

MEDIAWEEK

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THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE MEDIA

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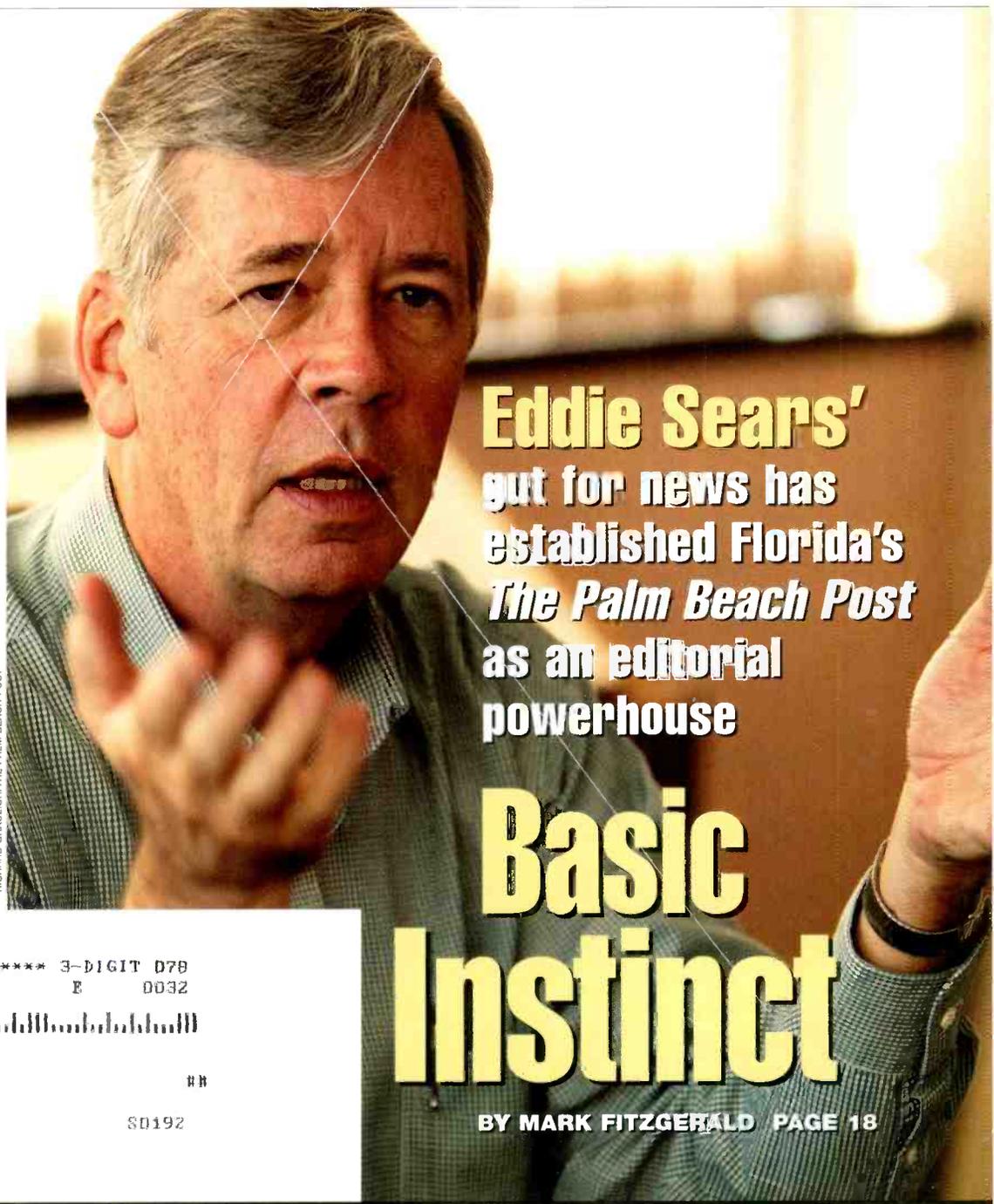
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RICHARD GRAULICH/THE PALM BEACH POST

Eddie Sears' gut for news has established Florida's *The Palm Beach Post* as an editorial powerhouse

Basic Instinct

BY MARK FITZGERALD **PAGE 18**



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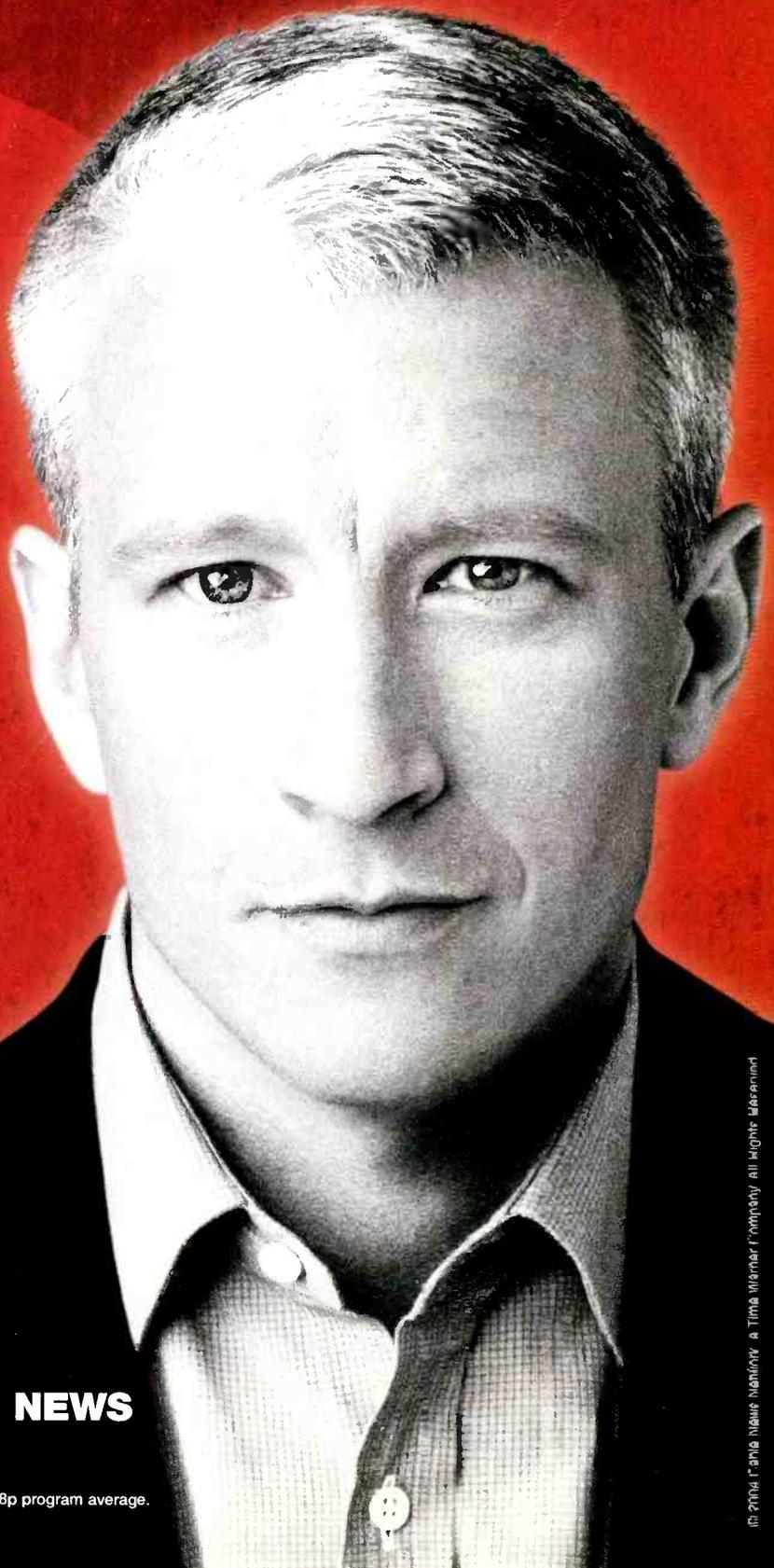
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At Deadline

REAL WORLD CO-CREATOR BUNIM DIES

Mary-Ellis Bunim, who, with Jon Murray, created MTV's *The Real World*, died late last week. She was 57. Bunim had been battling cancer. Along with Murray, Bunim is regarded as having founded the contemporary reality format, following the success of *The Real World* and sister show *Road Rules*. More recently, Bunim and Murray executive produced Fox's reality hit *The Simple Life*.

REP. TAUZIN WON'T SEEK ANOTHER TERM

Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-La.), chair of the House Commerce Committee that oversees TV and cable, has all but decided not to run for another term, his spokesman, Ken Johnson, said on Jan. 30. Washington insiders expect that Republican congressional leaders will choose Rep. Joe Barton (R-Texas) as the next chair of the powerful committee if Tauzin, 60, actually steps down.

E! TO AIR RED CARPET IN HI-DEF

E! Entertainment Television will telecast its two-hour pre-Oscar show, *Live From the Red Carpet: Academy Awards*, in HDTV on Sunday, Feb. 29, from 6-8 p.m. It will also be simulcast in high-definition on INHD, iN Demand Network's high-def platform. This marks E!'s first entry into high-def. Additionally, INHD will simulcast the *Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show*, which runs on USA Feb. 9 and 10, and the National Basketball Association's All-Star Game, which runs on TNT Feb. 15, in high-definition. Also, iN Demand reached a deal to restore and air archived video from 16 past summer and winter Olympics.

GUTTERIDGE JOINS FREMANTLE

In an effort to capitalize on its success with *American Idol*, FremantleMedia last week named Tom Gutteridge CEO of its U.S. production operation, FremantleMedia North America. Gutteridge will be based in Los Angeles and will report to Catherine Mackay, Fremantle's regional CEO, USA, Australia and Asia. Prior to his appointment, Gutteridge was group creative director at The Television Corporation, the British production company behind Fox's *Paradise Hotel* and its upcoming reality soap *Forever Eden*. In addition to *Idol*, FremantleMedia also produces CBS' *The Price is Right*.

