona Wildcats' loss to Duke University at the NCAA basketball finals. Rossi was struck on both legs by shrapnel apparently from police non-lethal fire, was treated at the scene by paramedics and remained there, reporting. Police had fired stun grenades and rubber bullets into the crowd of rioters after about an hour and a half of activity that included setting cars ablaze and other property damage.

Rissi was live at the time

and exclaimed in pain when she was struck. "I said 'I've been hit,'" adding "ow" a few times, she recalled. "Then I looked down and saw blood coming from both my pant legs."

A former Phoenix police officer herself, Rossi said she was reluctant to criticize the police action and said she had not made a complaint to police. Maybe, she said, police didn't use proper discretion in clearing the area of journalists and bystanders, "but that was a risk I was willing to take."

DOUBLEHEADER

It was a big week for popular WBBM-TV Chicago sports anchor Tim Weigel, who has been off the job for months while recuperating after surgery for a brain tumor. Not only was Weigel back at work, covering the Cubs on Opening Day, but he was inducted into the Chicago Journalism Hall of Fame as a living legend.

All news is local. Contact Dan Trigoboff at (301) 260-0923, e-mail dtrig@erols.com, or fax (413) 254-4133.



Newsroom with a view

Lisa Ling (c), co-host of ABC's *The View*, visits WCVB-TV Boston to discuss with local anchors Susan Wornick and Jim Boyd her upcoming run in the April 16 Boston Marathon. Ling is running the race to benefit a fund in honor of her late cousin and uncle to benefit "Ali & Dad's Army," a U. Mass Memorial Foundation fund dedicated to researching pediatric cancer.

Focus Orlando, Fla.

THE MARKET

DMA rank	21
Population	3,068,000
TV homes	1,126,000
Income per capita	\$16,360
TV revenue rank	20
TV revenue	\$239 million

COMMERCIAL TV STATIONS

Rank*	Ch.	Affil.	Owner
1. WFTV	9	ABC	Cox
1. WESH	2	NBC	Hearst-Argyle
2. WKMG-TV	6	CBS	Post-Newsweek
3. WOFL	35	Fox	Meredith
4. WKCF	18	WB	Emmis
5. WRBW	65	UPN	News Corp.
6. WOPX	56	Pax	Paxson
7. WRDQ	27	Ind.	Cox

*February 2001, total households, 6 a.m.-2 a.m.

CABLE/DBS

Cable subscribers (HH)	867,000
Penetration	77%
ADS subscribers** (HH)	135,120
ADS penetration	12%
DBS carriage of local TV?	Yes

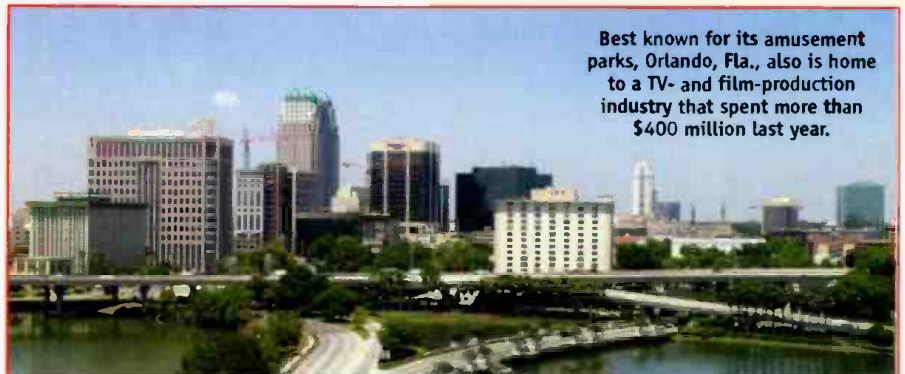
**Alternative Delivery Systems, includes DBS and other non-cable services, according to Nielsen Media Research

WHAT'S NUMBER ONE

Syndicated show	Rating/Share***
<i>Jeopardy</i> (WFTV)	12/20
Network show	
<i>ER</i> (WESH)	20/32
6 p.m. newscast	
WFTV	10/19

***February 2001, total households

Sources: Nielsen Media Research, BIA Research



Best known for its amusement parks, Orlando, Fla., also is home to a TV- and film-production industry that spent more than \$400 million last year.

Nothing Mickey Mouse about it

Lots of competition and close races in most dayparts. That pretty much sums up the Orlando, Fla., TV market. "We've got eight free over-the-air viewer options," says William Hoffman, director of sales at Cox's WFTV (ABC) and WRDQ (independent). "That's a lot for the 21st market. It's hard in an eight-station market to have what we used to refer to as a 'dominant position'—where you take your performance in a time period and add up your two closest competitors and they equal you."

Says Jeff Sales, GM of WKMG-TV (CBS), "Late news is the real dogfight" between WKMG, WFTV and WESH (NBC). "There's not half a rating point between any of us sometimes. In terms of corporate ownership, we have Cox, Hearst-Argyle, Post-Newsweek and Fox, so everybody is a big player, and they all play for keeps." In the February Nielsen ratings, "everybody had a slice of something," he says. "All the big stations in the market could say, 'We dominated something' or 'We did something really well.' Anybody who wants bragging rights in this last book can have them."

The Orlando market includes Melbourne and Daytona Beach and is a well-known tourist destination (with multiple theme parks from Disney, Sea World and Universal), but it has more to offer as an economic base. Sales explains: "We have the Space Coast—the Kennedy Space Center and all the support around it, like Lockheed and virtually every high-tech company you can think of. There's banking and regional hospitals. Growth is simply incredible. Population in Orange County, which is Orlando proper, has grown 30% over the last 10 years. And it doesn't show signs of slowing down."

Hoffman is optimistic: "We see the second quarter being better than the first quarter, and I think there's reserved optimism that we're going to see each quarter getting better. We could see some political soft money coming into the market as early as the third quarter, and it looks like we'll absolutely see some in the fourth. That means that all stations with good news products will be the ones who take on the brunt of that advertising demand." —Mark K. Miller (mrkmiller@aol.com)



RICKI LAKE DELIVERS!

RICKI Triumphs Over Its Lead-In With Women 18-49!



R
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Lake
the
5pm franchise

Source: NSI, WRAP Sweeps, Feb. '01; % change vs. half-hour lead-in
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Programming

CableWatch

MARCH 26-APRIL 1 Cable programming ratings according to Nielsen Media Research

C A B L E ' S T O P 2 0

Ranked by rating. Cable rating is coverage area rating within each basic cable network's universe; U.S. rating is of 100.8 million TV households. Sources: Nielsen Media Research, Turner Entertainment.

Rank	Program	Network	Day	Time	Duration	Rating		HHs (000)	Cable Share
						Cable	U.S.		
1	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	10:00P	70	5.3	4.2	4217	8.7
2	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	09:00P	60	4.1	3.3	3298	5.8
3	NCAA Women's Basketball Nat Post	ESPN	Sun	10:35P	15	3.8	3.1	3061	5.7
4	NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament	ESPN	Sun	08:30P	125	3.3	2.7	2724	5.0
5	m/"On the Edge of Innocence"	LIF	Sun	06:00P	120	3.2	2.6	2554	5.9
5	Spongebob	NICK	Sun	11:00A	30	3.2	2.5	2545	9.3
7	WCW Monday Nitro Live!	TNT	Mon	08:00P	60	3.1	2.5	2524	4.5
7	m/"A Face to Die For"	LIF	Sun	04:00P	120	3.1	2.5	2477	6.7
9	Rugrats	NICK	Fri	08:00P	30	3.0	2.4	2401	5.2
10	Catdog	NICK	Sun	11:30A	30	2.9	2.4	2380	8.6
10	Hey Arnold	NICK	Tue	07:00P	30	2.9	2.4	2373	5.0
10	WCW Monday Nitro Live!	TNT	Mon	09:00P	60	2.9	2.4	2356	4.1
10	Rocket Power	NICK	Sun	10:00A	30	2.9	2.3	2350	8.9
10	Rugrats	NICK	Sat	09:30A	30	2.9	2.3	2349	8.8
10	Spongebob	NICK	Sat	10:00A	30	2.9	2.3	2343	8.7
10	Rugrats	NICK	Tue	07:30P	30	2.9	2.3	2328	4.6
17	Fairly Odd Parents	NICK	Fri	08:30P	30	2.8	2.3	2300	4.7
17	Wild Thornberrys	NICK	Sun	10:30A	30	2.8	2.3	2270	8.4
17	m/"Precious Victims"	LIF	Sun	02:00P	120	2.8	2.3	2268	6.7
17	Rugrats	NICK	Sun	09:30A	30	2.8	2.3	2259	9.1
17	Rocket Power	NICK	Sat	08:30A	30	2.8	2.3	2259	9.3
17	Spongebob	NICK	Sat	10:30A-	30	2.8	2.2	2223	8.1

D E M O T R A C K E R : P E O P L E 5 0 P L U S

Ranked by rating. Cable rating is coverage area rating within each basic cable network's universe; U.S. rating is of 100.8 million TV households. Source: Fox Family Channel

Rank	Program	Network	Day	Time	Duration	Rating		HHs (000)	Cable Share
						Cable	U.S.		
1	NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament	ESPN	Sun	8:30P	125	3.6	2.9	2175	6.3
2	NCAA Women's Basketball Nat Post	ESPN	Sun	10:35P	15	3.1	2.5	1899	5.7
3	Grand Ole Opry Live	TNN	Sat	8:30P	30	2.9	2.4	1764	5.6
4	Bill Gaither Gospel	TNN	Sat	9:00P	60	2.7	2.2	1651	5.2
5	JAG	USA	Fri	7:00P	60	2.5	2.1	15536	5.6
6	JAG	USA	Mon	7:00P	60	2.5	2	1500	4.8
7	JAG	USA	Thu	7:00P	60	2.4	2	1467	4.9
8	NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament	ESPN	Fri	9:38P	133	2.4	2	1466	5.3
9	JAG	USA	Wed	7:00P	61	2.4	1.9	1453	5.0
10	Prime Movie	LIF	Tue	9:00P	120	2.4	1.9	1439	4.6

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Upfront downer

Analysts see networks selling less inventory and a 25% drop for Internet ads

By Steve McClellan

It will be one of the weakest upfronts in the last 10 years, with fewer dollars being spent overall and pricing that may be flat or up just slightly. That's how Salomon Smith Barney broadcasting and cable analyst Niraj Gupta described the upcoming advertising upfront market, which will break after the broadcast networks unveil their new fall schedules in May.

The news is worse for Internet advertising, which will plunge 25% this year, according to Salomon Smith Barney's Lanny Baker.

Speaking at Tuesday's The Big Picture media conference in New York, sponsored by Salomon Smith Barney and BROADCASTING & CABLE, Gupta said networks might be faced with flat prices this upfront and at best might realize increases of 4%. (Many ad-time buyers say prices will fall.) Gupta, and his colleague, Salomon Smith Barney entertainment analyst Jill Krutick, said they think the networks will sell "much less" of their inventory in the upfront and thus the dollar volume will be less than last year's record \$8.2 billion. But networks

with ratings momentum, including CBS, Fox and Univision should do well, Gupta said.

Krutick said she has revised pretax-earnings growth estimates for the major entertainment companies for 2001 downward from the high teens to the mid teens, on a percentage basis. And the average falls to about 8% if AOL and Viacom are excluded. Both of those companies will generate 30% EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) or close to it, she said.

Internet advertising will plunge 25% in 2001 to \$6 billion, according to Baker, Salomon Smith Barney's Internet analyst. Baker said dotcom companies, which accounted for about 50% of last year's \$8 billion in ad sales on the Web, will account for just 15% of the 2001 total.

As the world knows, it has been rough sledding in the Internet world, as investors bailed without a positive earnings story in sight. Baker said some 15,000 jobs have been cut from the sector in the past eight months.

But Baker remains convinced that the sector will rebound in 2002 "like a phoenix from the ashes," as online usage and penetration continue to grow at an average annual rate of 25% to 35%. Top performers: AOL Time Warner and, despite recent problems, Yahoo. ■



Dauids vs. Goliaths

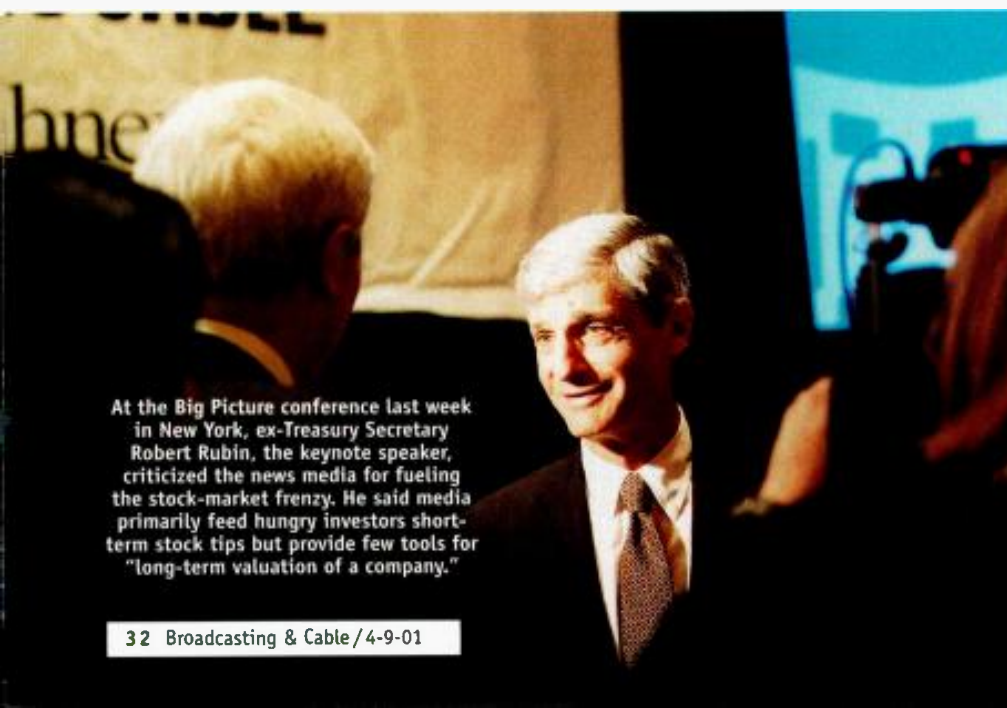
As affiliates continue to wage war against networks, a conspiracy theory waxes

By Steve McClellan

That affiliates protest against the networks just keeps gnawing at the big bosses. At last week's Big Picture conference, one day before CBS quit the National Association of Broadcasters, News Corp. president and COO Peter Chernin called the Network Affiliated Stations Alliance's FCC grievance filing against the networks last month "silly and unfortunate." Stations need to get past issues like helping to pay for programming in some way, shape or form, because "stations need us" to obtain costly and quality programs that will draw audiences, he said.

NBC President Bob Wright attributed the most recent network-affiliate contretemps to a hidden force: "Publishing organizations"—station groups such as Cox and Post Newsweek whose roots are in daily newspapers—have "captured" the NAB in their bid to have the newspaper-broadcasting crossownership rules repealed.

It's not a bad strategy, said Wright. It's designed to protect their profit margins and grow them in the future by linking their newspapers to TV stations and the Internet for cross-media sales efforts. All the same, Wright said he's hopeful the deregulation-minded Michael Powell-headed FCC will grant the same freedom to broadcasters as to publishers. (After the formal conference, Wright also said he was surprised other group owners, those without newspaper



At the Big Picture conference last week in New York, ex-Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, the keynote speaker, criticized the news media for fueling the stock-market frenzy. He said media primarily feed hungry investors short-term stock tips but provide few tools for "long-term valuation of a company."

ties, couldn't see through the ruse.)

For a large part of the conference, Wright hammered home an oft-quoted NBC contention that the 35% ownership cap really means something much less than that. He argued that, even if NBC owned stations in all 214 markets where its affiliates exist, it would capture only an average 16% of viewers because, obviously, one network doesn't get 100% of a market's viewers. He said that, in fact, with the current rules, NBC's owned stations garner about 6% of viewers nationwide.

Yet, he said, in contrast, radio companies can own stations that capture up to 40% of listeners in a market, and cable companies were allowed to aggregate up to 30% of all cable subscribers until recently, when the courts ruled the FCC hadn't justified how it came up with that cap. "It isn't rational, it's politics," Wright said of the TV ownership rules.

James O. Robbins, head of Cox Cable, said he'd love to talk to "any network" having problems with affiliates in Cox's service areas about carrying their shows on cable.

That was a reference to earlier threats by NBC and ABC to take their signals to cable if affiliates resisted network proposals to reduce compensation or have affiliates help pay the

cost of high-priced programming like the rights to the National Football League.

Asked by panel moderator Herb Schlosser, former NBC executive and senior adviser and consultant at the Global Media Group of Salomon Smith Barney, about the likely impact of personal video recorders on viewing patterns, Wright said he didn't envision enormous danger. If it comes to the point where viewers simply refuse to watch commercials, "all we have to do is incorporate the ads into the shows." Indeed, some advertisers, including Coca-

Cola, have recently struck so-called "product-placement" deals for certain shows.

And as Wright noted, in the early days of TV, product placement was common because the sponsors owned the programs.

But Viacom President Mel Karmazin doesn't see a return to the old days if viewers stop watching ads. Instead, he sees a subscription model replacing the advertising model. "If they stop watching the ads, we'll charge them a fee for the programs," he said. But he does not see the issue's becoming serious for CBS, near term. Viewers have had the opportunity to tape shows and zap spots for years with VCRs. Most viewers don't do it, he claimed. ■

'Stations need us' to obtain costly and quality programs that will draw audiences.

—Peter Chernin, News Corp.



AOL Time Warner's Case (l) and Levin stand by their claim that, despite the recession, 12% to 15% revenue growth will be realized.

Levin says the 'R' word: Retirement

Still determined to assure continued revenue growth and cash flow

By John M. Higgins

In what seems to have been a significant change in tone, AOL Time Warner CEO Jerry Levin acknowledged last week that he will retire from the company, in due course.

Speaking at the Salomon Smith Barney and BROADCASTING & CABLE'S The Big Picture conference in New York Tuesday, Levin said he won't be like "my good friends Sumner Redstone or Rupert Murdoch," meaning that "you will not have to carry me out of AOL Time Warner."

But the former Time Warner Inc. chairman said that he won't leave until he sees through the integration of the Internet and TV businesses that drove AOL to buy Time Warner. "I will not give out a date," said Levin, 61.

That's not earth-shattering, but it's the first public discussion by Levin of the issue of long-term management of AOL. COO Bob Pittman, associates say, is anxious to run the combined companies solo. AOL Chairman Steve Case said that, when Levin hands over the reins, "it won't be to



NBC President Bob Wright on TV ownership rules: "It isn't rational, it's politics." He also claimed "publishing organizations captured" the NAB.

me” but to some other inside executive.

Case and Levin also stood by their assertions that, despite the recession, AOL will generate 12% to 15% growth in revenue, to \$40 billion, and a 30% increase in cash flow, to \$11 billion.

They set those goals last summer, before ad sales turned so sour, to bolster the sinking price of AOL's stock. With every other media company missing its targets, many Wall Street executives believe AOL will miss its goals, as well.

“We’re on target,” Levin said, reiterating the company’s new recession mantra that AOL Time Warner generates a huge per-

centage of its sales through subscriptions to the AOL online service, Time Warner Cable or magazines. “It’s a company that revolves around 130 million subscriptions,” Levin said.

Indeed, ad sales take the first hit in a bad economy, but investors taking comfort in this would presume that a recession won’t eventually crush subscriptions, as well.

AOL has no immediate plans to raise its \$21.95 monthly subscription fee, Case said, adding that any increase would be not driven by short-term financial goals but “because there has been so much value added.” ■



Digital deadline delay?

By Steve McClellan

Washington communications attorney and former FCC Chairman Richard Wiley said it is unlikely that broadcasters will meet the 2006 deadline for converting their stations to digital and turning back their analog spectrum to the government.

“I think it’s highly problematic,” Wiley told those attending The Big Picture media conference in New York Tuesday. He cited standards issues, less-than-ideal quality and consumer resistance to buying the required TV receivers, copyright issues, and the ongoing haggling between broadcasters and cablecasters over interoperability and carriage issues.

But perhaps the biggest issue, Wiley said, is the lack of compelling programming to drive set sales. Sony Corp. of America President Howard Stringer said viewers will buy more sets as more manufacturers introduce receivers that combine tuners and decoders into a single unit. Sony is introducing several such models this year, he said.

NBC President Bob Wright said a lot of issues need sorting out and that will just take time. “It’s not going to come together quickly.” Viewers “won’t spend \$2,000 to use a set of rabbit ears,” he said, referring to the cable issues. “It’s going to have to settle out. It’s not there at all.” ■

The Mel mantra

Viacom’s Karmazin reiterates that advertising is sound and the firm’s businesses are well-positioned.

By Steve McClellan

Viacom President Mel Karmazin insisted again last week that advertising is generally sound and the company’s ad-driven businesses are well-positioned this year to gain market share, particularly CBS and TNN.

But Karmazin did acknowledge that the company is cutting expenses and limiting its capital expenditures. Along with increasing revenues, that’s how to grow a business, he said. “We’re pulling all three of those levers.”

Karmazin told The Big Picture crowd that Viacom was still on track to achieve 20% pretax earnings growth this year, to about \$6.2 billion. But he described growth in the just ended first quarter as “modest.”

And he complained that investors were undervaluing Viacom’s stock: “You’d think

we’d said we were going to make \$3 billion,” not \$6.2 billion, he said. Viacom stock is down about \$20 from its high so far this year of \$60. The company is buying back \$2 billion of its stock under a recent authorization.

Karmazin said CBS should gain “extraordinary amounts” of ad-market share this year given its gains, particularly on Thursday nights, the most sought-after and priciest night on the network schedules.

With *Survivor*, CBS could end up winning the night for the season, for the first time in 17 years. CBS currently has about 28% of the three-network share of advertising, he said. He also said the TNN cable network has climbed into the top 10 rated networks and should take “huge market share” in the coming upfront.

Karmazin said CBS will be prepared to swap or otherwise dispose of TV stations to get back under the ownership cap of 35% if the company’s court appeal to get the FCC to stay enforcement of the current cap fails. When Viacom bought CBS, the companies’ combined TV station coverage soared to 41%. ■



Karmazin claims Viacom’s still on track to achieve 20% pretax earnings growth and that investors undervalue his stock.

Changing Hands

TVs

WECN(TV) Naranjito/Bayamon, P.R.

Price: \$4,040,000

Buyer: Pegasus Communications Corp., Bala Cynwyd, Pa. (Marshall W. Pagon, 66.4% owner); owns six full-power TVs; has option to buy five more TVs; has LMA with WFGL(TV) High Springs/Gainesville, Fla.

Seller: Encuentrio Christian Network Corp., Bayamon, P.R. (Rafael Torres Padilla, director); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: Ch. 64, 1,000 kW visual, 100 kW aural, ant. 466 ft.

Affiliation: Independent

FMs

Two-thirds of WFAL(FM) Falmouth/Fredericksburg, Va.

Price: \$1.8 million

Buyer: Soundwaves Inc., Annapolis, Md. (Carl W. Hurlbaeus, president/owner); already owns one-third of WFAL; owns WGRQ(FM) Colonial Beach/Fredericksburg, Va.

Sellers: RJ Broadcasting Co. LLC, Washington (Robin B. Martin, managing member)/Stafford County Broadcasting Inc., Washington (Cary Tepper, vice president). Martin owns 26.5% WIZN(FM) Vergennes, Vt.

Facilities: 104.5 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 328 ft.

Format: Dark

KSKE-FM Vail, Colo.

Price: \$1 million

Buyer: AGM Rocky Mountain Broadcasting I LLC, Bakersfield, Calif. (Anthony S. and L. Rogers Brandon, co-

Station Trades

By dollar volume and number of sales; does not include mergers or acquisitions involving substantial non-station assets

THIS WEEK

TV/Radio □ \$0 □ 0
TVs □ \$4,040,000 □ 1
Combos □ \$0 □ 0
FMs □ \$4,275,000 □ 5
AMs □ \$2,012,400 □ 3
Total □ \$10,327,400 □ 9

SO FAR IN 2001

TV/Radio □ \$200,000,000 □ 1
TVs □ \$359,840,000 □ 12
Combos □ \$2,412,265,820 □ 32
FMs □ \$104,547,900 □ 70
AMs □ \$66,344,811 □ 45
Total □ \$3,142,998,531 □ 160

members/brothers); owns KSMT(FM) Breckenridge, KKCH(FM) Glenwood Springs/Aspen and KIDN-FM Hayden/Steamboat Springs, all Colo.; is buying KZYR(FM) Avon/Vail and KSNO-FM Snowmass Village/Vail, Colo. Brandons also own/are buying 19 other FMs and 11 AMs in California, Colorado and New Mexico and 25% of KVFC(AM)-KRTZ(FM) Cortez, Colo./Farmington, N.M.

Seller: Clear Channel Communications Inc., San Antonio (L. Lowry Mays, chairman; Randy Michaels, CEO, Clear Channel Radio); owns/is buying 18 TVs and about 1,140 other radios; is selling

WRTK(AM) (formerly WNIO) Niles/Youngstown and WPAO(AM) Youngstown, Ohio (see item, below)
Facilities: 104.7 MHz, 100 kW, ant. 394 ft.

Format: Country

WFXQ(FM) Chase City (near Petersburg), Va.

Price: \$735,000

Buyer: JBS Broadcasting Inc., Apex, N.C. (A. Thomas Joyner, principal); owns/is buying WHLF-FM South Boston/Danville, WJWS(AM)-WSHV(FM) South Hill/Petersburg, WJLC(FM) Clarksville/South Boston and WAZR(FM) Woodstock, all Va.

Seller: Patricia Wagstaff, Chase City; no other broadcast interests

Facilities: 99.9 MHz, 12 kW, ant. 469 ft.

Format: Country

Broker: Patrick Communications
KMAD-FM Madill, Okla./to be Whitesboro/Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas
Price: \$490,000

Buyer: NextMedia Group LLC, Englewood, Colo. (Carl E. Hirsch, chairman/5.5% owner; Steven Dinetz, president/5.5% owner; Samuel "Skip" Weller, president/co-COO, Radio Division; Jeffrey Dinetz, executive vice president/co-COO, Radio Division; Thomas Weisel Capital Partners LP, 45.4% owner); owns/is buying/manages 42 other FMs and 15 AMs

Seller: Robert S. Sullins, Durant, Okla. Note: Sullins bought KMAD-FM for \$200,000 in March 1998

Facilities: 102.5 MHz, 3 kW, ant. 233 ft.

Format: Country

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3444 North Country Club Tucson, Arizona 85716 (520) 795-1050

HEARST-ARGYLE

has acquired

WMUR-TV

Manchester, New Hampshire

from

IMES COMMUNICATIONS

for

\$185,000,000

The undersigned acted as exclusive broker
in this transaction and assisted in the negotiations.



Kalil & Co., Inc.

3444 North Country Club Tucson, Arizona 85716 (520) 795-1050

Changing Hands

**KACE(FM) (formerly KRFD) Richfield,
Utah**

Price: \$250,000

Buyer: Sanpete County Broadcasting Co.,
Manti, Utah (Douglas L. Barton, owner);
owns KMTI(AM)-KMXU(FM) Manti.

Barton's wife owns KSVC(AM)-
KCYQ(FM) Richfield

Seller: Legacy Communications Corp., St.
George, Utah (E. Morgan Skinner Jr.,
president); owns three FMs and two AMs

Facilities: 97.5 MHz, 32 kW, ant. 3,027 ft.

Format: Dark

AMs

WQII San Juan, P.R.

Price: \$1.5 million

Buyer: Broadcasting Network of Puerto
Rico, San Juan (Agustin Meizoso, presi-
dent; Ferre Investment Group, owner); no
other broadcast interests

Seller: Communications Council Group
Inc., San Juan (Nieves Gonzalez-Abreu,
president); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: 1140 kHz, 10 kW

Format: Tropical

WRTK (formerly WNIO)

**Niles/Youngstown and WPAO
Youngstown, Ohio**

Price: \$300,000 cash

Buyer: D&E Communications Inc.,
Cleveland (Dale Edwards,
president/owner); no other broadcast
interests

Seller: Clear Channel (see KSKE-FM Vail,
Colo., item, above)

Facilities: WRTK: 1540 kHz, 500 W day;
WPAO: 1470 kHz, 1 kW day, 500 W
night

Format: WRTK: big band; WPAO:
Christian

Broker: Jorgenson Broadcast Brokerage Inc.
(seller)

**KJAA Globe (near Phoenix and Tucson)
Ariz.**

Price: \$212,400

Buyer: Good News Radio Broadcasting
Inc., Tucson (Douglas E. Martin, presi-
dent); owns two Tucson AMs

Seller: Gila County Broadcasting Co. Inc.,
Globe (Eugene A. Pearsall, president); no
other broadcast interests

Facilities: 1240 kHz, 1 kW

Format: News/talk, sports

Amplification

The broker in the sale of FM stations
KMIT and KGGK (April 2 issue) was
Patrick Communications LLC.

—Compiled by Elizabeth A. Rathbun

Napster needs its blanket

Asks Congress for compulsory license to cover copyrighted songs

By Paige Albinak

Beleaguered Internet music-service Napster has officially asked Congress to grant it a blanket copyright license to offer music to consumers by paying one fee into a pool. That was Napster CEO Hank Barry's message to a Senate panel at a hearing last week.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) called the granting of a "compulsory license" a "last resort," to be considered only if the industries involved could not work out their differences.

Napster has been trying to settle a legal dispute with record companies, which have accused the Internet service of violating their copyrights. Napster offers a file-swapping service on the Web that allows users to share pieces of music without paying for them. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco last month ruled that Napster was guilty of "vicarious" copyright infringement and ordered the service to take down any songs record companies identify as copyrighted within 72 hours of being asked.

Last July, before any court had ruled, Napster told Hatch's committee that it did not need any legislative intervention. But now that Napster has been soundly beaten in the preliminary rounds and the record companies have rejected its offer of \$1 billion in licensing fees over five years, Napster is looking for help anywhere it can get it. Cutting individual licensing deals with record companies would be virtually impossible and extremely expensive.