NOGGIN'S ASCHEIM TO OVERSEE DIGITAL NETS

Tom Ascheim, general manager of Noggin/The N, last week was promoted to the new position of executive

vp/general manager of Nickelodeon Digital Television. Ascheim will oversee the four digital spin-offs of Nick: Noggin and its teen counterpart The N, Nickelodeon Games and Sports for Kids (GAS) and Nicktoons, as well as related video-on-demand content.

ADDENDA: NBC has given an early renewal to dramas *Las Vegas* and *American Dreams*, with a full 22-episode order for each series for the 2004-05 season. The network last week also made an exclusive content-sharing deal with Court TV's Web site thesmoking-gun.com. **Lori Madeloff** was promoted to senior vp of product and custom services for TNS Media Intelli-

gence/CMR from vp of product and planning. **News Corp.**'s \$430 million sale of Major League Baseball's Los Angeles Dodgers to Boston real estate developer Frank McCourt was unanimously approved by the Major League Baseball owners. News Corp. will remain a minority owner until McCourt finds someone to buy out its remaining stake in the team. **Michael Wolff**, most recently media columnist and a failed bidder for *New York* magazine, which was ultimately sold to Bruce Wasserstein, joins Condé Nast's *Vanity Fair* March 1 as a contributing editor. Wolff will continue to write about the media industry. **Deborah O'Brien** was promoted to vp of contracts administration at Touchstone Television. O'Brien, who began working in contract administration for Walt Disney Television in 1990, will oversee business affairs for Disney's Touchstone TV and ABC Entertainment. **Citadel Broadcasting** has agreed to acquire four radio stations in Memphis from Barnstable Broadcasting for \$100 million. The stations, Country WGKX-FM (the fourth-ranked station in the market), Classic Rock WSRR-FM, Urban Oldies WRBO-FM and Smooth Jazz WJZN-FM, make Citadel the second-largest billing radio

group in the market, at 22 percent. **Discovery Health** executive vp/gm **Bob Reid** is stepping down. Reid was said to have strategic differences with Discovery Networks president Billy Campbell. However, Reid is in discussions with the network group about a possible production deal. **Frank Detillio** has been named vp/gm of WTOG-TV, Viacom's UPN affiliate in Tampa-St. Petersburg, Fla. Most recently vp/gm of WBMA-TV, Allbritton Communications' ABC affiliate in Birmingham, Ala., Detillio succeeds Mike Conway, who is retiring this month.

INSIDE MEDIAWEEK



Fox's Beckman says *Idol* likely won't pull 30 shares during Feb. sweeps Page 5

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JOE VESPA/FOX

Market Indicators

NATIONAL TV: CALM

Most of the big-name media buyers spent the weekend at the Super Bowl. And with several busy pitching the big ad accounts up for review, buying scatter time is in a holding pattern as the February sweeps begin.

NET CABLE: MIXED

First quarter crawling along despite spending from wireless and entertainment categories. Inventory in sports moving with NBA and Nascar selling well. TNT's NBA All-Star game is about 85 percent sold-out.

SPOT TV: AVAILABLE

Slow to ramp up and there is still plenty of inventory available on major stations in Feb. despite pressure from political spending. Auto, retail and finance active. Local stronger than national spot.

RADIO: SLOW

Slower than expected but steady with spending from cable and TV tune-ins, financial, pharmaceutical, auto and real estate. Pacing tightening into March. Network radio soft and rates are competitive.

MAGAZINES: HOT

Men's lifestyle books are filling up with auto ads and the fashion category is spreading its money across multiple issues as well. Drugs and remedies are also spending briskly in men's titles as new medications are introduced.

USA's Herzog Expected to Rejoin Comedy Central

Comedy Central president Larry Divney will be retiring after five years and USA Network president Doug Herzog, who held the job before him and put Comedy Central on the map with *South Park* in the late 1990s, is expected to take over, according to sources familiar with the situation. USA and Comedy Central declined to comment on Herzog's move, but he is expected to return to Comedy Central in the spring or summer after NBC's acquisition of Universal Television, USA's parent company, is finalized.

When NBC announced it would take over the Universal Television assets last year, Herzog's future at NBC Universal immediately became unclear. It was widely predicted that he would move on from USA if not offered the job of overseeing the new cable network group, which will include Bravo, Sci Fi Channel and Trio. That position is expected to go to Jeff Gaspin, NBC's executive vp of alternative series, specials and program strategy, who is credited with finding Bravo's first hit series in *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.

Herzog and Divney leave their respective positions on top. Thanks to programming and scheduling successes, USA grew its prime-time delivery of viewers 2-plus 32 percent in January to 2.4 million people. Buoyed by *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *Chappelle's Show*, Comedy grew its delivery of viewers 2-plus 9 percent to 824,000. Viewers in key demographic groups also increased over last year. —Megan Larson

FCC: Cable Rates Rise and Consumers Turn to Satellite

The cable industry keeps raising rates and losing ground to satellite competitors, according to the Federal Communications Commission's report on competition in video markets. The FCC last week reported cable rates rose 5.1 percent in the 12 months ended June 2003, more than double the inflation rate of 2.1 percent for that period.

The increase capped a 10-year period that saw cable rates rise 53.1 percent, roughly double (continued on page 6)

Infinity Returning To Local Roots

Hollander takes over program arm after Schuon's exit. Where's Sykes?

RADIO By Katy Bachman

In a further sign that Infinity Broadcasting is reorienting its programming strategy back to a more local bent, Andy Schuon—who presided over the radio group's first corporate programming division reporting to John Sykes, CEO of Infinity—last week abruptly resigned. Schuon was replaced by Steve Rivers, who was promoted to president of programming from senior vp of programming, a position he's held since he joined Infinity last November. In addition, the corporate programming division, which had been reporting to Sykes, now answers to Joel Hollander, president and COO of Infinity.

The new programming structure follows a series of sweeping organizational and executive management changes put into place by Hollander during his seven-month tenure. A loyal lieutenant of Viacom COO Mel Karmazin for more than two decades, Hollander was brought in to maximize revenue and turn business around after the 183-station group posted lackluster earnings last year.

With programming under Hollander, Infinity is heading back to a more locally driven approach to programming. "I'm refocusing the [corporate programmers] to concentrate more on the local stations, particularly those that need attending to," Hollander said.

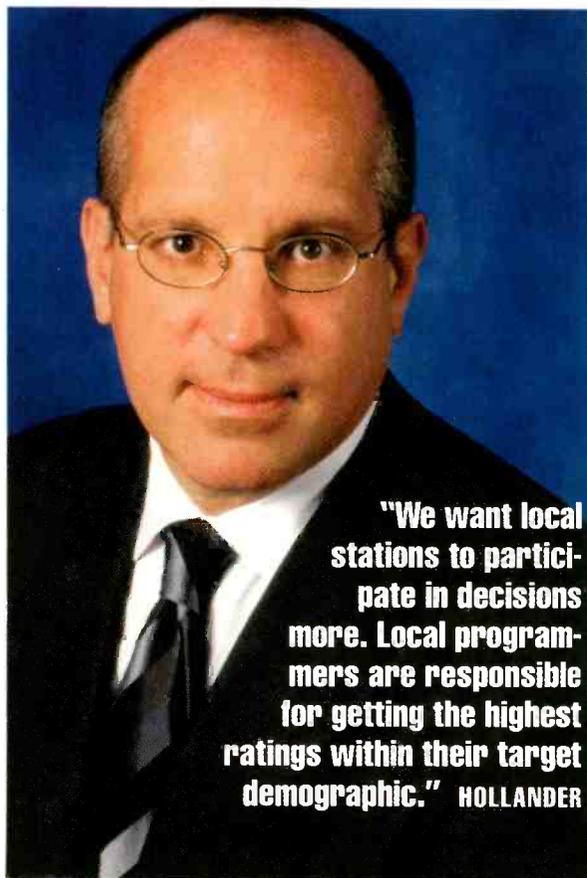
In the future, many of the nationally driven programming initiatives that Schuon had spearheaded under Sykes likely will be developed for Infinity's part-owned sibling unit Westwood One, which is in the business of distributing national radio programming. Schuon—who worked with Sykes for years at MTV Networks, which, like Infinity, is owned by Viacom—had created shows such as the exclusive broadcast premiere of The Beatles' "Let It Be Naked" album last November and an hour-long, virtually commercial-free interview with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in October 2002.

Infinity will continue to explore exclusive programming specials on a

national or regional level, but now local stations will play a stronger role in their development. "We want local stations to participate in decisions more. Local programmers are responsible for getting the highest ratings within their target demographic, and whatever initiative they might take, they have to do it," explained Hollander.

"I hope [the change] means a more local emphasis on programming," said Rich Russo, director of broadcast for JL Media. "Infinity tried to use the cable TV approach in radio and it doesn't work...it ruled out any say of the station. It should have been done through Westwood One."

As good as Schuon's concepts, created under the name Infinity Connect, may have been, the economics didn't really work for local stations. The Rumsfeld interview, for example, ran on only 25 Infinity stations. It was broadcast virtually commercial-free with only one national sponsor. The stations, which had to air the full



"We want local stations to participate in decisions more. Local programmers are responsible for getting the highest ratings within their target demographic." HOLLANDER

hour at the height of drive time, between 5 and 6 p.m., the second most lucrative daypart for a station after morning drive, were left without any revenue opportunity.

But Hollander is well-suited to figure out how to make national programming work on the local level, where stations derive 80 percent of their advertising revenue. Before he became CEO of Westwood One, Hollander built a solid reputation as a station operator, culminating with turning Sports WFAN-AM in New York into the country's top-billing station during his tenure as general manager. When he ran Westwood, Hollander turned around an embattled network by developing national news and sports brands, recruiting top national talent and lining up the right local stations to clear the programming. Bill O'Reilly, the most successful Talk radio launch ever, is a case in point. O'Reilly debuted in May 2002 on a record 205 stations and now clears more than 400. "Everyone knew O'Reilly was going to be a hit, but it's still up to the local radio stations to decide to take the show or not," Hollander said. "Westwood has to persuade the stations to take the show, just like the other networks do."