But the content industries—represented at last week's hearing by MPAA's Jack Valenti and RIAA's Hilary Rosen—are opposed to any compulsory licensing



Recording artist Don Henley, foreground, testifies on Capitol Hill, April 3, at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on online entertainment. In the background, left to right are Hank Barry, CEO of Napster; Steve Gottlieb, president of TVT Records; and Hilary Rosen, president of the Recording Industry Association of America.

scheme for music or movies.

"The reason a compulsory license won't work with movies," Valenti said, "is because cable and satellite are defined by limited areas. But the Internet is global and instant. The technology to contain it doesn't work."

Valenti also said the Internet's global nature would require an exorbitant royalty fee from would-be distributors, such as Napster.

"Americans would be subsidizing the viewers in other countries around the world," Valenti said.

"There has never been a compulsory license that goes to the core distribution right," said RIAA's Rosen. "That would be a disaster."

Meanwhile, singers/songwriters Don Henley and Alanis Morissette came to Capitol Hill to defend artists' rights. Henley

said artists should be compensated every time one of their works is streamed on Net radio.

"It is fundamentally unfair that broadcasters have always been exempt from paying performers a performance right for analog broadcasting; we don't want to see this inequity extended to the Internet," he said.

Broadcasters currently are challenging a ruling by the U.S. Copyright Office last December that requires them to pay royalties to record companies if they stream their radio signal over the Internet, a royalty they don't have to

pay to broadcast over the radio.

"There are a number of examples of stations which, as a result of the Copyright Office's decision, have shut down their Internet streaming operations," said Dennis Wharton, NAB spokesman. ■

Broadcasters are challenging a ruling by the U.S. Copyright Office that requires them to pay royalties to record companies if they stream their radio signal over the Internet.

IN BRIEF

INFORMATION PLEASE

The FCC has told Fox Television Stations it will need more financial information if it is to be convinced that the *New York Post's* survival will be endangered if parent News Corp. is forced to sell the newspaper when Fox acquires a second New York City TV station. Fox is asking the FCC to expand its waiver exempting News Corp. from the newspaper/broadcast crossownership ban when WWOR-TV is added to its New York stable as part of Fox's purchase of the Chris-Craft station group. Fox must provide detailed information on the *Post's* finances by April 18.

VOICING DISAPPROVAL

The television and movie industries last week asked federal judges to strike down FCC rules requiring TV programming to feature spoken descriptions of on-screen action. The rules, created to help blind people, go beyond FCC authority and are an unconstitutional "scheme of compelled speech," say the National Association of Broadcasters, the National Cable Television Association and the Motion Picture Association of America.

SAVE OUR SERVICE

Congressional supporters of public broadcasting have formed a 70-member caucus on Capitol Hill to protect the service's interests. The bipartisan group is chaired by Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), Amo Houghton (R-N.Y.), Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), Edward Markey (D-Mass.), Connie Morella (R-Md.) and Zach Wamp (R-Tenn.). The caucus comes together at a time when public broadcasting is seeking additional financial support from Congress for its transition to digital.

Congress gets earful on program access

Fair-price-guarantee law expires in March

By Paige Albinia

Opening salvos were fired last week in the coming legislative battle over video distributors' access to programming.

A law that requires cable companies that own both systems and programming networks to make their programming available to all customers at fair prices expires next March, so Congress is preparing to re-examine it.

Cable industry representatives, speaking before the Senate Antitrust Subcommittee, didn't go so far as to ask to be rid of the law, but National Cable & Telecommunications Association President Robert Sachs pointed out that there are 224 national cable networks today, as opposed to 76 in 1989.

Sachs also said that vertical integration among cable operators has dropped from 53% in 1989 to 35% last year. Sachs also has said in the past the cable industry would like to see the law completely voided.

There is some sentiment in Congress to renew program access, which Congress passed as part of the 1992 Cable Act. Democrats, in particular, favor maintaining it. Last week, ranking committee member Herb Kohl (D-Wis.) said "the best way to ensure that consumers pay the lowest prices possible and have the highest quality of service is to increase the competitive choices."

To do that, Kohl said, Congress should consider three proposals: extend program access beyond 2002; consider legislation that would allow companies to compete to offer services to consumers who live in apartments; and open up

competition among providers of set-top boxes.

Cable competitors testifying at the hearing—RCN and DirecTV—said they have trouble gaining access to local sports nets owned by Comcast in Philadelphia and Cablevision in New York.

Sen. Arlen Specter pointed to an incident in which Comcast refused to give RCN a long-term programming deal for Comcast Sports Net until Specter met personally with both parties.

Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) said that behavior concerned him—going so far as to threaten to bring cable companies in with subpoenas—and pointed to an incident in which Comcast refused to give RCN a long-term programming deal for Comcast Sports Net until Specter met personally with both parties. He said, "I wonder why that had to come about in a senator's office."

Consumers Union Co-director Gene Kimmelman told the committee that cable rates continue to rise at three times the rate of inflation, a complaint to which both Kohl and Subcommittee Chairman Mike DeWine (R-Ohio) seemed sympathetic. He asked, "Can consumers expect to see cable rates decrease any time soon, or, rather, are they going to see cable rates increase and increase and increase?"

Kimmelman said, "There is no sign of meaningful price competition in sight. [We] believe the need for policymakers to curtail abusive practices of cable monopolies is long overdue."

In cable's defense, Sachs cited a recent FCC report that found that cable subscriptions costs are actually going down on a per-channel basis. He said, "As cable systems are upgraded and new satellite programming services are launched, cable operators have added new channels that consumers want." ■

Fees on the up-and-up

By Bill McConnell

Radio stations, some TV stations and winners of permits to build new broadcast facilities would pay higher regulatory fees in 2201 under proposed charges unveiled by the FCC.

Charges to VHF TV stations in top-10 markets would rise 13%, to \$45,100. Stations in markets 51 through 100 would see their fees increase 8%, to \$13,750. Radio station fees would climb between 4% and 25%.

The increases reverse a trend of nearly across-the-board cuts in recent years. Not everyone would see an increase, however. VHF TV outlets in markets 11 to 15 would get a 1.4% cut, and UHF stations in markets below the top 25 would get either a cut

or see their fees remain the same.

The disparity was created because FCC officials aim to increase the revenue generated in each category by 7.75%, a target matching a congressionally mandated obligation for total fee revenue.

Consequently, in categories where there are relatively few licensees, a slight change in the number of operators would lead to a disproportionate change in fees. The change in top-10 VHF outlets' obligations, for instance, was larger because the total number of outlets dropped by two to 42.

The fees for cable also are expected to climb. The FCC proposed to increase cable systems' regulatory fees by 2 cents per sub, to 49 cents. The charge for cable antenna relay services would climb \$2, to \$55.

Fee Category	FY '00	FY '01
VHF TV		
Markets 1-10	\$39,950	\$45,100
Markets 11-25	33,275	32,825
Markets 26-50	22,750	21,325
Markets 51-100	12,750	13,750
Remaining markets	3,300	3,275
Construction permits	2,700	3,075
UHF TV		
Markets 1-10	\$15,075	\$15,150
Markets 11-25	11,425	12,300
Markets 26-50	7,075	7,075
Markets 51-100	4,225	4,075
Remaining markets	1,150	1,150
Construction permits	2,800	4,000
Other		
Satellite TV stations (all markets)	\$1,250	\$740
Satellite TV construction permits	445	480
LPTV, TV/FM translators	280	305
Cable antenna relay service	53	55
Cable TV systems (per subscriber)	.47	.49
Earth stations	175	180
Space stations	94,650	8,125

Radio Station Regulatory Fees by Market Population

Fee Category	FY '00	FY '01
More than 1 Million**		
AM Class A	\$4,375	\$4,550
AM Class B	3,575	3,750
AM Class C	1,725	1,900
AM Class D	2,225	2,400
FM Classes A,B1,C3	3,575	3,750
FM Classes B,C,C1,C2	4,375	4,550

Fee Category	FY '00	FY '01
400,001-1 million**		
AM Class A	\$2,725	\$2,850
AM Class B	2,200	2,300
AM Class C	1,200	1,300
AM Class D	1,450	1,550
FM Classes A,B1,C3	,200	2,300
FM Classes B,C,C1,C2	2,725	2,850
125,001-400,000**		
AM Class A	\$1,950	\$2,050
AM Class B	1,350	1,450
AM Class C	625	725
AM Class D	775	875
FM Classes A,B1,C3	,350	,450
FM Classes B,C,C1,C2	1,950	2,050
50,001-125,000**		
AM Class A	\$1, 5	\$1,375
AM Class B	850	900
AM Class C	425	475
AM Class D	650	700
FM Classes A,B1,C3	850	900
FM Classes B,C,C1,C2	1,325	1,375
20,001-50,00**		
AM Class A	\$800	\$850
AM Class B	625	675
AM Class C	300	50
AM Class D	425	475
FM Classes A,B1,C3	625	675
FM Classes B,C,C1,C2	800	850
Fewer than 20,000**		
AM Class A	\$400	\$450
AM Class B	300	350
AM Class C	200	250
AM Class D	250	300
FM Classes A,B1,C3	300	50
FM Classes B,C,C1,C2	400	450
AM construction permit	250	280
FM construction permit	755	925

*proposed

**market size

Source: FCC

COURT PLOWS AHEAD

The satellite TV industry last week celebrated a minor victory in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Alexandria, Va. The court decided not to delay a decision on whether it is unconstitutional for satellite carriers to be required to carry all local broadcasters in any local markets they serve.

The National Association of Broadcasters and the government had asked the court to hold off on a ruling until decisions emerged from the FCC and a federal district court, two venues that also are considering the question.

POWELL INCLINED TO RELAX RESTRICTIONS

FCC Chairman Michael Powell told B&C last week he is inclined to relax broadcast-ownership restrictions. "You will see them tested," he said. But Powell pointed out that his is just one of five votes on the commission when all seats are filled. He said he hopes that the administration by May would nominate three commissioners to fill the one existing vacancy and two anticipated vacancies and that they would be confirmed by Congress prior to its August recess.

NAB JOINS SUIT

The National Association of Broadcasters last week asked for "intervenor" standing in a Canadian copyright suit against Internet TV broadcaster JumpTV. If the Canadian court grants the request, NAB will be able to participate in the case almost as if it were a plaintiff.

JumpTV is an Internet broadcaster that claims to have technology that limits Internet access to local broadcast signals. NAB says JumpTV's technology is untested and not proven to be capable of preventing widespread leaks of transmissions back into the United States."

Technology

DTV goes to the country

TV engineer successfully tests 8-VSB over challenging terrain

By Michael Grotticelli

Many in the industry have predicted that the digital television system as approved by the ATSC, which is problematic even in some urban areas, would never work in the nation's rural communities serviced mostly by some 6,000 translators. Recent tests in rural Utah prove otherwise.

It has been assumed that, because of long distances from the originating station and uneven terrain that inhibits line-of-sight to the transmitter, over-the-air DTV using 8-VSB modulation was unlikely to reach the consumer's home with a standard RF antenna.

After four months of continuous testing with two long-range signal repeaters, Kent Parsons, an engineer for the University of Utah's two educational channels, vice president of the National Translators Association (NTA) and a translator guru for nearly 45 years, has reached the conclusion that DTV translators will be able to deliver "studio-quality" television signals to rural viewers with high reliability and reasonable cost.

Looking to find out just how translators would work in the demanding environment of Utah—a state with approximately 300,000 viewers who depend on translators for TV



One of two translators used in the test, this one is located in Cove, Utah, 67 miles from the first site.

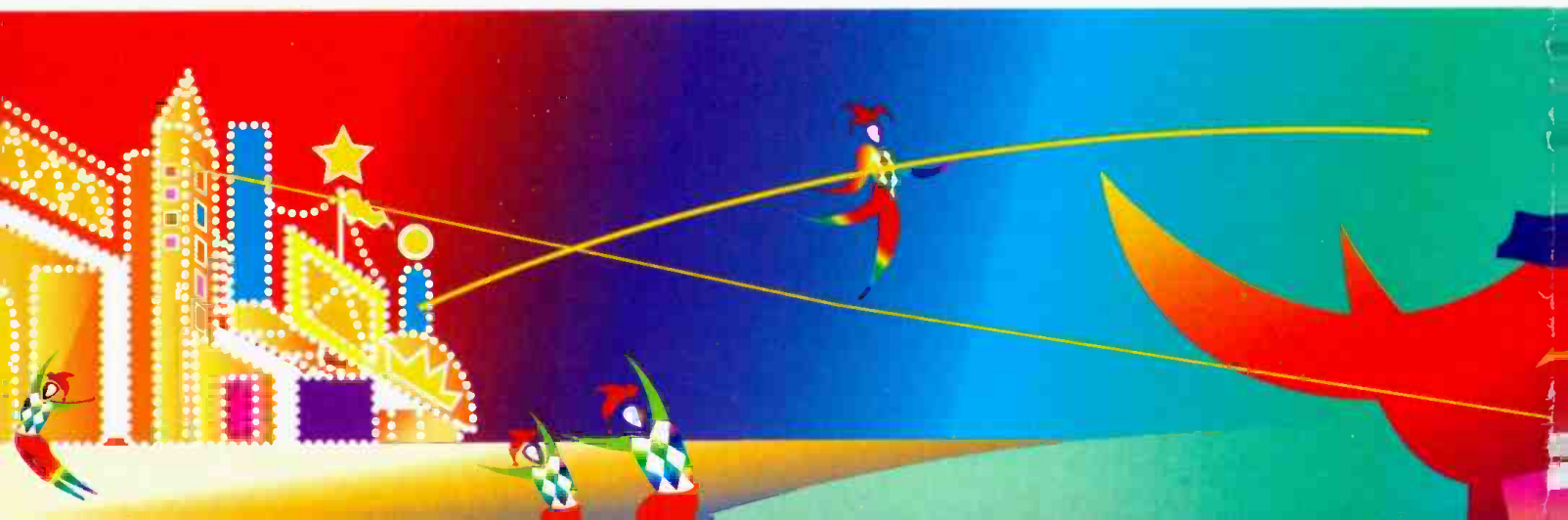
service—Parsons found that digital translators can send a reliable signal, using modest power, and will eventually cost about the same as analog translators. He plans to continue his tests well into the summer months—when lightning can be a problem—and then send a full report to the FCC.

In December, armed with two-year experimental licenses from the FCC, Parsons began to measure the effects of DTV on translators after no one in the industry seemed to pay attention to the fact that the university's stations could possibly be taken off the air if interference problems should arise. With no Class A status (granted by the FCC to all full-power stations in the U.S.) and no channel assignment to ensure their survival, he took action.

"Translators have been completely ignored by Congress, with no assignments or consideration of being displaced," he says. "I believe that, because of the debate surrounding the modulation scheme, some felt that the last thing this industry needed was another set of test results that would muddy the water. I kept waiting for someone—the Congress, the FCC or even the NTA—to do something to make provisions for translators to continue to provide free over-the-air TV to rural people."

Judging from his findings, Parsons is sure that stations will be able to produce quality service for the hundreds of thousands of rural TV viewers and the many cable systems that rely on translators.