Running national programming out of Westwood rather than from the station side has its advantages, not least of which is more revenue. Infinity stations would still get exclusivity in their markets, but programs could be cleared on other stations to flesh out the distribution. The Beatles special was carried by only 75 Infinity-owned stations—it's safe to say that more than 100 other stations would have run the show had they been offered it.

"If you have a nice owned-and-operated station base [from which] to launch programming, that's great. But no one group, no matter how large, has enough stations to get you enough money in the national arena," said Traug Keller, president of ABC Radio Networks. "Good product finds distribution beyond an owned-and-operated station base and revenue will follow that distribution."

"Hollander is getting back to basics, which is smart. National radio programming is bottom-up, unlike TV, which is top down," said Matt Feinberg, senior vp of national radio for Zenith Media.

So what does all this mean for Sykes, who was building his legacy at Infinity on a national program platform? Sykes was not available for comment. Leveraging his vast entertainment and music contacts, Sykes could still explore national programming opportunities for Infinity, but it's clear that their distribution may take a different form than Sykes originally envisioned. And with Schuon gone, Sykes has only one direct report left in Hollander. ■

Tight Feb. Sweeps Expected

Battle between Fox and NBC for 18-49 demo could be joined by ABC and CBS

TV PROGRAMMING By A.J. Frutkin

As viewers remain drawn to non-scripted programming, most networks are set to enjoy ratings bumps during this month's sweeps. Those non-scripted shows also are making the race tight for adults 18-49. In fact, media buyers are split as to who will win the coveted demo: Fox or NBC.

Fox's *American Idol* is sure to loom large over the sweeps, which runs from Feb. 5 to March 3. But without the one-two punch of last February's *Joe Millionaire*, some media buyers believe Fox may only run a strong second-place finish to NBC's stunting.

Although ratings for *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiancé* have been solid, they may not be enough to push Fox over the top, said Brad Adgate, senior vp/director of corporate research at Horizon Media. "The fact that Fox only has one big show will help NBC edge them out," he added. But *Fiancé* could grow, said Stacey Lynn Koerner, executive vp/director of global research integration at Initiative. "I think the show will get more traction as the families of the participants are introduced," she said. Add that growth to *Idol*, Koerner added, and "Fox has the buzz." Preston Beckman, executive vp of strategic program planning at Fox Broadcasting, noted that last season's February broadcasts of *American Idol* were among the series' lowest-rated, before it heated up again going into the finale. "We won't be seeing the 30 shares in February that we see now," Beckman said, downplaying Fox's chance at victory.

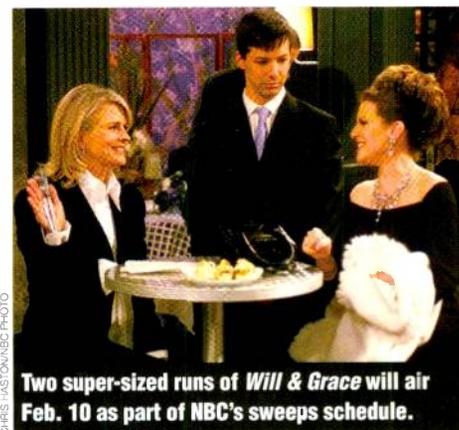
Of course, *Idol* isn't the only show of note airing during sweeps. NBC will rely on super-sized episodes of *Friends* and *Will & Grace* and the strength of dramas *ER*, *Law & Order* and *The West Wing*, not to mention *Fear Factor* and *The Apprentice*, to stave off the competition. Leading up to its Academy Awards coverage on Feb. 29, ABC launches its five-night *Super Millionaire* series on Feb. 22. It also premieres Stephen King's *Kingdom Hospital* on March 3.

CBS will rely on its *CSI* franchise for another win in total viewers. Event programming like the net's Grammys broadcast on Feb. 8 and early episodes of *Survivor: All Stars* make the 18-49 race even closer. But Koerner said the Academy Awards gives ABC the edge for a third place showing in 18-49. "It's hard to beat the Oscars," she said.

Still, the gap between first and fourth place

could be the tightest in years, and Adgate said that "shows that there's no real overall dominant network." It's so competitive, he added, that "one big show could tip the scales for any of the networks."

Or one big news/interview get, like last year's Michael Jackson bonanza. So far, no such event has emerged, certainly not from the presidential race, said John Rash, senior vp/director of broadcast negotiations at Campbell Mithun. While it may be the year's most pressing news story, "the networks already have ceded coverage, and the audience, to cable," said Rash. Perhaps the closest the nets have come so far to matching a Jackson-like event is Diane Sawyer's Feb. 16 interview with



CHRIS HASTON/NBC PHOTO

Two super-sized runs of *Will & Grace* will air Feb. 10 as part of NBC's sweeps schedule.

actor/director Mel Gibson, whose upcoming film, *The Passion of the Christ*, has stirred debate for its reported portrayal of Jews.

With most of ABC's biggest guns coming toward the end of sweeps, the network hopes to see its numbers rise as the ratings period progresses. Along with the Oscars, ABC is banking on *Millionaire*'s return to raise its fortunes. But scheduling the game show wasn't easy. Buyers may recall that the original *Millionaire* was an early-evening show. Resurrecting it in its 8 p.m. slot would have pitted it against *Fear Factor* on Mondays, *American Idol* on Tuesdays and *Survivor* on Thursdays.

Jeff Bader, executive vp at ABC Entertainment, said opting for the 10 p.m. slot for *Super Millionaire* allowed the network to avoid that scheduling mess. And with ABC's dramas failing to catch on with viewers this season, Bader added, "the 10 p.m. time periods are the ones that we need to improve most for our affiliates." ■

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inflation. Cable's share of customers who pay for TV, which stood at 95 percent in 1993, fell below 75 percent last year, as direct-broadcast satellite's share rose to nearly 22 percent.

Consumers Union said the report shows "how consumers have been shortchanged and ripped off" by cable's "monopolistic practices." It called for Congress to step in and promote competition. Robert Sachs, president/CEO of the National Cable & Telecommunications Association, said the FCC report "reaffirms the sweeping competitive changes" in the video marketplace. —Todd Shields

Warner Bros. Axes Sharon, Greenlights Larry Elder

In the revolving door of syndicated talk, Warner Bros.' struggling freshman *The Sharon Osbourne Show* is the latest casualty, with word of its cancellation coming just days after the syndicator greenlit *The Larry Elder Show* for 2004-05. *Elder* has been cleared on Viacom's station group, which has yet to decide if it will air the show on CBS or UPN outlets in its eight duopoly markets.

In other syndication news, although upcoming Sony Pictures Television daytime talker *Life & Style* has been picked up by The WB 100+ Station Group, there are no confirmed clearances in New York, Los Angeles or Chicago. At press time, *Life & Style* was cleared in six of the top 10 markets. —Marc Berman

Carmakers Begin Steering Ad Dollars to the Internet

As competition among the automakers for consumer dollars has intensified, car companies are starting to move more advertising dollars to the Internet. It remains to be seen to what extent the trend comes at the expense of traditional media such as spot TV or radio.

General Motors, which spent more than \$47.2 million in online marketing in 2003, is shifting some incremental ad money to the Internet from its 2004 budget for spot TV, a GM source said. One recent example was a campaign touting GM's "Hot Button" car giveaway on Edmunds.com. (continued on page 8)

Indecency Fines on Coarse

Backed by Bush, FCC levies record fines as broadcasters feel heat from Reps.

WASHINGTON By Todd Shields

Heavy fines proposed by the Federal Communications Commission last week demonstrated the agency's newfound resolve to fight broadcast indecency. With Congress and the Bush Administration also getting into the act, Washington's message was clear: Coarse broadcasts are going to face tougher scrutiny and potentially steeper penalties.



Lawmakers of both parties called for stronger enforcement by the FCC and self-restraint by the networks as Congress held its initial hearing on a bill to increase

tenfold, to \$275,000, the possible fine for broadcast indecency. The bipartisan fulmination came one day after the FCC proposed fines totaling \$755,000 against Clear Channel Communications for broadcasts on four of its Florida radio stations featuring crude sexual themes, and \$27,500 against Young Broadcasting for a live interview on KRON-TV in San Francisco showing a stage performer exposing himself. Young apologized and said it would pay the fine. Clear Channel did not comment directly upon the FCC action. It has 30 days to respond to the agency.

Some said the FCC should do more. FCC Commissioner Michael Copps, a minority Democrat on the Republican-dominated FCC and a longtime advocate of tougher indecency enforcement, said the agency should have considered revoking licenses of the four Clear Channel stations. He called the proposed

penalty "merely a cost of doing business." Clear Channel's annual revenue exceeds \$8 billion. Commissioner Kevin Martin said he favored a fine for each offending utterance rather than one fine per program—an approach that would have nearly doubled Clear Channel's potential penalty. FCC Chairman Michael Powell said the agency may begin using Martin's method. Powell said increased penalties would "turn what is now a 'cost of doing business' into a significant 'cost for doing indecent business.'"

Congress was eager to help. Members seemed especially offended that the FCC, in a ruling the agency is moving to reverse, had decided it could not punish the use of the f-word on a live awards broadcast on NBC last year because the word was used as an adjective rather than as a description of a sexual act.

"For the FCC to split a hair as to whether a word is an adjective or a verb is rather ridiculous," said Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-La.), chair of the House Commerce Committee. In a signal of powerful backing, he sat in on an initial hearing concerning the bill to increase penalties. The White House lent its support via a letter from Commerce secretary Donald Evans.

Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.), who chairs the House telecommunications subcommittee, called on networks to review their codes of conduct and consider time delays for live programming, something instituted by NBC and Fox after offensive words went out live.

"American families should be able" to know, said Upton, that "at times when their kids are likely to be tuning in, broadcast TV will be free of indecency, profanity and obscenity." Upton said that broadcasters, who might be called to testify, should expect at least one more indecency hearing as the bill to hike fines works its way through Congress. ■

Cable Hears Parity Calling

Strong Jan. ratings have execs predicting CPMs will catch up to broadcast

THE MARKETPLACE By Megan Larson

The first monthly ratings returns of the new year illustrate the continued growth of ad-supported cable and the building confidence among sales executives that 2004 will be the year in which cable networks begin to receive

their fair share of upfront dollars.

Cable networks have always lagged significantly behind broadcast networks in terms of cost-per-thousand (CPM) pricing. But following a year of consistent audience gains and



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Other automakers are also investing more on Internet-based marketing. Collectively, GM, Toyota, Ford, Daimler-Chrysler, Honda and Nissan upped their spending from \$119.5 million in 2002 to more than \$145 million in 2003, according to TNS Media Intelligence/CMR.

While only 30 percent of Internet households have broadband access, according to Jupiter Media, automakers are using more videos in their Web efforts, with the majority of ads going to such sites as MSN Autos and AOLAutos. Jupiter projects total automotive Internet ad spending to rise from \$307 million in 2003 to \$1.7 billion by 2008. —Karl Greenberg

Sara Lee Consolidates U.S. Account With Starcom

Sara Lee Corp. announced last week that it had consolidated all of its media strategy, planning and buying activities for its U.S. brands with Starcom U.S.A.

The account, which previously was spread among seven other firms, including Starcom, is valued at \$215 million, according to Nielsen Monitor-Plus. The move comes one year after Sara Lee named Lee Chaden executive vp of global marketing sales, the packaged goods company's first corporate-level global sales and marketing position. Starcom currently manages several brands for Sara Lee, including Ball Park franks and Jimmy Dean sausages. —Katy Bachman

Showtime Renews *L-Word* Series for Second Season

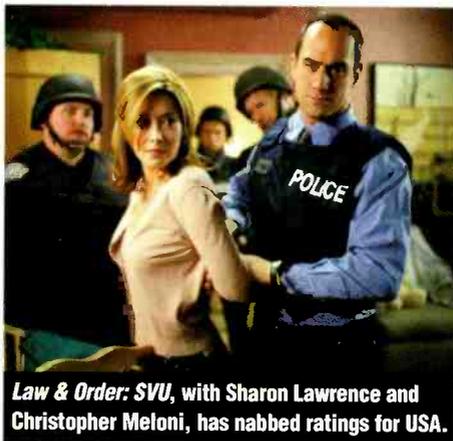
Showtime late last week renewed its original series *The L-Word* for a 13-episode second-season run.

The show, which airs Sundays at 10 p.m., premiered on the network Jan. 18. Production on season two is slated to begin in June. It's the fastest second-season renewal in the network's history. "With its provocative storytelling, rich character development...the decision to renew *The L-Word* was a no-brainer," said Robert Greenblatt, Showtime Entertainment president. The one-hour drama focuses on a circle of gay women friends in Los Angeles. —ML

original programming success, January's 9 percent prime-time ratings growth at the expense of broadcast, which fell 9 percent—depending on whose ratings one looks at—amplifies cable executives' call for a level playing field.

"It has always been said that something has got to give to close the CPM gap, and this will be the breakthrough year," said David Levy, president of entertainment ad sales and sports for Turner Broadcasting. "I don't see [viewer migration to cable] stopping, and clients can no longer pay price increases to broadcasters who give them ratings decreases."

Last fall, media agency executives began expressing concern over audience losses on broadcast, especially among adults 18-49. They



Law & Order: SVU, with Sharon Lawrence and Christopher Meloni, has nabbed ratings for USA.

started off this year with talk of moving 10 percent of their upfront budgets into cable.

If they make good on that claim, \$1 billion would fall into cable's upfront that wasn't there last year—which, depending on who you ask, ranged from industry estimates of \$5.3 billion to the Cabletelevision Ad Bureau's calculation of almost \$5.7 billion. Add in a typical year-to-year increase—which was a whopping 21 percent last year, according to the CAB—and the cable upfront could fall between \$6.4 billion and \$7 billion.

If broadcast networks are, indeed, paid less—CPM increases this year, cable's gains could

start to even out the pricing inequalities.

Cable sales executives have long claimed that gross ratings points on such top-tier entertainment networks as TNT, USA and MTV are interchangeable for those delivered by NBC, CBS or Fox. But another school of thought among media buyers says that any increase in cable's GRPs can easily eat away at the CPM gains they will seek.

There's no doubt that the broadcast networks' prime-time schedules are hurting. Some returning favorites and reality fare are doing well, but new shows this season largely fell flat. Meanwhile, more cable networks are churning out original programming and acquiring the best of off-network series and theatrical movies.

For example, USA's *Monk* is doing its best numbers ever, hitting a 4.0 rating, while USA's off-net run of *Law & Order: SVU* is putting in a solid performance. "There are more ratings points, but the quality of ratings points in top-tier cable is improving," said Jeff Lucas, president of ad sales for USA and Sci Fi Channel.

On average, prime-time cable grew 9 percent in households last month to net a 31.4 rating (50 share), according to Lifetime's analysis of Nielsen Media Research, while the seven broadcast networks fell 9 percent to a 29 rating (46 share). "The broadcast networks are down in viewers 18-49 and we're up," added Discovery Networks ad sales president Joe Abruzzese. "From our standpoint, it's a good equation and very good news going into next season." Discovery grew its adults 18-49 by 38 percent to deliver 837,000 viewers, thanks in part to original series *Monster Garage* and *American Chopper*, which will likely help Discovery Networks top the \$550 million upfront haul all its networks took in '03.

The Television Bureau of Advertising took issue with Lifetime's analysis, issuing its own universe comparisons that place broadcast TV ahead with a 34.9 rating to ad-supported cable's 31.4. TVB's data includes the Spanish-language networks in the broadcast ratings. ■

Comcast Recasts Ad Sales

Division re-branded to energize spot cable's profile; buyers need convincing

CABLE TV By Megan Larson

In a declaration to the advertising community that local cable is indeed a good buy, Comcast Advertising Sales is rebranding its local, regional and national ad sales effort under one name: Comcast Spotlight.

The name change is effective Feb. 2 and will

be followed by a yearlong ad campaign targeting major U.S. ad agencies. "We have streamlined operations and restructured to meet the needs of advertisers," said Vicki Lins, vp, marketing and communications for Comcast. "Comcast Spotlight makes a profound state-

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ment that spot cable can deliver.”

Local cable has always been hard to buy because agencies have had to cherry-pick multiple systems and interconnects across markets to achieve reach and efficiency. Local cable only nets about 15 percent of the \$28 billion spot TV marketplace. However, developments that allow buyers one-stop shopping in a market, and electronic data interchange (EDI) technology that cuts down on paperwork, have made buying spot cable easier in the last two years. Comcast, for example, has created interconnects in 55 of the 72 markets it serves.

Based on this momentum, Comcast Spotlight president Charlie Thurston said his renamed division will double its revenue to \$2 billion by 2007 from \$1 billion in 2003. Under-scoring the importance of advertising for the nation's largest MSO, the American Association of Advertising Agencies last week announced Comcast CEO Brian Roberts will speak during the opening general session of its annual conference in Orlando, Fla., on Feb. 12.

While media buyers recognize the effort to make spot cable a better buy, they point out that interconnects are not ubiquitous and, on a cost-per-thousand basis, local cable lacks the

value of competing ad platforms. “Local cable will always be compared to broadcast and network cable for efficiencies—a large barrier of entry for ad dollars,” said Bonita LeFlore, executive vp/director of local broadcast for Zenith Media. Added Laura Bracken, senior vp/director of media for Hill, Holliday, Connors Cosmopolis in San Francisco: “We just had an instance for one of our clients where we had to buy 20 different cable networks because there was no interconnect.”

One thing that will help is the rollout of Nielsen Media Research's local people meters, which are expected to raise local cable's measured audience share, noted LeFlore (Nielsen is owned by *Mediaweek* parent VNU). Based on the growth of people meters and interconnects, Merrill Lynch analyst Jessica Reif Cohen projects local cable's take of spot revenue will grow to 25-to-33 percent by the end of 2005. ■



Lins: Comcast is behind spot cable.

Nascar Shifts Into Points

New system expected to drive more viewership to NBC/TNT telecasts

TV SPORTS By John Consoli

The new Nascar points system instituted recently to determine the top driver in the upcoming season is expected to draw more viewers to telecasts split by NBC and TNT during the second half of the racing season. Where does that leave equal TV partner Fox?

Under the current six-year pact, now in its fourth year, Fox televises the first half of the Nascar season while NBC and TNT share the second. But under the new point system, after the first 26 races of the 36-race season, the top 10 drivers, plus any others within 400 points of the leader, will now be the only ones eligible to win overall and will virtually start from scratch, separated by only 5 points. That will give the Chase for the Championship telecasts on NBC and TNT added interest for viewers. Both could use a little help: Last season's final 10 telecasts lost 10 percent of their ratings because they competed for viewers with National Football League games on Fox and CBS.

Publicly, Fox is not looking to make an issue of the change. “We air 50 hours a week of Nascar programming on Speed Channel and four more hours on Fox Sports Net, so any-

thing that helps increase interest in the sport should carry viewers over to that programming,” a Fox representative said.

Meanwhile, Fox and NBC/TNT expect to benefit from the new Nascar title sponsor, Nextel, which plans to pump more ad dollars into each telecast. Prior title sponsor Winston, a cigarette brand, was prevented from running product ads during the telecasts.