Because it wasn't line-of-sight, many people surmised that the digital signal would not get through. Preliminary indications from Parsons' spectrum analyzer, however,



showed that it was going to work. So, last fall, he purchased an RCA DCT100 digital set-top receiver and hooked it up to a receive antenna. The signal was crystal clear and has been ever since, through fog, snow storms, rain and other natural challenges.

He next went to the FCC and requested experimental authority for two locations to stage his own reception test. Engineers there were very helpful, Parsons says, and assigned him call letters—although they made him sign an agreement to use only 8-VSB modulation in his tests. He also received permission from KSL-DT, the NBC affiliate in Salt Lake City, to use its signal for his tests.

KSL-DT, on ch. 38, is received at a mountain-top receiver site at 8,500 feet above main sea level (AMSL), 83 miles from Salt Lake City. A Zenith 8-VSB “remodulator” upconverts the signal to ch. 17 with a 30-W translator for local distribution and relays it to the next site. Parsons chose ch

17 because an existing analog station operating on ch. 16 is also inbound at the site and he wanted to see if it would interfere.

“I wanted to create a worst-case scenario,” he says. “We had no problem with the adjacent ch. 16. We also found no problems with ambient floor noise at the translator.”

At the second relay site, 67 miles from the first site (on Cove Mountain, 3 miles east of Monroe, Utah, at 8,750 feet AMSL), ch. 17 is converted, again by the Zenith remodulator, to ch. 32. This signal is then fed into two power amplifiers in a 1980s Larcen/TTC XL20 TV translator with an output power of 1 W for distribution to Monroe. Parsons has been watching DTV in his home off this translator and is encouraged by the results. There is, however, a 1½-second delay in the video signal.

Parsons and his two sons use a standard TV antenna at their respective homes, and all are receiving a reliable and sustained picture.

“We decided that we wouldn’t do anything different for DTV than we already do for NTSC,” he reports. “Actually, these tests have also proven to me that people in rural areas will have a smoother transition to DTV because they already have the antennas up on their roof and don’t care what channel the signal is on. So we’re in business.”

Parsons says the tests show that the new Zenith exciters will work with older amplifiers if aligned properly, so existing translators can be retrofitted. He also says he’s disproving the myth that more translators will be needed for DTV.



Using a spectrum analyzer and other monitoring equipment, Parsons checks the integrity of the incoming DTV signal from KSL-DT Salt Lake City daily in his home “test lab.”

GENDER COMPOSITION TV-NEWS SITES

February 2001
Ranked by composition
Source: Jupiter Media Metrix

Site	Males 18+	Chg.
1 CNNFN.COM*	73.7	up
2 CNBC.COM	67.7	up
3 FOXNEWS.COM	64.5	up
4 CNN.COM	62.4	up
5 BLOOMBERG.COM	61.8	down
All WWW	40.6	

Site	Males 18+	Chg.
1 ABC NEWS*	43.0	up
2 MSNBC.COM	39.0	NC
3 FOXNEWS.COM	33.7	down
4 CNN.COM	33.0	down
5 BLOOMBERG.COM	31.0	up
All WWW	41.1	

CABLE-TV SITES

Site	Males 18+	Chg.
1 CNBC.COM	67.7	up
2 ESPN*	66.8	up
3 FOXNEWS.COM	64.5	up
4 CNN.COM	62.4	up
5 SCIFI.COM	62.4	down
All WWW	40.6	
Cable/Network Universe	45.7	down

Site	Females 18+	Chg.
1 USANETWORK.COM	60.8	up
2 HGTV.COM	59.9	down
3 ABC*	57.7	up
4 LIFETIMETV.COM	55.8	up
5 COURTTV.COM	55.4	up
All WWW	41.1	
Cable/Network Universe	42.0	up

Composition: The percentage of a website/channel/application's visitors that belong to a specific age/gender grouping.

* Represents an aggregation of commonly owned/branded domain names.

** From January to February 2001.

—Statistically insignificant traffic.

Note: Sites categorized by BROADCASTING & CABLE.

NA: Comparison with previous month not available.

NC: No change from January to February 2001.

Sample Size: More than 60,000 individuals nationwide.

A Question Of Balance

Finding innovative customer solutions sometimes means balancing existing expertise with exciting new ideas. That's why last year Harris acquired the industry's leading broadcast automation company, **Louth Automation**.

Now known as **Harris Automation Solutions**, we offer single-channel, multi-channel, and news solutions that compliment traditional Harris broadcast products.

To see what this balanced approach can mean to your enterprise, visit us in **booth L5023** of the NAB Show in Las Vegas this spring.

next level solutions

SERVICE

SYSTEMS

AUTOMATION

TRANSMISSION

IN BRIEF

ABC SELECTS CHYRON FOR ON-AIR GRAPHICS

After trial runs on *Monday Night Football* and coverage of the Indy 500, ABC has chosen the Chyron Duet video platform and Chyron Aprisa digital disk recorders and still stores as the on-air graphics systems for its New York and Washington operations.

HITACHI SHOWS DVD CAMCORDER

At the NAB convention, Hitachi Denshi America Ltd.'s Broadcast & Professional Group will demonstrate a one-piece DVD-RAM camcorder with a 1/4-inch IT (inter-line transfer) CCD, 60 minutes of record time in high-quality mode (120 minutes in standard mode), a built-in image stabilizer and a 12:1 zoom lens.

Also included with the DZ-MV100A camcorder is disk-navigation software that provides immediate and random access editing to any scene recorded on the disk. Editing can be done directly from the camcorder's LCD screen. The suggested list price is \$2,000.

SMPTÉ 360M APPROVED

The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTÉ) has approved the first standard to define a media-exchange format for disk-based products such as servers and non-linear editors. Called SMPTÉ 360M, the new standard is based on a file format developed by engineers at the Grass Valley Group to facilitate industry-wide interoperability with the company's Profile video server and other devices. SMPTÉ 360M has already been implemented over a wide variety of transport layers and tested in hundreds of installations with multiple manufacturers' gear.

"I believe we will be able to use translators not only for distribution but also for relay links in place of microwave. We can go long hops with very little power," he says. "I also believe that we can put DTV signals in between analog signals that we're transmitting and transport a second channel. This is the first time that we've been able to take signals

and improve them."

Parsons believes that second-generation DTV receivers with 8-VSB decoders are working a lot better than first-generation units. "We now know that [signal] paths do not absolutely have to be line-of-sight, and we know that the technology is available," he adds. "We're ready." ■

NBC moves to digital

Multiple encoding systems will handle affiliate distribution

By Michael Grotticelli

NBC is converting the analog infrastructure for its affiliate distribution system to multiple digital encoding systems. The migration from the current distribution system, which broadcasts to about 180 of the network's 217 affiliates via satellite, will enable NBC to capitalize on the benefits of digital transmission and serve as another step toward complete digital-television operation. It also will allow for more capacity to send multiple channels and other ancillary data.

"Digital gives us a number of advantages," said Larry Thaler, director of distribution projects at NBC. "A primary advantage is that NBC will know that the signal we are broadcasting will be received by the affiliates with consistent image and sound quality. Digital is also the key to improving our transponder efficiency and will provide additional audio channels."

In all, five redundant multichannel systems will be installed at NBC's New York and Burbank, Calif., facilities. They will consist of encoders, multiplexers, 8PSK-compliant modulators, and three Director network-management and receiver-control systems—all from Norway-based equipment maker Tandberg Television. The Director systems provide the means to transmit contribution material over satellite while ensuring against unauthorized access to the network's broadcast material.

NBC is also replacing the control infrastructure and modernizing uplink-monitoring facilities.

In addition, 975 Tandberg Alteia Plus receivers will be supplied to affiliates across the country. As part of the project, each affiliate will install two racks of gear. According to Thaler, a distribution rack outfitted to receive network programming will be installed at each affiliate this year. The rack will include new receivers, digital switching and new scheduling equipment. A second and third phase of the project, to be completed "in the next few years," will improve the backhaul and transmission infrastructure.

In addition, a series of renovations is being made at the two main operation centers to accommodate the new digital gear. "There are several modifications to the uplink dishes at what we call the Master Sites," Thaler said. "These include new high-powered amplifiers, upconverters, and new uplink-monitoring equipment. In New York, we're also constructing a new equipment room to house the gear."

"We think there will be significant improvements in the quality and reliability of our signal distribution," Thaler said, adding that affiliates will also have improved access to NBC's distribution schedule.

Also, he pointed out, the upgrade is a "critical step" toward terrestrial DTV operation. ■



Tandberg's E5611 digital encoder is part of an overall network upgrade that will provide improved signal quality and the capacity to distribute additional data.

BROADCASTING CABLE

TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP AWARDS

NAB2001 – Las Vegas
Special Supplement – April 25, 2001

For the 4th consecutive year, Broadcasting & Cable Magazine will recognize four industry leaders for their contribution to the development of technology for the television industry.

Our 2001 Award Winners are:

||| IRA GOLDSTONE |||

VP, Engineering and Technology of Tribune Broadcasting Television Station Group

||| DICK GREEN |||

President and CEO of Cable Labs

||| MARK SANDERS |||

President and CEO of Pinnacle Systems

||| FOX SPORTS |||

We will recognize these industry leaders in the following ways:

On April 23rd Broadcasting & Cable will host The Technology Leadership Awards at NAB 2001.

On April 25th, Broadcasting & Cable will publish a special supplement recognizing and outlining the accomplishments of these winners. Total circulation for this issue is 50,000 including distribution at the NAB. This is your opportunity to recognize these leaders with a corporate salute ad in this important issue.

ISSUE DATE – April 25, 2001

SPACE CLOSE – Wednesday April 11, 2001

MATERIALS CLOSE – Friday April 13, 2001

Chuck Bokorn: 775-852-1290 • Marcia Croft: 325-549-4114 • Yvonne Feltus: 212-337-6945
Rob Payne: 212-337-7022 • Michael Farina: 212-337-6931 • Classified Advertising & Marketplace Advertising: 866-258-1075

VISIT OUR WEB SITE: www.broadcastingcable.com



New media on the hunt for revenue

Streaming tools promise to broaden audience more easily

By Anne Hohenberger

It wasn't too long ago that new media was all the rage, and NAB reflected the market by expanding its focus. This year, NAB attendees will again find numerous products and services meant to keep new media moving forward. In the first installment of our three-part "Road to NAB" series, we take a look at some of the bigger new-media providers and what they will be offering attendees. We start out by taking a look at streaming media, datacasting and interactive television.

Broadcasters, traditional media companies, businesses and countless other content producers and individuals have embraced the Internet as an important communications channel. And streaming media has been one new tool in that communications channel for a large number of Web sites. The advantage of streaming media is that it's one way to deliver rich media without the need for a broadband connection at

the end-user's machine or transmitting large files that take ages to download.

Many broadcasters, cable networks and sports franchises have already taken the plunge and offer streaming video as a matter of course on their Web sites. Much of this content is intended to supplement or enhance the programming and newscasts available on television. The capability exists and broadcasters have adopted the technology. Technology aside, the bigger question becomes one of revenue generation.

Some technology providers speak of targeted advertising, which matches a viewer's preferences and even demographics. But broadcasters must decide how much to invest in their Internet presence and how best to use the medium. Choices abound for creating, storing, archiving and streaming media over the Internet.

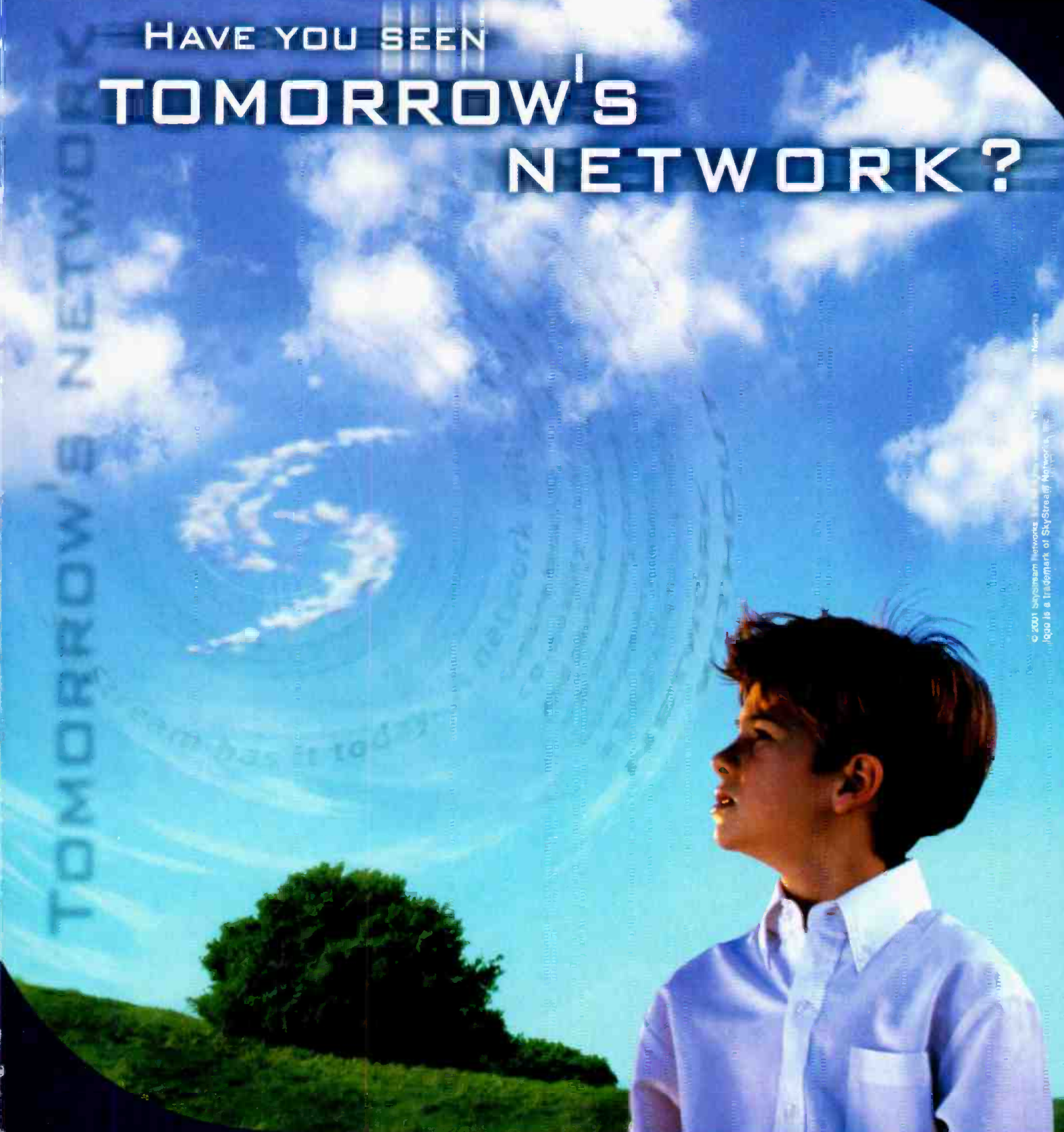
NAB 2001 will have a different feel from NAB 2000 when it comes to streaming media. For example, last year there was a lot of talk concerning broadband and bandwidth. But manufacturers contacted for this article didn't discuss bandwidth. The assumption is that audiences checking out sites offering streaming media have the bandwidth necessary to utilize and enjoy the rich content they're about to click on.