“The wireless category is on the rise demographically, in contrast with tobacco advertisers, which are declining demographically,” said Dick Glover, vp of broadcasting and new media for Nascar. Gillette is another new major advertiser in Nascar. Additionally, Nascar is adding a second race in California this season that will air in prime time on Sunday, Sept. 5, during Labor Day weekend. “We continue to try to grow the sport by adding races and telecasts in nontraditional markets,” said Glover.

NBC airs the beginning of the Nascar Nextel Cup season with its coverage of the Daytona 500 on Sunday, Feb. 15. NBC and Fox alternate coverage of that Nascar season-opening race each year. ■

local media

TV STATIONS | RADIO STATIONS | CABLE | NEWSPAPERS | MAGAZINES | OUTDOOR

WASHINGTON, D.C. TV STATIONS

WJLA Challenges Its Rivals With More Newsroom Hires

BY KATY BACHMAN

Mike Buchanan, an on-air fixture in the nation's capital who in December was unceremoniously let go from WUSA, Gannett's CBS affiliate, after 33 years, has a new TV home. Last week, Buchanan joined WJLA-TV, Allbritton Communications' ABC affiliate, as a general assignment reporter. He's the latest in a string of recent hires by Bill Lord, vp of news, who hopes that by assembling an A-Team of local news, WJLA can topple the market's longtime news leader, WRC, NBC's owned-and-operated outlet.

For WJLA, which trails WRC and is in a close race with WUSA, it's going to be a long and bumpy ride. WRC, which broadcasts more news hours than any other TV station in the market, leads in every one of its newscasts except at 4 p.m., when its news runs up against *Judge Judy* on WTTG-TV, Fox TV's O&O. While WJLA and WUSA juggle line-ups and personalities, WRC has been remarkably stable. Its top-rated morning news, averaging a 21 share, will mark its 10th anniversary on Feb. 7 with the same morning team, the same producer and the same weather reporter it's always had.

Lord isn't daunted by the challenge. "Buchanan brings a great deal of credibility, not just with the audience but with all the [news] sources we deal with," said Lord, who is also vp of news for News Channel 8, Allbritton's 24-hour cable news channel. "He knows everyone in the area and he has a reputation as a straight guy and honest reporter. He fits into our plan to make improvements."

Improvements, indeed. Since Lord joined WJLA a year ago from KIRO-TV, Cox TV's CBS affiliate in Seattle, he has made a number of changes. In mid-January, Lord replaced the early-morning news team of Andrea McCarren and Elliott Francis, who had held their jobs since March 2002, with Doug McKelway and Alison Starling. Both McCarren and Francis were redeployed as

reporters and weekend anchors.

One week earlier, Lord managed to bring in ABC's award-winning sportscaster Tim Brant to become WJLA's sports director, replacing Rene Knott, who recently ended a 12-year run at WJLA. Perhaps Lord's biggest catch of all was last fall, when he lured longtime CNN anchor Leon Harris for the 5, 6 and 11 p.m. news.

Lord also hopes to leverage the combined resources of WJLA and News Channel 8,

both of which moved into a new, \$22 million news complex in Arlington, Va., last fall.

"The merger [of WJLA and News Channel 8] gives us unbelievable strength in terms of coverage and our ability to get more places than the other guys," said Lord, adding that with all the changes, he doesn't expect to see an immediate hike in the station's ratings. "This is a long-term plan. All of these things will add up and I hope to see progress in each ratings period."

"What they are doing is very smart and very aggressive. WJLA reminds me of the New York Yankees going out to get great talent," said Howard Bomstein, president of The Bomstein Agency, which handles local accounts such as Lindsay Cadillac and the Washington Capitals. "It won't be easy [to catch WRC]. You can either stand pat or you can try. If they get ratings, they'll get advertising." ■

NEWS ANALYSIS DIGITAL RADIO

HD Radio Offers a Chance to Compete With Satellite



Van with a plan: WHUR's rolling HD demonstration

I live in multipath hell. For those of you who don't speak broadcast geek, it means that FM radio signals bounce off the beautiful hills of Virginia where I live and arrive at my radio receiver out of step. There's always a low buzz and lots of distortion accented by pops and sizzles in the background. Turning up the volume is painful, especially for a dinosaur rocker like me.

So, when Urban WHUR-FM, the first radio station in the Washington, D.C.,

area to go HD, said they'd drive me around in their snazzy new demo van, I said, "Bring it on."

This is the first year consumers will get a chance to sample digital radio, dubbed HD radio by its developers, iBiquity Digital Corp. HD radio promises to deliver CD-quality sound on FM and reduce that irritating interference. For AM stations—the band that listeners under the age of 35 barely know exists—HD radio makes AM sound like today's FM.

What I heard delivered. Alicia Keyes sounded as clear as if I were listening to her CD—no tinny sound, no interference. Sounds were distinct, with a broader dynamic range. It was like the first time I heard Album Rock on FM, which opened up a whole new listening experience. Back then, it wasn't just about better sound. FM heralded an explosion of music-intensive formats. The big question for radio: Will HD radio have an equally profound effect?

If the radio industry is smart, it will explore how HD can bring new programming experiences to listeners. Gathering steam is satellite radio, with fewer commercials, more music choices, and interactive features such as display of song title and artist. Right now, satellite radio has an advantage, one that at least 1.2 million listeners are willing to pay for. But HD radio can level the playing field, mostly because it's free. Only 300 stations have adopted HD, and more are expected to join. But consumers are barely aware of HD radio, even as satellite radio runs more and more TV ads and signs more subscribers.

HD radio may not quite be the second coming, but it's close. And the best part is, it's free. It's radio's race to lose. —Katy Bachman

After changing the spot cable industry,
there was just one thing left to do.

market profile

BY EILEEN DAVIS HUDSON



Nationwide Arena is home to the NHL's Blue Jackets, Columbus' only major pro sports franchise.

EXPERIENCE COLUMBUS

Columbus, Ohio

YOU CAN'T TALK ABOUT MEDIA IN THE STATE CAPITAL OF OHIO WITHOUT MENTIONING the Dispatch Printing Co. The privately held, locally based company has a firm hold on the local media industry, owning the market's leading daily newspaper and broadcast television station as well as a statewide

cable news network, two radio stations and a group of weekly newspapers. In television, Dispatch's broadcast division, Dispatch Broadcast Group, owns CBS affiliate WBNS-TV. The station remains the overall news leader in the No. 34-ranked market with 854,040 TV homes.

In October, WBNS relaunched its 11 p.m. newscast under the name Night Beat. Tom Griesdorn, vp/general manager of WBNS and Ohio News Network, Dispatch's statewide, 24-hour news channel, says he has redirected resources and staffing to help improve the newscast. While its late news still trailed the news of NBC's owned-and-operated WCMH-TV in the last sweeps, Griesdorn believes WBNS is making strides in the time period.

Dispatch has placed a major emphasis on convergence among its properties. As part of this collaborative effort, WBNS has

returned to a beat reporting system so its reporters can team with staffers from sister media properties, particularly for investigative stories such as the rash of sniper shootings on Interstate 270 that continue to plague the Columbus area, says Griesdorn. The team effort falls under the direction of convergence editor John Schwantes, hired in 2002 from a similar position with Gannett's *Indianapolis Star* and WTHR, McGraw-Hill Broadcasting's NBC affiliate in Indianapolis.

WCMH ended its experiment with a 10 a.m. newscast in April 2003. The station had

canceled its hour-long noon newscast and replaced it with the 10 o'clock news hour in September 2002, leading out of the third hour of NBC's *Today* show. But the earlier newscast never caught on, so WCMH reinstated its noon news, which remains in second place.

WBNS wins at noon, as well as at 5 and 6 p.m. WCMH is the late-news leader at 11 p.m. as well, and has enjoyed some growth at 6 p.m. WBNS and WCMH are in a tight race in morning news.

In January, WCMH's midday anchor Gail Hogan left the station after 16 years to take a job with a local media training company. WCMH recently hired Monique Ming Laven as its weekend anchor at 6 and 11 p.m. She had been principal anchor at WKOW-TV, Quincy Newspapers' ABC affiliate in Madison, Wis. Last year, WCMH added the 5 p.m. news to the duties of its main anchor team of Colleen Marshall and Cabot Rea, co-anchors at 6 and 11 p.m.

WCMH president/gm Craig Robinson arrived at the station in October 2002. He was previously vp of sales at WRC-TV, the NBC O&O in Washington, D.C.

Viacom owns WWHO, which is a UPN primary affiliate and WB secondary affiliate. The station carries WB prime-time programming from 10-11 p.m. weekdays, with other WB programming airing on weekends, says Shaun McDonald, WWHO vp/gm. (McDonald also serves as gm of UPN affiliate WNDY-TV in Indianapolis, dividing his time between Indianapolis and Columbus, which are about three hours apart.) McDonald is WWHO's third gm in two years. An earlier gm, Jeff Cash, left in September 2002. Cash was replaced by John Satterfield, who then became vp/station manager of Viacom's duopoly in San Francisco (KPIX-TV and KBHK-TV) in January 2003. McDonald took over at WWHO and WNDY last March.

For the first time, WWHO last year broadcast three of the four preseason games of the National Football League's Cincinnati Bengals via a deal with WBNS, which holds the broadcast TV rights to the games. WBNS could not air three of the games due to conflicts with CBS network programming, says WWHO's McDonald.

Sinclair Broadcast Group owns the market's only duopoly of ABC affiliate WSYX and Fox affiliate WTTE. John Quigley, vp/gm of the

NIelsen MONITOR-PLUS

AD SPENDING BY MEDIA / COLUMBUS, OHIO

	Jan.-Dec. 2001	Jan.-Dec. 2002
Spot TV	\$226,786,366	\$212,718,756
Local Newspaper	\$87,915,780	\$88,680,300
Local Magazine	\$4,122,230	\$4,809,700
Total	\$318,824,376	\$306,208,756

Source: Nielsen Monitor-Plus

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market profile

two stations, declined comment.