Another buzz last year surrounded the



HAVE YOU SEEN TOMORROW'S NETWORK?

TOMORROW'S NETWORK



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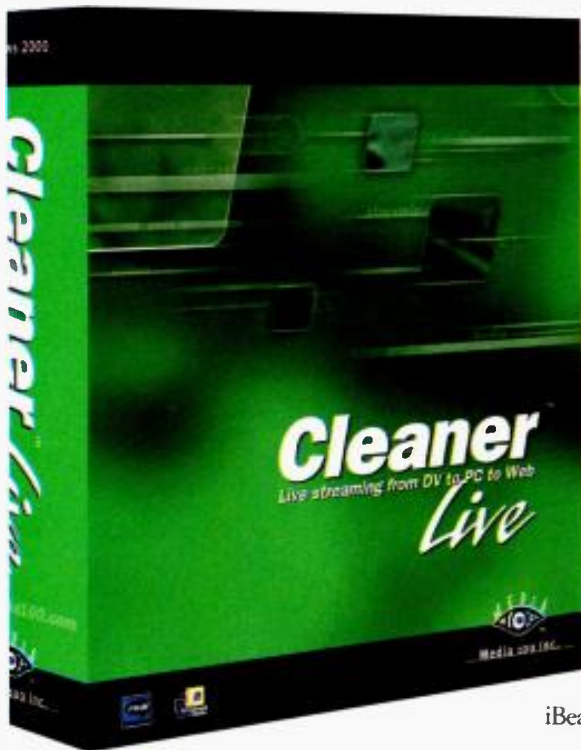
streaming formats from Real, Microsoft and QuickTime. No single streaming format has won out. And most manufacturers are offering streaming solutions that support both Real and Windows Media formats. Many support QuickTime, but not all do so "natively."

Here's a look at what some of the major players in the streaming-media market will offer at the show.

GRASS VALLEY GROUP

Grass Valley Group's WebAble technology is joined by the new Aqua Internet encoder as part of its Web Publishing solution. Aqua supports all the major streaming formats and incorporates GVG's One Pass

Media 100's Cleaner Live can encode for RealSystem and Microsoft formats simultaneously.



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Encoding solution.

"With the Profile, Aqua extends the GVG WebAble initiative by acting as a WAN turbo charger for new streaming media or repurposed content. It can sit on a directory within GVG's MAN system, pre-processing and enhancing Web media and doing it in real time," says Mike Cronk, GVG's vice president of marketing. "Aqua can also take baseband from a VTR or router and use it independent of a Profile."

Aqua can encode streams for speeds of 28.8 kb/s to more than 2 Mb/s and in Microsoft Windows Media, RealNetwork RealVideo and Apple Quicktime formats in a single pass.

IBEAM

When iBeam first began offering its streaming service in January 2000, the company claimed to handle 1 million streams per month. That number had grown to more than 750 million by December 2000, and, today, iBeam reports up to 100 million streams per month. "And it's still growing," according to Drew Henry, senior vice president of marketing at iBeam.

The company is experiencing "positive momentum," Henry adds, despite a stock price that has taken a tumble to about \$1 a share (from a high of \$29 in July). He says that iBeam has served more than 40 million ads and offers the means to take streaming ads and insert them intelligently into live and on-demand streams on the Internet.

"Streaming is happening, and it is happening much like we envisioned: in support of regular broadcasts, enhancing the broadcasts," says Henry. "Advertisers are seeing a return on their investment, definitely. While it's small today, it's growing quickly and is demonstrated by the growth that we're seeing in the number of ad insertions."

iBeam continues to expand its ser-



RealNetworks continues to attract customers with features like "skins" for the RealAudio Player.

vices. As part of its intelligent distribution network, iBeam is offering a new syndication agent that allows an iBeam customer to copy, distribute and manage the transaction associated with syndicating content. iBeam will demonstrate the new agent at NAB.

KASENNA

Kasenna and its hardware partners SGI and Hewlett-Packard will demonstrate the Kasenna MediaBase Network Edition that allows users to move content from a centralized to a distributed environment. Assets do not have to be replicated at multiple locations.


Greg Carter, director of business development at Kasenna, notes, "Broadcasters are moving toward digitizing their content, and they want to preview that content on workstations and desktop computers." The new software, introduced in March, includes video-content management, video-content distribution and streaming and commerce functions.

Kasenna MediaBase is a streaming-media platform that supports a number of hardware-based encoders, asset management technologies and streaming formats. Currently, MediaBase supports RealMedia, QuickTime, Windows Media, MP3, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 and, according to Carter, soon MPEG-4.

Kasenna, originally designed for the SGI IRIX operating environment, has added Sun Solaris and Linux, both popular for managing Internet applications.

MEDIA 100

Media100 plans to demonstrate its recently introduced Cleaner Live, a streaming appli-



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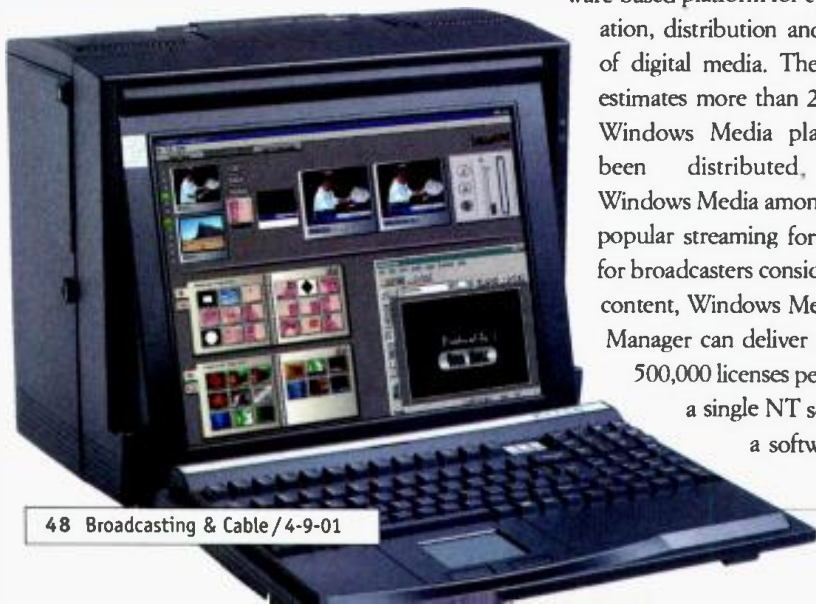
ROAD TO NAB MULTIMEDIA

cation for real-time capture and Internet streaming. Cleaner Live streams the Windows Media and RealSystem formats simultaneously. The software runs on a PC running Microsoft Windows 2000. Cleaner Live accepts input directly from NTSC or PAL DV cameras (via Firewire).

Kevin Bourke, vice president of corporate communications for Media100 says that people are still kicking the tires and trying to understand if streaming media is viable or when it will be viable. "We're putting streaming into context so people understand the whole process for streaming, the whole digital media workflow," he says. "It's not just for major television and independent producers. The potential market is exploding."

Bourke adds that the past year has been a tremendous education period for broadcasters regarding streaming media. "They've had an opportunity to get their heads around what it can do for them and what it can't. How can I look at streaming

Pinnacle's StreamGenie is a portable system with multiple inputs, a DVE, a character generator and other tools.



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as a strategic value-add? How can I extend my broadcasting reach with the Internet?"

MICROSOFT

Microsoft recently released Microsoft Windows Media Audio and Video 8 compression technologies, which provide "near-DVD-quality video at rates as low as 500 Kbps, CD-quality audio at 64 Kbps" and new options for encoding media, such as batch encoding, two-pass encoding and variable-bit-rate encoding.

"Before digital media is going to take off, it has to be comparable in quality to what people get through traditional means," says Geordie Wilson, product manager for Microsoft's Digital Media Division. "In video, the benchmark is DVD, and, in audio, the benchmark is CD. Connections have to support the quality."

At NAB, Microsoft will feature demonstrations of content produced using the new codecs, as well as its latest software

'Before digital media is going to take off, it has to be comparable in quality to what people get through traditional means.'

**—Geordie Wilson,
Digital Media Division, Microsoft**

players, Windows Media Player 7 for Mac and Windows Media Player 8 for PC-compatible systems. Both players are appropriate for downloaded and streamed content.

Windows Media is an all-in-one, software-based platform for content creation, distribution and playback of digital media. The company estimates more than 240 million Windows Media players have been distributed, making Windows Media among the most popular streaming formats. And for broadcasters considering paid content, Windows Media Rights Manager can deliver more than 500,000 licenses per day from a single NT server. And a software devel-



ParkerVision's PTV Webstation for News is for both live and on-demand needs.

opment kit is available for the Windows Media platform, allowing users to customize applications using streaming media.

MINERVA NETWORKS

Minerva Networks' NAB exhibit centers on the theme of IP Television. "It's all about deployment of television-based services at the edges of networks, not just video over the Internet," says Patrick Sweeney, vice

president of marketing for Minerva Networks, noting that DSL and fiber are the backbone of IP Television networks for live and video-on-demand.

The company offers several basic hardware components for preparing streaming-media content in the VNP product family: the VNP-40, which outputs QuickTime and MPEG-4 streams; the VNP-100 series for MPEG-1 encoding; and the VNP-150 and VNP-200 for MPEG-2 encoding. As for MPEG-4, "When someone releases a true MPEG-4 player, we'll be compatible. There is no agreed-upon standard for MPEG-4 right now," adds Sweeney.

PARKERVISION

ParkerVision will unveil the PTV Webstation for News, a streaming system

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for live and on-demand media.

The new product builds on the company's PVTV Studio News product family and allows producers to create a broadcast and Internet version of the same program. Using PVTV Webstation for News, broadcasters can add URLs, multimedia graphics and advertising to their streaming content.

PINNACLE SYSTEMS

Pinnacle Systems will showcase both the StreamGenie and StreamFactory Web-casting production and encoding systems.

StreamGenie is a portable system-in-a-box with multiple source inputs, a DVE, a character generator and other production tools. A dual-encode version outputs multiple formats (Real and Windows Media) at multiple bit rates. StreamGenie can also output uncompressed video for mobile production requirements.

StreamGenie this year adds integrated PowerPoint presentations to video. "O&O's are using streaming for training affiliates, employees and salespeople," says Rod Nydam, Pinnacle senior product manager.

StreamFactory is a stand-alone encoder for media streaming without StreamGenie's "suite" of production tools. StreamFactory accepts any video input, including SDI-embedded and EBU signals, with up to four independent streams as output. "This product offers more optimized streams to both cable modem and

POTS customers," adds Nydam. Pinnacle Systems is introducing a dual-processor version of StreamFactory at NAB, as well as a downstream keyer for logo insertion.

The company is also offering a new drop-in card preprocessor option to reduce video artifacts and noise. StreamFactory supports independent audio sampling and balanced analog audio output. StreamGenie and StreamFactory are compatible.

REALNETWORKS

RealNetworks will feature its flagship streaming products, RealAudio 8 for Internet audio and RealVideo 8.

RealAudio 8 delivers audio quality equivalent to, or better than, RealAudio G2, the current standard, at two-thirds the bandwidth. RV8 scales from narrowband through broadband, delivering VHS-quality to DSL and cable-modem users and full-motion near-DVD quality at 750 Kbps. RealNetworks first launched RealAudio on the show floor of NAB in 1995.

"At this year's show, we're taking a proactive approach to addressing the top concern of everyone doing business on the Net today: 'How do I make money?'" says Shelley Morrison, vice president of media and distribution sales, RealNetworks. "Our booth will directly address RealNetworks' end-to-end solutions for monetizing the digital assets of broadcasters."

RealNetworks plans to demonstrate and explain services around ad streaming and replacement, Real Broadcast Network, the GoldPass subscription service and RealSystemIQ, a streaming-media-network architecture similar to a peer-to-peer network. The company calls this "neural broadcasting." RealNetworks will host its

own booth, as well as a partner pavilion.

TELESTREAM

Telestream plans to showcase FlipFactory Pro, an expanded version of its FlipFactory streaming-media-production software. FlipFactory automates the encoding and distribution of streaming media into multiple formats and bit rates.

The company calls the new version of FlipFactoryPro a "universal format translator" as it automates the entire process of capturing, preprocessing, encoding and delivering media.

ClipMailPro and ClipExpress Internet appliances work with FlipFactory to provide delivery of high-quality MPEG media files

over data networks.

FlipFactoryPro will be demonstrated working with servers from some of the major broadcast-server manufacturers including Grass Valley Group and Pinnacle Systems.

Telestream will also demonstrate ClipRemote, a new encoding and delivery appliance for portable applications such as remote broadcasts. Media acquired via ClipRemote can be encoded into MPEG files for Internet delivery or satellite transmission.

"Until now, most broadcast servers have used proprietary, closed formats," says David Heppe, vice president of marketing and business development for Telestream. "FlipFactory Pro addresses the differences in formats, file directories and server interfaces. We have established relationships with each of the manufacturers, and we feel we're in a good position to offer broadcasters universal translations."

Heppe also notes that the company recently released software that integrates Virage VideoLogger with FlipFactory and allows users to "flip" a number of streaming formats and send those files to Virage with the accompanying metadata. ■



Telestream's Dave Heppe says FlipFactory addresses format and directory differences.



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Datacasting companies put best bit forward

Many manufacturers say the technology is ready for delivery

By Carl Lindemann

Just what is the future of datacasting? Potential run-ins with Congress and the FCC concerning spectrum use aside, many are banking on it as a way that broadcasters will get a return on investment on digital. Broadcasters set aside a few Mb/s of digital spectrum for delivery of data such as computer files and other information and then charge for the access to those bits. Those companies that are looking to help broadcasters receive that ROI will be at NAB, looking to attract broadcasters with their technology.

Mark Simpson, president and CEO of

Triveni Digital, which will be exhibiting at NAB, says the show and 2001 will be a turning point for datacasting. "This will be a year where people will be looking for what to deploy," he says. "They won't just be exploring the options; they will be looking for business models that justify deployment."

Simpson isn't alone in his enthusiasm. But irrespective of whether the believers in datacasting are right about what the next few weeks will mean for the technology, one thing is certain: There will be a number of places in Las Vegas to check out datacasting technology, business models and services. Here's a sampling of what to expect at this year's convention.

DOTCAST

Dotcast comes to NAB as the Dotcast Digital Network prepares for a national rollout. "With \$90 million in funding and with broadcast partners in every major U.S. market, we're moved into the implementation phase," says James Elder, Dotcast's director of corporate communications.

After conducting trials through the fall, the company expects to launch a nationwide commercial network offering 4.5 Mb/s per tower throughput over analog systems and up to 10 Mb/s per tower on digital TV systems by the end of the year. Already, Dotcast has agreements with approximately 200 broadcasters. Broadcasters who allocate part of their unused spectrum to Dotcast will share in the revenues generated by new digital-content services.

The biggest news for NAB is that Harris Corp. will be Dotcast's strategic manufacturing and integration partner. Harris will take on the task of installing the Dotcaster Edge Server and other technology at all the local broadcast partners.

For Elder, this year's NAB is an opportunity to show that datacasting is a practical reality. "Our goal for NAB this year is to demonstrate to the technical community the progress we've made in our network development," he says. Dotcast will be located in the Harris booth.

IBLAST

iBlast, which has built its future around access to bandwidth for datacasting, will offer the first public demonstration of some





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of the potential services it could offer. One which iBlast CEO Michael Lambert is touting is the ability to use digital spectrum to give viewers the same experience they have in the hotel room. Once your mind gets back out of the gutter, it's clear he's talking about video on demand. Lambert has some big plans for datacasting, believing it frees viewers from the confines of schedules defined in programming guides. "Cheap storage at home is the magic that enables broadcasters to get into video on demand," he says. "It adds PVR capabilities to give users the ultimate choice. It gives the ability to stop, fast forward and rewind right in the living room."

Lambert also says that iBlast is working with the film industry to make this a viable means for digital distribution of movies. "We've found that the studios like the idea of video on demand. They like to control their product and 'window' through different media." Security is also a prime consideration. "Ours is a one-way system so you can't share it between users; it is very secure," he adds.

The rollout for the service will begin later this year, with coverage for at least 93% of U.S. television markets planned by 2002. Already, 251 TV stations are part of the iBlast network. iBlast will be located in a suite in the Mirage but will also have representation in the NDS booth.

IRDETO ACCESS

Irdeto Access will be demonstrating its CypherCast at NAB. CypherCast is a datacasting application that the company says will help broadcasters generate new, consistent revenue. The conditional-access technology integrated in CypherCast follows proven pay-TV practices, according to Joe Zaller, vice president of marketing for

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Triveni Digital will offer SkyScaper 2.0, as well as the Program Editor.

Irdeto. "We've moved everything we've learned from pay-TV to the IP context. Applying these proven technologies can shake up the entire industry by delivering paying customers," says Zaller.

Irdeto has 30 years of experience in conditional-access and pay-TV. CypherCast enables stations to deliver subscription services to both clients over the air in IP form to set-top boxes or to PCs. The standard CypherCast platform can broadcast up to 1,000 individual multicast streams arrayed in up to 100 distinct program services for as many as 250,000 subscribers in a local viewing area. The system is scalable to handle millions of subscribers. "This is a very efficient way to get a lot of data to a lot of people," adds Zaller.

For Zaller, the challenge at NAB is more than technical. It is about thinking through the changes in the industry and adapting to them with new business models.



Wavexpress' TVTonic browser plug-in looks to make datacasting an easy proposition for viewers.

"Broadcasters are comfortable with a 'fire and forget' approach," he notes. "Once the signal leaves the station, they're done. Before you can turn viewers into subscribers, you've got to get past that."

Zaller sees the changing technology following an earlier pattern. "It's analogous to when MPEG came out. Now, everyone knows that they have to do something about Internet IP. The only question is where to turn."

SPECTRAREP

Is digital conversion an expense or an investment? It creates a new resource for stations. But to get a return on this means going beyond TV's traditional business. SpectraRep's vision is to provide a broadband wireless digital network for business-to-business data distribution, giving partner stations the opportunity to turn digital data capabilities into revenues.

SpectraRep came together in February 2000 as a separate company within the BIA Financial Network. "Within BIA, we were working with Internet people that had content to deliver and also digital TV people with the pipes to do it," says Mark O'Brien, SpectraRep's executive vice president. Putting these two together filled an obvious need. For clients, this means serving as a one-stop solution for distributing content. "We're like the general contractor you hire when you build a house," adds O'Brien. "They are responsible for getting the house built, though they don't swing a hammer or use a saw. We take care of it soup-to-nuts by partnering with companies like Wavexpress and Triveni."

The advantage for business-to-business customers is that they have a single point of contact in managing the project. "The biggest segment we're targeting is proprietary video streaming," adds O'Brien. "Many companies have already



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equipped employees with laptops. That's great. But the only way to really connect them with what's going on is by multicast high-bandwidth streaming content."

For broadcasters, partnership with SpectraRep follows a familiar business model. "We're not asking for bandwidth that we control but a commitment for us to go represent the stations," says O'Brien. "It's much the same way that national ad reps have inventory and go out to sell it. It's like selling avails: not controlling it, just representing it."

One of the highlights for SpectraRep at NAB will be hosting a live over-the-air datacasting event. The demonstration will use Sun Microsystem equipment and Triveni's technology to datacast show content over KLAS-DT (ch. 7). The company will have a suite in the Las Vegas Hilton (room 950) and a presence at the Triveni booth on the show floor.

THOMCAST

Thomcast Communications "OPAL" is the key element of the company's data-broadcasting solution. Based on a rack-mounted Windows NT server with DVB-SPI (LVDS) and ASI interfaces, OPAL takes advantage of OpenMux real-time multiplexing kernel in order to broadcast Internet or data files over ATSC and DVB-compliant terrestrial, cable, and satellite networks.

OPAL can handle up to 50 data inputs and allocate outgoing bandwidth based either on preset minimum/maximum data rates or statistical IP rate allocation. The system can also store multiple configurations. This means that DTV broadcasters can work out the maximum bandwidth available for data broadcasting in a variety of video scenarios (i.e. whether the video

broadcast is in SD or HD). They then have a series of templates stored and ready which can be switched between as circumstances dictate. OPAL can feed any third party multiplexer; however, it is even more powerful when combined with AMBER (Thomcast's remultiplexer) in a solution called Smart Data Pack.

The advantage to Smart Data Pack is in the way that it adds data without affecting the main program stream "because it is really an add-on to the DTV broadcast chain," says Jean Macher, Thomcast product manager. "What this means is that you never have the data, jeopardizing the main video stream. The SmartData pack also allows broadcasters to optimize the full 19.4 Mbps of their transport stream by replacing null packets with intelligent data."

TRIVENI DIGITAL

Mark Simpson, CEO, thinks the move to business models is a major shift from last year.

"Now, deployments and implementations are not just timely but possible. The technology is ready. Our infrastructure is now tied into a better collection of end-to-end solutions." With this in mind, the Triveni Digital booth is being designed to showcase the entire data-broadcasting universe. "We're focusing on showing a wide range of applications from partners. These give an overview of the possibilities for the technology and give people ideas as to how they can make money right away."

Triveni will also be featuring new versions of its own products including SkyScraper 2.0. The latest version of the end-to-end DTV platform will have increased robustness and an enhanced feature set. Also, an upgrade to StreamScope will give simpler visual representations of content streams and PSIP (Program and Systems Information Protocol) tables. Another product, StreamBridge, is new to NAB this year. It is a real-time translator for

PSIP data in ATSC transport streams. The company says this is essential where signals originating in a central point are rebroadcast through other stations—a common situation for public broadcasters.

WAVEXPRESS

When the Internet first took off, some said TV viewers would quickly opt for the new medium. But audiences have not treated this as an either/or situation. Wavexpress will be demonstrating a product that takes advantage of the way many use both simultaneously. "Already, you've got 27 million people who are 'telewebbing' (going online with the

TV on)," says Brian Hickey, Wavexpress' vice president of marketing. In dual use, TV viewing has become a background activity. "It turns the television into a radio. The only time telewebbers look to the TV is when they hear something that draws them back." Wavexpress is looking to resolve that situation with its TVTonic Web

This will be a year where people will be looking for what to deploy. They won't just be exploring the options!

—Mark Simpson, Triveni Digital

browser, an open platform product that allows for surfers to surf and watch related or non-related TV content with the help of an analog or digital TV-tuner card. "It puts TV on the PC, giving the telewebbing community what it wants," adds Hickey. TVTonic also addresses what Hickey sees as the other great trend in TV viewing: time shifting. "TVTonic will have PVR functionality without needing anything except a PC."

TVTonic also has tools that will allow broadcasters to create custom-produced Web sites wrapped around standard television programs.

For Hickey, enabling telewebbing is also a natural way to draw audiences to datacasting. "The end game is in datacasting. We are developing a consumer relationship to help migrate people to data broadcasting through terrestrial broadcasters."

Wavexpress will have a demonstration suite at the Hilton and will be sharing booth space with Triveni Digital. ■

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ITV providers are talking business, not technology

Video-on-demand offerings top buzz list

By Carl Lindemann

Talk of interactive television continues to outstrip actual delivery, but it looks like many of the interactive-television-related companies at NAB will be talking business rather than technology. Applications such as video-on-demand or PVR functionality through the set-top are recurring trends, as is the ability to surf or chat through the television. Here's a look at what some of the interac-

tive-television manufacturers will offer at the show.

ACTV

Target marketing of TV advertising promises to be one of the key advantages of the digital era. ACTV's SpotOn service will go live in 40,000 homes in Denver later this year. Once realized, the system may save both viewers and advertisers from wasting time and effort. "It means that if I'm a young household with a family, my TV isn't going to get ads for Fixodent," says Richard

Yelen, ACTV's senior vice president, marketing. "Media buyers now are buying television shows trying to reach the dominant audience viewing. Here, you're actually buying the audience that's viewing."

Advertisers will also be able to target narrow audience segments that would otherwise be overlooked. "You could actually have Fixodent ads in a Nickelodeon show if there happen to be senior citizens watching."

ACTV believes implementing SpotOn may change many core dynamics in the TV industry, particularly as TV metrics could undergo a fundamental change. "We can account for spots aired in each individual home," says Yelen. "These ratings are no longer based on sampling but whether it was actually on that channel." Getting such in-depth information does raise privacy concerns. Yelen appreciates this as well as the potential for additional business concepts. "The advertiser isn't going to know personal information. On the other hand, this product also offers permission-based marketing possibilities. If you click for a coupon, the advertiser is obviously going to have to know your address for fulfillment. Beyond that, Big Brother is not watching."

ACTV's SpotOn is designed to work with any set-top converter and any middleware provider. It is both direct-to-home as well as cable-TV friendly. Already, ACTV has signed a distribution agreement with AT&T broadband. ACTV will demonstrate the technology in the Motorola booth.



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CHYRON

Chyron's Interactive Division will hit the show floor with one goal. "Two years ago, we started working on making iTV content creation routine," says Bill Hendler, Chyron interactive division vice president. "Most of the work done, even in HTML, was non-standard." Visitors at Chyron's booth at NAB will see content authoring and production tools with Lyric's iTV enhancements. According to the company, these enhancements save having to invest the time and cost of installing and mastering entirely new tools. "This takes advantage of the installed base, typically systems that are up to 12 years old. All we need to do is perform a software upgrade and put a PC on site to work with existing Chyron equipment," says Hendler. Perhaps even more important, the translations to iTV maintain production values. "A lot of iTV looks very bad. We really felt we had to create content-creation tools that maintain a consistent look and quality."

Other Chyron iTV offerings at NAB include the DCC Interactive solution. This integrates interactive content with Pro-Bel and other automation systems. Also, the character generator (CG) interactive software upgrade for Infinit or Duet hardware allows synchronous iTV linked to on-screen graphics. CG Interactive allows automatic deployment during a live event with no interruption of TV production workflow. "A lot of the attractive scenarios for iTV have to do with news and sports. In the live environment there's no chance to take recorded material and do the voodoo to make it interactive." Automation has added benefits. "There's no need to reproduce the efforts of the television graphics production

SPECIAL REPORT



Veil Interactive technology was used by Ericsson in a game piece to promote its latest cell phones.

team. This saves effort and limits the opportunity for error," says Hendler.

INTERTAINER

Intertainer will arrive NAB on the heels of signing a number of important deals with content providers to distribute movies, music videos and other programming through the company's digital cable and broadband Internet video-on-demand platforms. These agreements with A&E, Universal Studios and Warner Music Group add depth and breadth to its library of some 65,000 hours of programming from 70 content providers. Intertainer is also deploying its VOD service to 40,000 DSL

subscribers in Cincinnati. The systemwide rollout through a broadband subsidiary of Broadwing follows a year of joint testing.

"The technology is catching up with the (VOD) vision both in terms of the infrastructure options, quality of video at reasonable bit rates, and the number of platforms available in the home," says Bruce Anderson, Intertainer's senior vice president, Technology. That means that consumers will soon be adding VOD to their home entertainment options. "We're going to be seeing an explosion in the number of IP-enabled Windows Media-capable set-top boxes." Intertainer will demonstrate a service similar to the Cincinnati deployment at the Microsoft booth that will serve up content via DSL to a uniView set-top box.



Liberate is now offering its service to 40,000 customers in the Cincinnati area.

LIBERATE TECHNOLOGIES

The proliferation of information appliances seen in and around NAB 2001 comes from a tremendous amount of cultivation of the technical infrastructure. Liberate Technologies has spent the past four years sowing seeds as a middleware provider for set-top

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ROAD TO NAB MULTIMEDIA

SPECIAL REPORT

boxes. For Charlie Tritschler, Liberate's vice president of marketing, the first fruits will come from video-on-demand applications built on top of their platform. "The focus this year is VOD. It's been our focus this past year and I think you'll see a lot more companies moving into this space," he says.

Why is VOD poised to take off? "Last year, the concept was interesting. People knew there would be consumer demand, but the technological and business challenges were greater. Since then, the cost per stream has dropped and the technology has matured. We've integrated it into the platform and that makes it that much easier for a network operator to roll it out." At the end of March, Charter Communications selected Liberate's software to enable interactive services with Motorola DCT5000 set-tops. This follows a pilot program in St. Louis. Full deployment is planned by the end of the year.

Adopting open standards and a common architecture has cleared the way for mass implementation of VOD. "Extending that platform into a VOD gateway allows different providers to write to the same API," says Tritschler. "That makes it easy for them because they don't have to deal

with technology infrastructure issues and it gives network operators a much broader choice of VOD suppliers."

Liberate Technologies will be demonstrating its product offerings at the Tandberg, Pace and Philips booths.

NDS

Visitors to the NDS booth will find that much of what was in the idea stage at last year's show is now ready for prime time. "At NAB 2000, we were showing concept," says Beth Erez, NDS' vice president of marketing. "We told people that these were being worked on. This year, a lot of what's being shown is actually available for on-air use." The centerpiece is Value@TV, an open and scalable suite of interactive TV applications. Highlights of Value@TV include QVC, Discovery and SportsActive. The first two applications are designed specifically to complement the cable channels. QVC enables impulse buying while Discovery allows Discovery Channel viewers to embark on in-depth explorations of the science, technology and nature subjects referenced by the programming. SportsActive is one of two interactive sports applications offered. One targeted for the South American market runs on the NDS Core (the equivalent of Microsoft Basic TV Digital), the other on OpenTV.

Looking ahead, NDS will also feature what Erez predicts will trigger a ground shift in the consumer experience. XTV and iXTV are personalized TV systems. XTV is a third-generation PVR that is integrated with the set-top box and conditional access systems.

"The idea is to open numerous revenue opportunities through targeted advertising and video rental," she says. "It lets consumers create personalized listings and get targeted offerings based on their profile." iXTV is billed as the next step beyond XTV, a full convergence of iTV and personalized TV. Based on individual preferences, content is cached to enable true interactivity. This avoids the need to serve up bandwidth-intensive material in time.