Time Warner Cable is the largest cable service provider in the Columbus area, and manages the Time Warner Cable Interconnect in

Columbus. The interconnect consists of Time Warner and Insight Communications and represents 364,000 subscribers in the Columbus DMA. It also inserts on 38 basic cable channels.

Adelphia Communications and WideOpenWest are two other cable providers in the Columbus area.

Ohio News Network is carried on Time Warner Cable's digital tier. ONN has seven affiliate stations across the state, including WBNS, which contribute stories daily. Late last year, ONN switched from doing blocks of news in the mornings, midday, afternoon and late night to a 24-hour wheel similar to CNN.

Fox Sports Net Ohio has the rights to the National Hockey League's Columbus Blue-jackets, the National Basketball Association's Cleveland Cavaliers and Major League Baseball's Cleveland Indians and Cincinnati Reds, all of which are telecast into the market.

Dispatch Printing Co.'s *Columbus Dispatch* is the leading daily in the market. Its daily circulation as of last September was 252,564, flat compared to the period ended September 2002, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations. Its Sunday circ slipped 1.1 percent to 368,334 last September from September 2002.

In July 2002, the *Dispatch* underwent a major redesign, which coincided with its conversion to the narrower, 50-inch web width that has become the industry norm. Ben Marrison, editor of the *Dispatch*, says the goal was "to try to make the paper easier to navigate." He says the paper has implemented skyboxes on the cover, an index on page 2 and a standing header for each section.

The *Dispatch* is also in the midst of revamping its Monday-through-Saturday features section. "Right now, the section is good," says Marrison, "but we want it to be great." The overhauled section, set to be unveiled by mid-year, will be edgier and hipper, he promises. On Jan. 22, the paper promoted Mary Lynn Plageman to assistant managing editor of features, a new position. (Her prior assistant editor post was eliminated).

The *Dispatch* is also planning to launch a permanent, two-person projects team for investigative reports. Currently, reporters are allowed temporary leave of their beats for various periods of time to work on investigative pieces. Marrison says that rotation system will continue.

The siblings have a close working relationship. The *Dispatch* and WBNS-TV have representatives attend each other's daily budget meetings. Marrison says that at times, *Dispatch* reporters appear on WBNS; likewise, WBNS reporters occasionally write stories for the paper. The two operations also share photos and conduct joint opinion-polling. The newsrooms also emphasize their joint investigative efforts, including a story late last year that

SCARBOROUGH PROFILE

Comparison of Columbus, Ohio

TO THE TOP 50 MARKET AVERAGE

	Top 50 Market Average %	Columbus Composition %	Columbus Index
DEMOGRAPHICS			
Age 18-34	31	33	105
Age 35-54	40	40	100
Age 55+	29	27	94
HHI \$75,000+	30	23	78
College Graduate	13	12	94
Any Postgraduate Work	11	10	89
Professional/Managerial	23	23	100
African American	13	10	78
Hispanic	14	#	#
MEDIA USAGE-AVERAGE AUDIENCES*			
Read Any Daily Newspaper	54	56	103
Read Any Sunday Newspaper	63	63	100
Total Radio Morning Drive M-F	22	20	90
Total Radio Afternoon Drive M-F	18	17	92
Total TV Early News M-F	29	30	104
Total TV Prime Time M-Sun	39	39	100
Total Cable Prime Time M-Sun	14	16	118
MEDIA USAGE-OTHER			
Accessed Internet Past 30 Days	60	62	102
HOME TECHNOLOGY			
Owns a Personal Computer	68	67	98
Purchase Using Internet Past 12 Months	41	40	98
HH Connected to Cable	67	71	106
HH Connected to Satellite/Microwave Dish	18	17	94
HH Uses Broadband Internet Connection	16	16	100

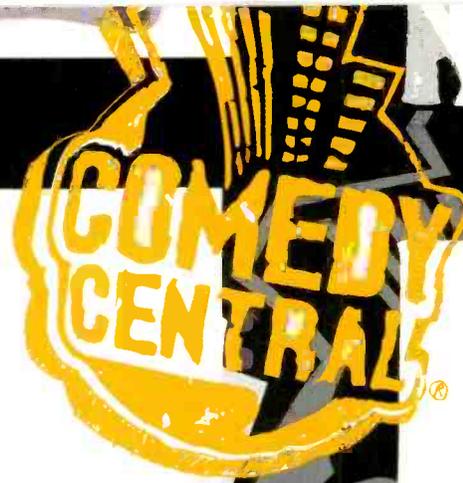
#Respondent level too low to report. *Media Audiences-Average: average issue readers for newspapers; average quarter-hour listeners within a specific daypart for radio; average half-hour viewers within a specific daypart for TV and cable.
Source: 2003 Scarborough Research Top 50 Market Report (February 2002 - March 2003)

ARBITRON RADIO OWNERSHIP

Owner	Stations	Avg. Qtr.-Hour Share	Revenue (in millions)	Share of Total
Clear Channel Communications	2 AM, 4 FM	26.8	\$34.0	32.3%
Saga Communications	4 FM	10.3	\$15.2	14.5%
Infinity Broadcasting	3 FM	10.9	\$13.5	12.9%
Radio One	3 FM	11.7	\$10.6	10.0%
RadioOhio	1 AM, 1 FM	8.0	\$10.3	9.8%
North American Broadcasting	1 AM, 2 FM	7.7	\$8.4	8.0%
Ingleside Radio	1 FM	2.4	\$2.1	1.9%
Salem Communications	1 AM	0.5	\$1.9	1.8%
WCLT Radio Inc.	1 FM	2.3	\$1.7	1.6%

Includes only stations with significant registration in Arbitron diary returns and licensed in Columbus or Immediate area. Share data from Arbitron Fall 2003 book; revenue and owner information provided by BIA Financial Network.

Still Dave. Still HOT.

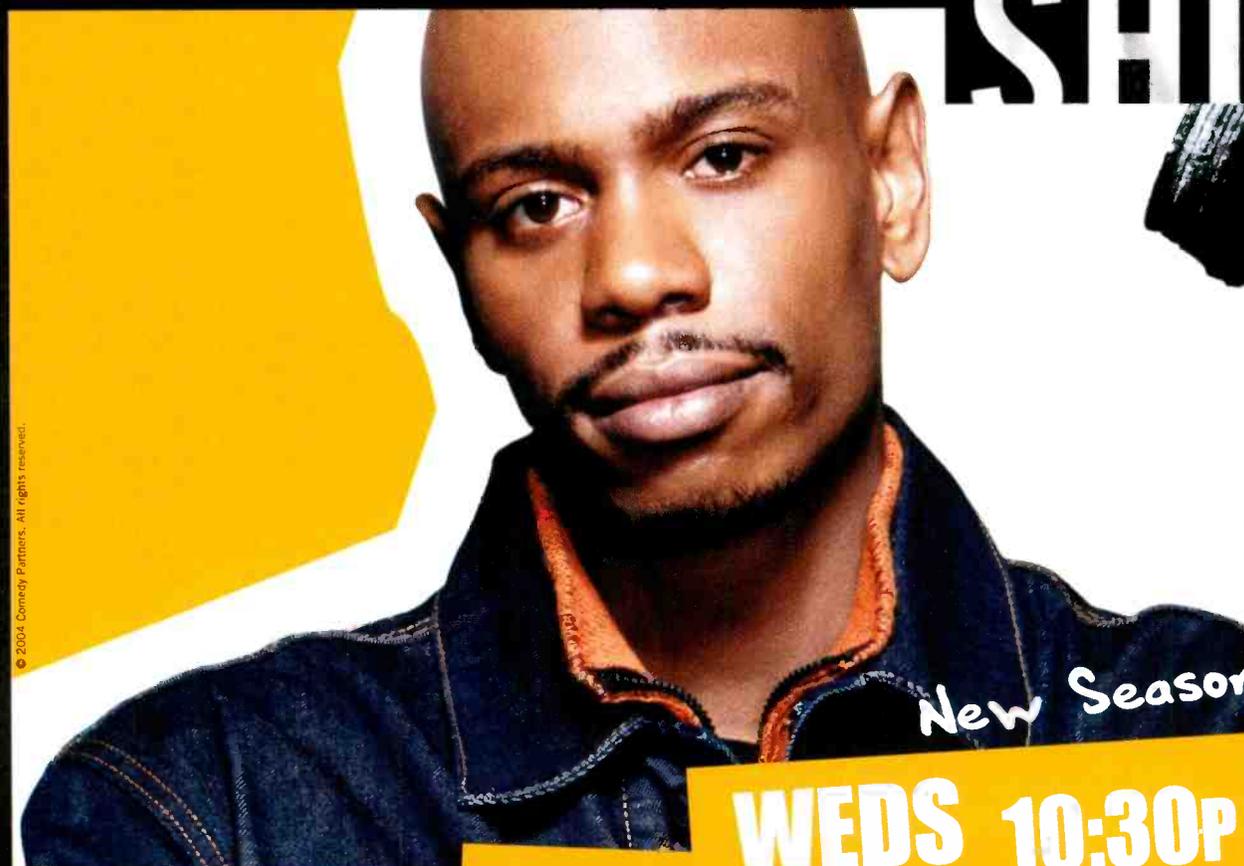


#1 CABLE SHOW in its timeslot among adults.*

#1 SHOW ON TELEVISION in its timeslot among Young Men.*

MOST WATCHED CABLE SHOW OF THE YEAR among Young Men.*

CHAPPELLE'S SHOW



New Season

WEDS 10:30P | 9:30C

*Source: Nielsen Media Research via Galaxy Explorer.
1/21/2004, 10:30P-11P, Among Ad supported Cable A18-49
delivery; 1/21/2004, 10:30P-11P M18-34 delivery; Ad supported Cable,
M18-34 delivery, 12/29/03-1/21/03. Subject to qualifications upon request.