OPENTV

OpenTV comes to NAB to demonstrate the company's robust integration and implementation of established iTV technologies. "We have an audience for broadcasters and content companies to target as well as the technologies to facilitate reaching that audience," says Anup Murarka, vice president of strategic product marketing. "The challenge is not building new technology, but to have these work seamlessly together. How do you integrate these effectively? Currently, OpenTV reaches some 13.9 million digital set-top boxes in more than 50 countries, although deployment here in the U.S. has yet to hit the cable MSO level.

Beyond OpenTV's software and infrastructure platform to enable digital interactive television, new prospects are opening to bring on-demand content to other digital communications devices.

One of the latest offerings being demonstrated at the show is Spyglass Prism 3.3.0. The server-based content-transformation solution is designed to improve performance of Web-enabled devices. Many of the latest features are driven by the demand for wireless content in Asia. This includes conversion of all Web-image types and their mobile-phone equivalents for iMode, WAP and MML services as well as transcoding from HDML to WML and among all versions of WML.

POWERTV

PowerTV will demonstrate VOD applications and an Internet suite that unites TV viewing with online functionality. "It's not just the Internet thrown on TV," says



NDS is involved in offering SportsActive to South American TV viewers



OpenTV currently reaches 13.9 million set-tops worldwide.

A circular portrait of Cheryl Idell, a woman with dark hair, wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored top. The background of the portrait is dark and out of focus.

Cheryl Idell, Executive VP, Initiative Media

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Chuck Kaplan, PowerTV's vice president of marketing. "It's a blended experience rather than a series of disassociated experiences on the same monitor. Creating a two-screen environment by windowing on the single screen is easy. The more interesting part is looking at what the viewer is actually doing with this."

Kaplan says that the technology is ready for rollout. The remaining issues have more to do with marketing. "The content providers and advertisers are interested but they're waiting for critical mass."

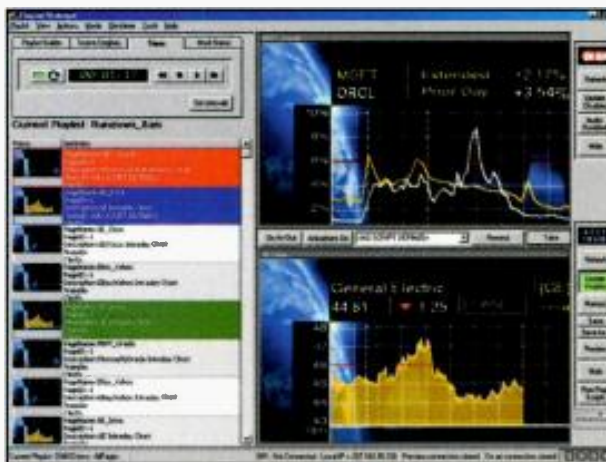
Numerous cable operators will be conducting field trials in the coming months. "These are not technology trials," adds Kaplan. "The cable operators will be evaluating how to price, package and position it." They will also be looking at how it can improve retention. "The early results are that it has a significant impact on retention. People who start to interact with these services find it lifestyle changing. That makes it extremely 'sticky.'" These initial results seem to repeat similar findings with VOD. "We have more than 600,000 subscribers using the PowerTV VOD applications. Not only have their buy rates gone up, but the retention rates, too. That's because it has changed their lifestyle."

VEIL INTERACTIVE

Veil Interactive's message is to look beyond the box. "Most interactivity coming from the TV has been relegated to the set-top box," says Ted Koplak, the company's president and CEO. "We'll be introducing new concepts in interactivity that are far more global than anyone would imagine. These give new ways to go cross media with more impact for both the advertised message as well as what

comes from the content provider."

Such versatility stems from the company's core technology. VEIL (Video Encoded Invisible Light) information is integrated into television broadcasts and even home video recordings in the vertical-blanking interval. This makes the data potentially ubiquitous and virtually impossible to strip out. There are two versions of the encoding software to support different data rates. VEIL I delivers data at up to 60 bits/sec to simple optical readers. VEIL II achieves 100 times that rate to infrared or RF receivers as well as Bluetooth devices. Visitors to the booth will see six different VEIL-enabled devices including PDAs,



VertigoXmedia's Producer On Air 2.0 possesses bidirectional capabilities.

remote controls, wireless phones and even toys. VEIL chips can also be added to set-top boxes, allowing for delivery of coupons and other value-adds to programming. The technology also can serve as a watermark for video.

For Koplak, the wireless dimension can better connect audiences. "We can take the viewer from in-home to theme parks and supermarket kiosks. We want to take them through a lot of different experiences on the way to the point-of-sale."

VERTIGOXMEDIA

VertigoXmedia's NAB offerings will highlight what the company sees as a move beyond graphics automation. "We're not just

talking about graphics automation anymore. It's grown into content automation. That's the ability to repurpose content to allow broadcasters to distribute it over multiple delivery channels," says David Wilkins, VertigoXmedia's president and CEO. The company's recently released Producer On Air 2.0 is an open platform for automating and formatting content delivery. "We have a real value proposition with tangible benefits for broadcasters today and open opportunities for tomorrow." According to Wilkins, adopting Producer On Air 2.0 as a standard can realize enormous savings over custom solutions. Another attractive feature is the

products' bi-directional capabilities. "We can take input from the Web audience and turn it into real-time viewer polling and interactive games."

A key design element of Producer On Air 2.0 is the ability to add functionality to meet individual needs. "We have a standard product with 80% of what everyone needs and then offer modules and scripting. The broadcaster can graduate to these new delivery channels as needed.

First, use it for live TV graphics, maybe a Web page. When you're ready for iTV, just add a new module." Two modules are already available: Producer Interactive for iTV and Producer Mobile for wireless phones and PDAs. Producer Interactive is an authoring and control tool compatible with all current set-top-box standards including ATVEF and MHP.

Unlike earlier versions, Producer On Air 2.0 is also a platform for third-party developers. "If you want to build custom implementations for this, it is a completely open platform. We are looking for development partners," Wilkins says. The VertigoXmedia booth will be located in eTopia at the Sands. ■

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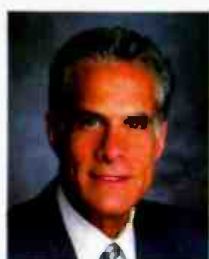
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This Week

April 10-12 *SCTE* Telephony seminar. Radisson Hotel O'Hare, Chicago. Contact: Ginny Nagle (610) 524-1725, ext. 210.

April 13-14 *National Association of Black College Broadcasters* 23rd Annual Black College Radio Convention. Renaissance Hotel, Atlanta. Contact: Lo Jelks (404) 523-6136.

Also in April

April 20-21 *Broadcast Education Foundation* Making News: Broadcast Journalism for the Non-News Executive. Mandalay Bay Resort, Las Vegas. Contact: Heather Birks (202) 775-2559.

April 20-23 *Broadcast Education Association* 46th Annual Convention and Exhibition. Las Vegas Convention Center (at the NAB Convention), Las Vegas. Contact: Diane Hare (202) 429-5354.

April 21 *Television News Center* Anchor Training. 1510 H Street, NW, Washington. Contact: Herb Brubaker (301) 340-6160.

April 21 *Broadcast Education Foundation* and the *Freedom Forum First Amendment Center* Freedom Sings: A Musical Celebration of Free Expression and the First Amendment. Bellagio Hotel, Las Vegas. Contact: Heather Birks (202) 775-2559.

April 21 *Broadcasters' Foundation* Golf Tournament. Las Vegas National Expo Center, Las Vegas. Contact: Gordon Hastings (203) 862-8577.

April 21-26 *National Association of Broadcasters* Spring Convention. Las Vegas Convention Center and Sands Expo Center, Las Vegas. Contact: Kathleen Muller (202) 775-3527. *TVB* Annual Marketing Conference, **April 23-24**. Contact: Janice Garjian (212) 486-1111.

April 22-25 *Cable Television Public Affairs Association* Forum 2001 and Beacon Awards. J.W. Marriott Hotel, Washington. Contact: Carol Vernon (703) 845-1400.

April 23-25 *The FARR Group Ltd.* The 2001 High Speed Access Summit. Radisson Edwardian Hotel, London Contact: Chris

Major Meetings

April 21-26 *National Association of Broadcasters* Annual Convention. Las Vegas Convention Center and Sands Expo Center, Las Vegas. Contact: Kathleen L. Muller (202) 775-3527. *TVB* Annual Marketing Conference, **April 23-24**. Contact: Janice Garjian (212) 486-1111.

May 21 *George Foster Peabody Awards* 60th Annual Presentation. Waldorf-Astoria, New York City. Contact: Louise Benjamin (706) 542-5019.

June 10-13 *National Cable Telecommunications Association* Annual Convention. McCormick Place, Chicago. Contact: Bobbie Boyd (202) 775-3669.

Aug. 2-4 *Satellite Broadcasting & Communications Association* Convention and Exposition. Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tenn. Contact: Laurie Nappi (703) 549-6990, ext. 366.

Sept. 5-7 *National Association of Broadcasters* Radio Show. Ernest Morial Convention Center, New Orleans. Contact: Gene Sanders (202) 429-4194.

Sept. 12-15 *Radio-Television News Directors Association* International Conference and Exhibition. Nashville, Tenn. Contact: Rick Osmanski (202) 467-5200.

Nov. 12 *BROADCASTING & CABLE*. 11th Annual BROADCASTING & CABLE Hall of Fame. New York Marriott Marquis, New York. Contact: Steve Labunski (212) 337-7158.

Nov. 27-30 *California Cable Television Association* Western Show. Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, Calif. Contact: Paul Fadelli (510) 428-2225.

Jan. 21-24, 2002 *National Association of TV Program Executives* 38th annual Conference and Exhibition. Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. Contact: Lana Westermeier (310) 453-4440.

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April 24-26 *SCTE* Telephony seminar. Hilton Garden Inn, Philadelphia. Contact: Ginny Nagle (610) 524-1725, ext. 210.

April 25 *Broadcasters' Foundation* American Broadcast Pioneer Awards. Las Vegas Hilton, Las Vegas. Contact: Gordon Hastings (203) 862-8577.

April 27 *NAMIC* 7th Annual Vision Awards. Beverly Hills Hilton, Beverly Hills, Calif. Contact: Tiffany Morrison (818) 954-5220.

April 28 *Television News Center* Newscast Producer and Writer Training. 1825 K Street NW, 5th floor, Washington. Contact: Herb Brubaker (301) 340-6160.

April 29-May 2 *Cabners In-Stat Group* Access to Intelligence: In-Stat 20th Anniversary Forum 2001. The Pointe Hilton Tapatío Cliffs, Phoenix. Contact: Kirsten Skedd (480) 609-4534.

April 30-May 2 *Association of National Advertisers* Seminars. Rye Town Hilton, Rye Brook, N.Y. Contact: (212) 697-5950.

May

May 3 *Radio-Mercury Awards* Creative Workshop. Pier 5 Hotel, Inner Harbor, Baltimore. Contact: Renee Cassis (212) 681-7205.

May 6-9 *EIA* and *CEA* Spring Conference. Grand Hyatt Hotel, Washington. Contact: Jeff Joseph (703) 907-7664.

May 7-10 *SPORTEL* Sportel America. Doral Golf and Spa, Miami, Fla. Contact: Liliane J.F. Vitale (201) 869-4022.

May 8-11 *SCTE* Cable Tec Expo. Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. Contact: Lori Bower (800) 542-5040.

—Compiled by Beatrice Williams-Rude
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Broadcasting

Appointments at WWLP(TV) Springfield, Mass.: **Dave Cote**, assistant chief engineer, promoted to chief engineer; **Maripat Jordan**, media buyer, Weber, Cohn & Riley, Chicago, joins as national sales manager.

Bob Finke, VP/GM, KOVR(TV) Stockton, Calif., will retire on June 30, 2001.

Rick Stanley, general sales manager, KTXA-TV Dallas, Texas, joins WBBM-TV Chicago, as director, sales.

Pamela H. Taylor, developer, youth programs, Red Cross, Va., joins WTXN-TV Hartford, Conn., as account executive.

Cable

Randy Hymel, GM, Radiofone, New Orleans, joins Cox Business Services, Baton Rouge, La., as GM.

Mark Bishop, VP, hardware sales, National Cable Television Cooperative Inc., Lenexa, Kan., promoted to senior VP.

Jeffrey Clark, manager, cable franchising, Cablevision, Bethpage, N.Y., promoted to

director, franchise management.

Programming

Promotions at Walt Disney Company-Latin America, Miami: **John Begert**, VP, creative and product development, promoted to senior VP, creative affairs; **Luis Perez**, VP, finance and broadcasting operations, promoted to senior VP, business operations.

Promotions at Granada Entertainment USA, Los Angeles: **William Hamm**, senior VP, series programming, promoted to executive VP; **Ann Johnson**, VP, series programming, promoted to senior VP.

Peter Gaffney, director, program planning and scheduling, VH1, New York, promoted to VP.

Betsy Rella, VP, research and planning, Viacom/MTV, New York, joins Lifetime Entertainment Services, New York, as VP, research.

Stuart Zuckerman, national sponsorship director, PBS Sponsorship Group, New York, joins NBR Enterprises,

New York, as VP, sales and marketing.

Trisha Robinson, VP, theatrical and video distribution, Showtime Entertainment, Los Angeles, appointed executive VP, Brainstorm Media, Los Angeles.

Kathryn Strachan, VP, strategic alliances, StreamSearch.com, St. Louis, joins Zoom Culture, New York, as VP, licensing and sponsorships.

Gary Rosenson, executive director, sales/affiliate sales, western region, Playboy Entertainment Group, Los Angeles, promoted to VP.

Peter Morley, research manager, NBC Television Stations division, New York, joins CNBC, New York, as research manager, ad sales.

Radio

Appointments at ABC Radio: **Michael Barr**, anchor/reporter, WJR Radio, Detroit, joins as correspondent, New York; **Steve Futterman**, anchor, various stations, Los Angeles, joins as correspondent, Los Angeles;

Cheri Preston, WTMJ(AM) Milwaukee, joins as correspondent, New York.

Appointments at Maine Public Radio, Bangor, Maine: **Jeanne Baron**, free-lance reporter, Vermont Public Radio, joins as radio producer; **Fred Bever**, reporter, Vermont Press Bureau, joins as Statehouse bureau chief.

Mark Bentz, general sales manager, Journal Broadcast Group, Tucson operations, Tucson, Ariz., promoted to VP/GM.

Dennis Jackson, station manager, WJMZ-AM Anderson, N.C., appointed GM, Radio One Inc., Augusta, Georgia.

Kathy St. John, executive director, development, Foreign Policy Association, New York, joins WNYC(AM) as director, development.

Siriol Evans, senior manager, public media relations, NPR, Washington, joins Digital Radio Mondiale, Bethesda, Md., as director, press and communications.

Dawn Littlefield, retail sales manager, Infinity Radio,



Mark Bishop



Jeffrey Clark



William Hamm



Trisha Robinson

F A T E S & F O R T U N E S

Dallas, appointed general sales manager, Entravision Communications Radio's Dallas group.

Journalism

Thelma Gutierrez, special units reporter, KCBS-TV Los Angeles, joins CNN, Los Angeles, as correspondent.

Connie Colla, morning anchor, WCAU(TV) Philadelphia, joins Comcast/CN8, Philadelphia, as newscast anchor.