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NEWSPAPERS: THE ABCs

	Daily Circulation	Sunday Circulation	Daily Market Penetration	Sunday Market Penetration
Franklin County: 447,272 Households				
<i>The Columbus Dispatch</i>	178,861	242,227	40.0%	54.2%
Licking County: 57,203 Households				
<i>The (Newark) Advocate</i>	20,323	20,892	35.5%	36.5%
<i>The Columbus Dispatch</i>	10,468	19,116	18.3%	33.4%
Fairfield County: 46,822 Households				
<i>Lancaster Eagle-Gazette</i>	14,456	14,493	30.9%	31.0%
<i>The Columbus Dispatch</i>	11,988	19,612	25.6%	41.9%
Delaware County: 43,032 Households				
<i>The Columbus Dispatch</i>	17,662	27,184	41.0%	63.2%
Pickaway County: 17,851 Households				
<i>The Circleville Herald</i>	5,664		31.7%	
<i>The Columbus Dispatch</i>	4,773	7,846	26.7%	44.0%
Union County: 14,843 Households				
<i>The Columbus Dispatch</i>	3,978	6,213	26.8%	41.9%
<i>The Marion Star</i>	411	339	2.8%	2.3%
Madison County: 13,868 Households				
<i>The Columbus Dispatch</i>	4,112	6,538	29.7%	47.1%
<i>Springfield News-Sun</i>	326	308	2.4%	2.2%

Data is based on audited numbers published in the Audit Bureau of Circulations' Fall 2003 County Penetration Report.

NIelsen RATINGS / COLUMBUS, OHIO

EVENING AND LATE-NEWS DAYPARTS, WEEKDAYS

Evening News

Time	Network	Station	Rating	Share
5-5:30 p.m.	CBS	WBNS	8.9	18
	NBC	WCMH	6.7	14
	Fox	WTTE*	5.5	12
	ABC	WSYX	4.2	9
	UPN	WWHO*	2.2	4
5:30-6 p.m.	CBS	WBNS	8.9	18
	NBC	WCMH	6.7	14
	Fox	WTTE*	6.3	12
	ABC	WSYX	4.2	9
	UPN	WWHO*	2.2	4
6-6:30 p.m.	CBS	WBNS	9.4	17
	NBC	WCMH	8.7	16
	Fox	WTTE*	6.5	12
	ABC	WSYX	4.6	8
	UPN	WWHO*	2.6	5

Late News

Time	Network	Station	Rating	Share
10-11 p.m.	Fox	WTTE	5.7	9
11-11:30 p.m.	NBC	WCMH	11.4	21
	CBS	WBNS	10.4	19
	ABC	WSYX	6.2	11
	Fox	WTTE*	4.1	8
	UPN	WWHO*	1.3	2

*Non-news programming Source: Nielsen Media Research, November 2003

exposed widespread medical abuse in the state prison system.

In Licking County, the *Dispatch* competes with Gannett's *Newark Advocate* (21,830 daily circ, 23,053 Sunday circ). Gannett also owns

the *Lancaster Eagle-Gazette* in Fairfield County to the southeast of Columbus (14,595 daily circ, 14,881 Sunday circ), which is also a scrappy competitor of the *Dispatch*. Both Gannett papers have higher penetrations in their respec-

tive counties than does the *Dispatch* (see *ABC chart on this page*).

Dispatch Printing, which owns a chain of weeklies called *ThisWeek Community Newspapers*, launched a new addition, *Licking County ThisWeek*, in the fourth quarter.

Other print publications in the market include *Columbus Business First*, a business weekly published by American City Business Journals. Columbus-based CM Media publishes the city's alternative news and entertainment weekly, *The Other Paper*. It also publishes a chain of 21 competing weeklies in the market under the Suburban News Publications name, along with city title *Columbus Monthly*.

Clear Channel Communications is the leading player in Columbus radio market, ranked No. 35 in the country. Of its seven stations in Columbus, one of them, '80s Hits WQIO-FM, is not strong enough to show up in the Arbitron radio market report (see *chart on page 14*). Clear Channel owns the market's three top stations in Contemporary Hit Radio WNCI-FM, News/Talk/Sports WTVN-AM and Country station WCOL-FM.

Saga Communications, Infinity Broadcasting, Radio One, RadioOhio (the local name used by *Dispatch Broadcast Group* for its two Columbus radio stations) and North American Broadcasting each have also carved out sizeable chunks of the market. Radio One owns the market's leading Hip-Hop station in WCKX-FM, ranked No. 4 overall among listeners 12-plus in the fall book. The station competes directly with Stop 26-Riverbend's Urban WSMZ-FM, which ranks No. 22 overall.

Clear Channel's Country leader WCOL competes with Infinity's WHOK-FM and WCLT Radio Inc.'s WCLT-FM. Saga's Adult Contemporary WSNY-FM is the market leader in its format, against Clear Channel's much weaker AC WFCB-FM.

Last year, Saga bought three local radio stations. In March, Saga purchased WODB-FM from Stop 26-Riverbend for \$9 million (Stop 26-Riverbend also acquired Saga's Gospel WVKO-AM in the deal). Last August, Saga purchased Smooth Jazz simulcasting partners WJZA-FM and WJZK-FM for \$13 million from Scantland Broadcasting.

As in radio, Clear Channel Outdoor dominates the signage business in Columbus, offering a total of about 1,500 faces in bulletins, posters and eight-sheets in the market, says vp/gm Rick David. Clear Channel is also the market's exclusive provider of posters. Other competitors locally are Lamar Advertising and Viacom Outdoor Advertising, both of which offer bulletins around the Columbus area. ■

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On one of those gray, blustery January afternoons that chill Florida tourism officials most of all, Edward M. Sears, the editor of *The Palm Beach Post*, is driving a visitor around town in a convertible with the top up.

As Sears crosses the bridge to the famously posh Palm Beach Island, watched by surveillance cameras and circling hawks, his narration is one part tour-guide patter, one part newspaper war story and one part passionate editorial opinion. Here's Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago development. It's actually good it was turned into condos. There's the filtration plant. Water and development—those are the key issues in Florida. Of course, the Kennedys are gone now, their place was over that way. Here's a new public high school for the arts. What is going on with school vouchers in this state is a crime. Did you drive in on that Taj Mahal ramp from I-95 to the airport, that incredible waste of concrete and money? We opposed that with all we had, and they put it in anyway.

This free-association from the editor everyone calls "Eddie" wouldn't surprise anyone back at the newsroom. "I think Eddie's a great instinctive newsman," says associate editor Jan Tuckwood. "Some leaders are like John Glenn, who fly by the book, and some are like Chuck Yeager, who fly by feel. Eddie is Chuck Yeager."

On the way back to the paper in West Palm Beach, Sears drives near the Palm Beach County Government Center, ground zero of the 2000 presidential election recount—a time when much of the news media outside Florida got its first look at how good a paper *The Palm Beach Post* had become. In the intense national spotlight, the Cox Newspapers daily stretched staff, budgets and deadlines in an all-out scramble to own the recount story. As he spins past the courthouse, Sears laughs at what he says was the only complaint publisher Tom Giuffrida made in the midst of the expensive coverage: "Once he said, 'Eddie, it's nice we're doing all these great stories. Do you think maybe you could arrange it so we can get the [expletive] paper out so people can see these great stories?'"

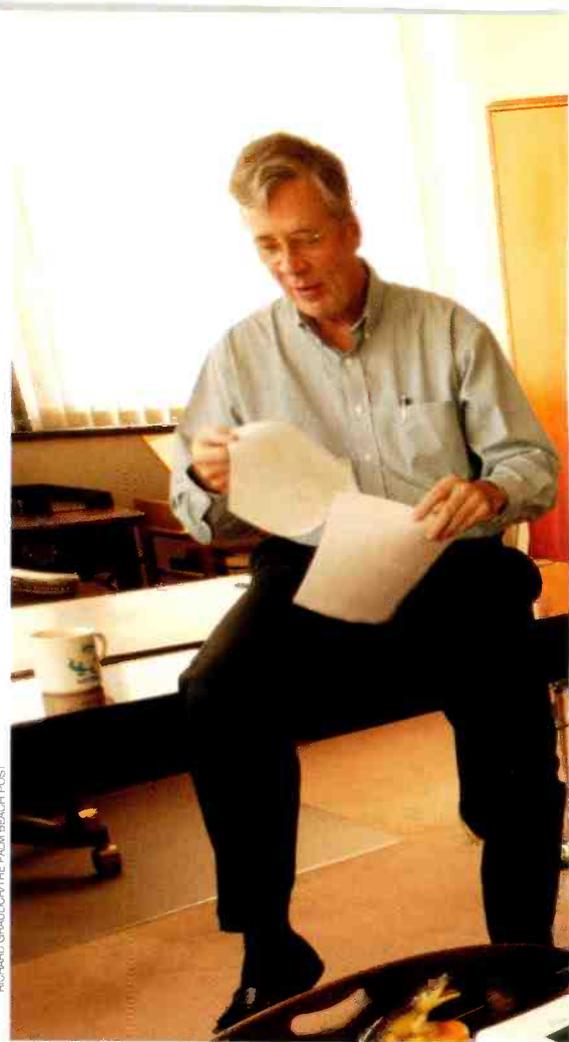
Readers anxious to follow the recount complained about late papers, too, sometimes with even more expletives. In his office, Sears keeps a newsbox window with a message from a reader who apparently found it empty: It reads, "Get a [expletive] alarm clock, you [expletive]."

Even as the chads on the once-infamous butterfly ballot recede into memory, it's becoming clear that the *Post's* performance on the recount was no fluke. Certainly the paper proved that again last year. The *Post* exposed the horrific working conditions of Florida's migrant laborers and called the situation by its true name—"modern-day slavery". The paper prompted a state criminal investigation of the school-voucher program by revealing such abuses as shelling out taxpayer money to a school with alleged Islamist terrorist ties, prompting a state criminal investigation. It jostled with Gov. Jeb Bush so often that he barred the paper's reporters from his traditional year-end interviews.