Dominique Sachse, evening anchor, KPRC-TV Houston, adds 10 p.m. newscast anchoring to her duties.

Leslie Mouton, morning anchor, KSAT-TV San Antonio, promoted to noon and evening anchor.

Tasha Jamerson, anchor/reporter, WTEN(TV) Albany, New York, joins WFSB(TV) Hartford, Conn., as anchor/reporter.

Advertising/Marketing/PR

Lori McCarthy, general sales manager, CableRep, Lafayette, La., appointed GM, CableRep Advertising.

John Mann, free-lance writer/producer, Los Angeles, appointed writer/producer, Studio City, Los Angeles.

Nicole Taylor Perry, head, business development, Z.com, Los Angeles, joins Ken Lindner & Associates, Los Angeles, as agent.

Wendy MacNeill, executive producer, KFMB-TV San Diego/news director, KKTU(TV) Colorado Springs, Colo., joins Dolan Media Group, Washington, as consultant/recruiter.

Internet

Tom Brew, executive producer, news, Onvia, Seattle, appointed executive editor, MSNBC.com, Redmond, Wash.

Technology

Appointments at Mixed Signals Technologies, Culver City, Calif: **Christoph Pachler**, strategist, Viant Corporation, Los Angeles, joins as chief financial officer/senior VP; **Tim Ordaz**, product manager, broadband products, Intertainer, Culver

City, joins as VP, product marketing.

Jim Ragonese, VP, business development and product management, Microtouch Systems Inc., Methuen, Mass., appointed VP, business development, Gotuit Audio Inc., Andover, Mass.

Polo Recuay, director, engineering, Videotek, Pottstown, Pa., named VP.

Allied Fields

Mary Jo Green, corporate VP/treasurer, Pitney Bowes Inc., New York, joins Sony Corp. of America, New York, as senior VP/treasurer.

Carri Davis, executive director, operations, Devlin Video International, New York, promoted to executive VP.

Carl Geppert, partner in charge, revenue assurance, Andersen, Denver, appointed partner/national industry leader, KPMG LLP, Denver.

Ismael Obregon, free-lance designer, California, joins Lab903, Santa Monica, Calif., as creative director/designer.

—Compiled by P. Llanor Alleyne
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T H E F I F T H E S T A T E R

Smooke's dream job

Syndie sales, the 'real TV business,' lit the road to agenthood

Steve Smooke, a syndication-sales-executive-turned-TV-agent at Creative Artists Agency, didn't always hobnob with the likes of Tom Cruise, Tom Hanks or Gwyneth Paltrow—a few of CAA's A-level stars—at big Hollywood parties. He wasn't always pitching Aaron Spelling's next project to the TV networks.

Smooke used to sweat it out in the slightly less glamorous syndication arena. In 1988, as vice president of Western sales at Genesis Entertainment, he was trekking to TV stations around the country to sell reruns of *Highway to Heaven*, short-lived court entry *The Judge* and year-long *Grudge Match*, in which couples got into a boxing ring to settle their disputes.

But Smooke insists he would not have attained his dream job as an agent without his syndication background: "You really get the flavor of the television business when you're in the general manager's office in Portland or Phoenix or Denver."

That experience gave him a taste for what Middle America savors. Smooke, who initially focused on syndication, cable and reality projects at CAA before shifting into prime time network series in 1995, explains: "I bring a different sensibility to the table. Hollywood is not America necessarily."

Garth Ancier, Turner Broadcasting System's executive VP of programming and former producer client at CAA, adds that Smooke's syndication know-how "helps him understand the back-end value of TV, the real business of TV."

And it doesn't hurt that "he's not a slickmeister. He's very honorable," adds Ancier, who executive-produced *The Ricki Lake Show*.

Currently, Smooke and partner Brett Loncar spend much of their time packaging shows for The WB, handling its two top-rated series, *7th Heaven* and *Charmed*. Smooke is also involved with WB series *Roswell*, *The Steve Harvey Show*, *Hype*, *The Jamie Foxx Show* and *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*.

On deck for possible rollout next year on The WB, courtesy Smooke and Loncar, are pilots by comedian Cedric the Entertainer, MTV personality Bill Bellamy, and country-music act The Clark Family Experience.

Susanne Daniels, co-president of WB Entertainment, considers Smooke "a great pal" and even recommended that her brother, comedy writer Warren Lieberstein, sign with him.



Steve Smooke
Agent,
Creative Artists Agency

B. Sept. 29, 1961, Los Angeles; B.A., social science, University of California-Berkeley, 1983; media buyer, Foote, Cone, & Belding, 1984-88; vice president, Western sales, Genesis Entertainment, 1988-90; vice president, first-run development, Genesis Entertainment, 1990-91; agent, focusing on first-run specials, children's programs, network reality, late-night specials and cable, Creative Artists Agency, 1991-95; current position, focusing on network prime time packaging since 1995; m. Marilyn, Oct. 7, 1995; children: Jacob (3), Rachel (2).

Even so, Smooke has had his share of missteps. The very first program that he sold as an agent was 1991's late-night talk strip *The Whoopi Goldberg Show*, which at the time was the biggest deal in syndication his-

tory, with Goldberg reportedly earning an unprecedented \$5 million upfront. But the show debuted poorly and lasted just one season.


"Sometimes we'll take out shows that we think are slam dunks. Sometimes they are, and sometimes they're not," Smooke notes. But today, "people would kill for the 2.0 rating we did in 1991." Moreover, he says, *Whoopi* raised the profile of its distributor Genesis Entertainment, giving it better positioning when it eventually merged with New World Entertainment.

But the "the beauty of coming from syndication," he says, is that it has helped his work in the current reality-TV trend. Stations, he points out, were picking up the game shows and alternative relationship formats long before the networks got into the act.

Recently, Smooke linked up *Cops* producer Bert Van Munster (his client of eight years) with CAA client Jerry Bruckheimer (*Pearl Harbor*) to do *The Amazing Race*, CBS' expected *Survivor* follow-up, in which 11 couples will race around the world in 30 days.

Smooke tries to dispel the usual image of agents. "There is the old slick-agent stereotype," he says. "But I think that, in today's world, everyone just has to cooperate. There's always the challenge of getting the best possible deal for your client, without killing someone in the process. But if you accomplish that, you'll do all right." ■

—Susanne Ault



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Voices T W O C E N T S

"I was watching *Sesame Street* with my 6-year-old nephew recently, and, sure enough, the kids' classic is still 'brought to you by the letter H and the number 5.' But it is also 'made possible by' pharmaceutical giant and Viagra-maker Pfizer, which 'brings parents the letter Z, as in Zithromax.' Zithromax, for the uninitiated, is a powerful antibiotic sometimes prescribed for children's ear infections. Note how the company is careful to say the message is aimed at parents and not the kids. (The spot features children and a zebra frolicking and a giant colorful tumbling wooden block with the letter 'Z' on its side—parents love playing with blocks.)"

—Brooke Shelby Biggs, on *Motberjones.com*, on attempts by PBS to sneak advertising into its children's programming.



"No one does tell me what to do, and I pay the price all the time. More people hate me than anybody else ... I say many things that get [Disney] mad. The censors are mad at me. The network doesn't particularly like me. I'm not a liked person. So this is all I have; you can't take that away from me."

—A mad-as-a-March-Hare Bill Maher denying Arsenio Hall's allegation that Maher's Politically Correct show must meet the approval of Michael Eisner, chairman of ABC parent

The Walt Disney Co.

"I've coined new words, like 'misunderstanding' and 'Hispanically!'"

—President George W. Bush speaking at a Radio & Television Correspondents' Association dinner in Washington on March 29, as reported in *Slate's* Jacob Wiesberg's column, "The Complete Bushisms."

"In fact, the show isn't one whit less tasteful than its title. Laura is parading

around the White House living quarters in her new red dress as tonight's premiere opens. She catches the attention of the White House's veteran housekeeper, Maggie (Marcia Wallace). 'Wow, look at you, Mrs. Bush,' Maggie says. 'You look like a hooker.'" —San Francisco Chronicle's critic, John Carman, on the tasteless and tacky humor of Comedy Central sitcom *That's My Bush*.

"In the 1930s, we crowned movie stars as royalty. Eventually, that wasn't enough. We didn't want merely to see celebrity; we wanted to be it. Now people feel entitled to fame just by preening for a lens: I am filmed; therefore, I am."

—Ted Anthony, *The Associated Press*, on how America became a stage and reality became TV.

"Viewers and advertisers alike have decided that, when given a choice, they will choose to reject those who advocate intolerance and advance an agenda of exclusion."

—Romaine Patterson, regional spokesperson for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, reacting to Paramount's decision to cancel Dr. Laura, as reported by Joel Brown of *The Boston Herald*.

"There were 50 million other issues. They were trying to pigeonhole me as though my

whole life were surrounded by what their whole life is surrounded with."

—Dr. Laura Schlessinger speaking on CNN's Larry King Live about gay protesters of her show.

"A listing in the Television section on Sunday for the 1924 film *The Sea Hawk* carried a fictitious plot summary and named two employees of *The Times* as the stars. The film, seen Sunday night at 12 on TCM, is actually an adaptation of Rafael Sabatini's 1915 novel about an English nobleman sold into slavery. It stars Milton Sills and Enid Bennett.

"The mock listing came from a feature syndicate that maintains *The Times'* movie capsule database and assembles the daily and weekly listings. An investigation has found that the *Sea Hawk* entry was one of three dummy listings written at *The Times* in December 1998 and transmitted to the syndicate to test the technology; they were not supposed to be stored.

"*The Sea Hawk* had most recently been televised in November 1998 and was not again scheduled until last Sunday. *The Times* regrets any inconvenience to readers. It is also, frankly, speechless at the coincidence of the April Fool's Day publication."

—An editor's note published in *The New York Times* on April 2.

A I R T I M E

Democracy digitized

A national information infrastructure is essential

By Jorge Reina Schement

Must we carry the liabilities of partisanship into the Information Age? When a new administration arrives full of certainty and conviction, as they all do, there exists the danger that an agenda embraced by the outgoing crowd will be cast aside merely because it belonged to them. When this happens, as it is happening right now at the Federal Communications Commission, Americans may lose more than old political labels; they may also lose national assets.

In a February *New York Times* article, new FCC Chairman Michael Powell expressed his reservations regarding the phrase "digital divide" as a description of the existing gaps in access to information services and technologies.

After expressing commitment to "eliminate barriers," he further responded to reporters' questions concerning the divide, "I think there is a 'Mercedes divide,'" he said. "I'd like to have one; I can't afford one. I'm not meaning to be completely flip about this. I think it's an important social issue. But it shouldn't be used to justify the notion of essentially the socialization of the deployment of the infrastructure."

Powell is right; no one deserves to have a Mercedes just because he or she is an American. And that might even be socialism, though a kind never before experienced on this earth. Nevertheless, by con-

struing the digital-divide agenda as an attempt to distribute undeserving handouts, Powell misses its value as a strategy aimed at broadening access to the essential process of an Information Age democracy.

Powell is right again: His FCC should eliminate barriers to democratic participation. And we should all commend him for forthrightness. Indeed, the existence of information gaps should come as no surprise to anyone in public policy.

As a basic assumption, most policy makers understand that access to information and communications technologies is the primary policy tool for enabling all citizens to participate in economic, political and social activities fundamental to an Information Age democracy that is also a good society.

In this historic moment, as the Information Age begins to gel, an accessible national information infrastructure (NII) is the essential ingredient for overcoming social fragmentation and enabling political participation.

In the 21st century, communication creates society, and, in essence, the NII creates the weave that holds us all together. Hence, when Americans observe or imagine that some are falling behind, it gives pause because it endangers the promise of democracy—thus our legitimate anxiety over gaps, especially information gaps.

Yet Powell's reference to Mercedes indicates that he might suspect these "gaps" to



Jorge Reina Schement is co-director, Institute for Information Policy at Penn State University.

be fabrications of some Democratic Party publicist. If so, he should dig a little deeper.

A decade of research has documented the existence and persistence of three critical gaps in access.

About 18 million Americans lack telephones in their homes. They are a mixed group. A similar gap appears to exist for Internet access. Some 4,500 schools and 500 public libraries still lack Internet access.

By acknowledging that information access gaps hinder participation in an Information Age democracy, Mr. Powell will bring a public ideal to the FCC in the finest tradition of American governance. And he himself will move toward gaining a better understanding of the FCC's role in promoting the public interest.

In the Information Age, we must recognize information gaps that threaten access, understand them and decide how best to close them. If we do so, we will breathe life into the economic, political and social life of a democratic society that embraces all. ■

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Editorials

COMMITTED TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Indecent proposal

The FCC has just released its seven-years-in-the-making clarification of its indecency policy. The speed with which the new Powell FCC released the guidelines confirms that he is an enemy of backlogs, which is a good thing. Powell, as we said before, is no fan of content regulation, and we don't think he has changed his tune.

The upside for broadcasters, from a practical standpoint, is that they now have a better idea of what will pass muster at the commission. The downside, in addition to the fact that they shouldn't have to run their content past a government gauntlet in the first place, is that anti-indecency forces may treat the move as a call to arms and the guidelines as a battle plan for a new assault on broadcast speech. And with the broadcasting industry facing a tough economy and looking to Washington for help on everything from copyright issues and digital deadlines to ownership-cap relief, the temptation of self-censorship is strong.

Having read some of the FCC's examples of the kind of speech drawing complaints, we wonder whether some broadcasters deserve their freedom. Our answer in some cases would be no. But that is only our opinion and shouldn't be the law of the land. Neither, for that matter, should it be that of three out of five regulators in Washington. That said, we read the release of the guidelines as overdue compliance with the court and clearing of the docket and not a signal that the FCC is eager to become a national nanny. We hope we are right.

Shortfall

There are two ways to read the Annenberg Public Policy Center report on the progress of women in achieving key industry positions: as a glass mostly empty or a glass slightly full. Annenberg chooses to concentrate on the fact that women constitute only 9% of board members and 13% of top executives, noting that it gets worse (3%) if you restrict reporting to so-called "clout" titles (chairman, CEO, president and the like).

But when the smoke clears, you find that 25% of executives at Clear Channel are women, that 25% of news executives at CBS and Fox are women, that women make up 21% of the boards at General Electric and Disney, and 29% of the board at SBC. At NATPE, the board is said to be 41% women, although at the National Cable and Telecommunications Association, it's zip. (It's 15% at the National Association of Broadcasters.) Women account for 44% of Yahoo's executive force, for 52% of TV anchors, 38% of TV network bureau chiefs and 17% of station GMs.

We're troubled by Annenberg's under-recognizing the progress shown by its own study, but we share its concern that there are so few women in the executive ranks. Change has to begin at the top, which means that a lot of male CEOs still have their work cut out for them.

Mr. Rogers goes to Washington

Public broadcaster Fred Rogers sought to set a gentle tone for noncommercial station executives' lobbying the Hill last week. Rogers, who is retiring from active production of his long-running children's TV show—though it will continue airing repeats—has been a favorite of this page. He did nothing to alter that opinion. Rogers said the executives need only articulate what the FCC knew when it set aside channels for educational TV: "that public broadcasting is at its best when it listens to the heartbeat of the nation and is its quiet servant."

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