The *Post* has such an outsized journalistic footprint these days that many people are surprised by its actual size: With a daily circulation of 154,489, it is not even one of the 60 biggest U.S. newspapers. "I often tell people that the *Post* is only a 160,000-circulation paper, but it is the best 160,000-circulation paper in America, in my opinion, and it's better than many papers that are a lot bigger," says *Cleveland Plain Dealer* managing editor Tom O'Hara, who worked with Sears as the *Post's* managing editor for 13 years. "A big reason for that is Eddie Sears, and the talent he has assembled."

Indeed, the roots of the *Post's* rising reputation can be traced in large part to the management strategy and style introduced to the paper almost two decades ago by *Editor & Publisher's* Editor of the Year, Eddie Sears.

If the *Post* were like most papers its size, it would be a pipeline to a large regional paper or a stepping stone to the big-city metros beyond. There's a little of that, as O'Hara's move to the *Plain Dealer* three years ago shows. But the *Post* mostly has managed to

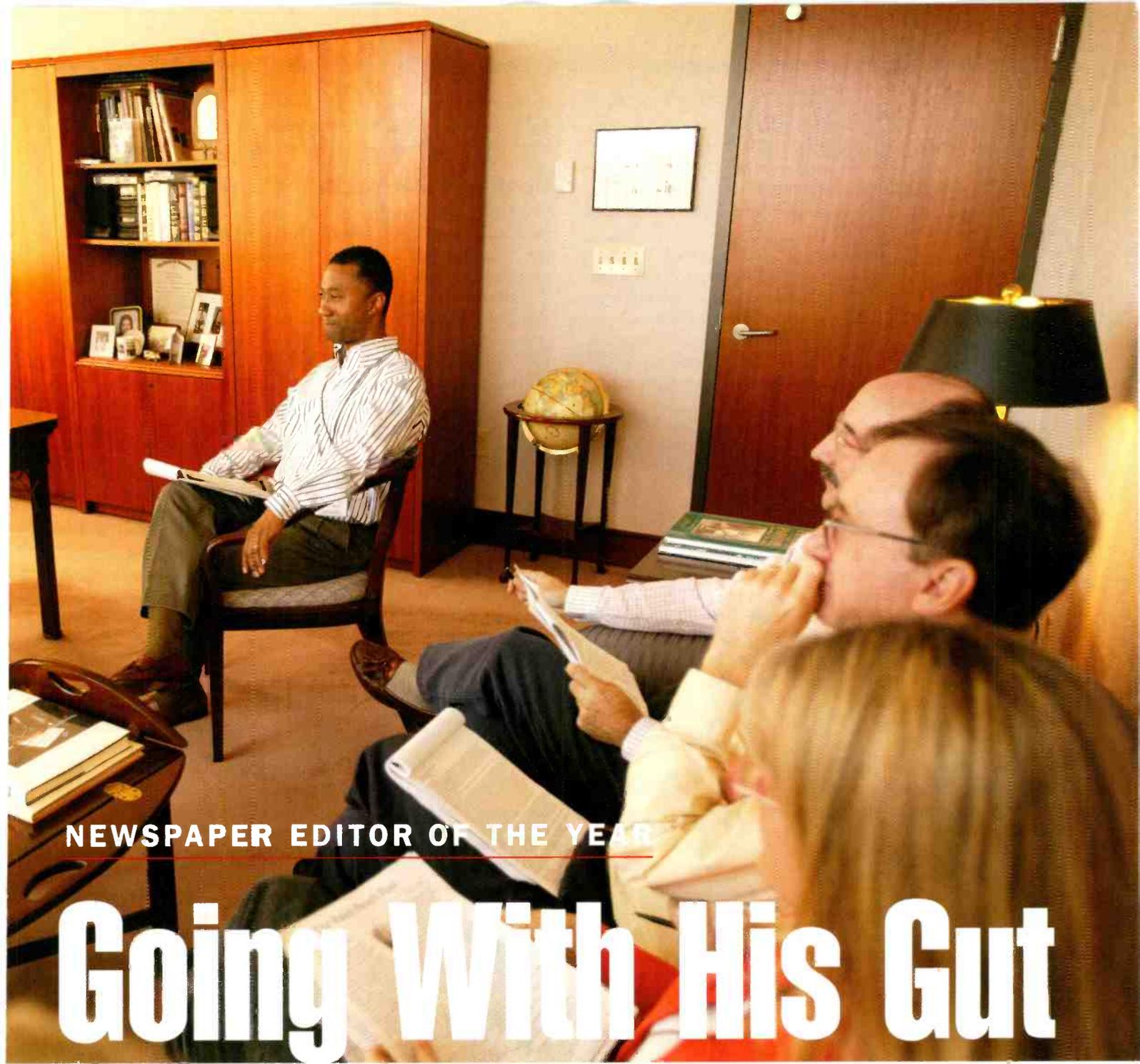


RICHARD GRALLO/OTHE PALM BEACH POST



SIZE DOESN'T MATTER

Though Sears' paper counts a circ of only 160,000, he believes that acting quickly and breaking out the reporting shoe leather gets the big stories.



NEWSPAPER EDITOR OF THE YEAR

Going With His Gut

Eddie Sears of Florida's *Palm Beach Post* turned a small paper into a respected editorial powerhouse, largely on instinct and good old-fashioned reporting **BY MARK FITZGERALD**

reverse the process: Reporters and editors arrive in West Palm Beach from larger papers such as *The Miami Herald* and *The Denver Post*, and stay in Palm Beach even when offers are dangled by journalism's household names.

"All of our top editors here have metro experience and have seen how the metros do it and bring that big-league stuff here to this medium-sized newspaper," Sears says.

O'Hara says Sears, in particular, targeted *Herald* reporters: "All those people were at a larger, allegedly more prestigious paper...[and] Eddie said, 'What the hell, let's see if we can get these people.' We didn't get all the ones that we went after, but we certainly got a lot of them."

Pete Cross, assistant managing editor for photography, is an example. He had been at the *Herald* for 17 years in good positions, but after listening to Sears and then-managing editor O'Hara, he concluded that he had a better future at the smaller *Post*. "Eddie has got an ability to get really good people and build on them," Cross says.

In some ways, the size of the paper is a recruiting tool. Editors and reporters repeatedly note that story ideas are not measured against focus group suggestions or readership study findings. And Eddie Sears is no micromanager, they say.

"There's a lot of trust—they let you do your work here. Eddie and J-Bart [managing editor John Bartosek] are not breathing down your neck," says Tim Burke, the assistant managing editor for sports, who also runs the paper's Web site. The light touch is deliberate, Sears says. The editor quickly acknowledges, for instance, that the *Post's* editorial is very important to him: "I put a high premium on the editorial page." Yet at the same time, he says, he "very, very rarely" goes to editorial board meetings because he would rather they argue out positions without his influence.

Sears also attracts journalists from metros by convincing the newsroom that it can do anything the big boys can, says deputy managing editor Bill Rose, who was at the *Herald* 25 years before moving north. "*The Palm Beach Post* is the kind of paper that never thinks it's too small to do something," Rose says. "Now that's easy to say, but I became a believer in the election of 2000. Eddie said, 'Do whatever it takes,' and we did."

Rose recalls how the newsroom learned that a *New York Times* reporter was talking to residents at the Whisper Walk development, where the confusing ballot had apparently misled 30 people in the overwhelmingly Democratic and Jewish precinct in suburban Boca Raton to cast their votes for Pat Buchanan. As soon as

FLOODING THE ZONE The *Post* has made its editorial mark on a number of stories, including the 2000 election controversy and the dark side of migrant labor.

the *Post* heard that, it flooded the zone on the *Times*—sending dozens of reporters to precincts and even enlisting cafeteria workers to survey registered voters by phone. In the end, they talked to 1,172 voters.

The Whisper Walk reporting illustrates two key elements of Sears' philosophy of newspapering: Act quickly and employ old-fashioned, shoe-leather reporting. "The *Post* is a paper of record—pure and simple," Sears declares. "Its philosophy is as basic as it gets. We are not trying to reinvent journalism."

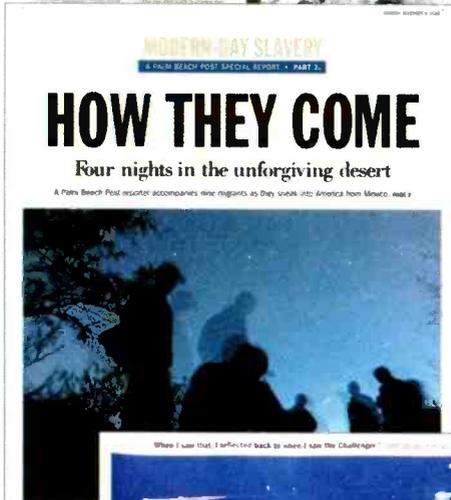
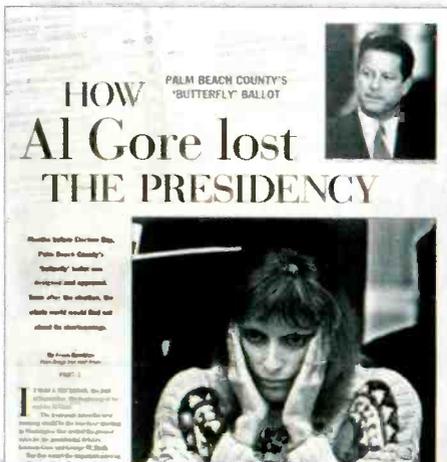
Fads are not welcome in Eddie Sears' newsroom, and that suits the newsroom fine, says Bartosek: "We don't have 'team leaders,' we have editors...It's a traditional approach, and I think that reflects Eddie, who is a very traditional journalist, a very traditional editor."

The traditional editor also encourages the kind of quirkiness that disappeared from many newsrooms around the time that ashtrays did. "Eddie values people with personality," Jan Tuckwood fairly shouts as she sits at a desk covered with several piles of clippings, magazines, books and printouts that threaten to teeter with each slap of her hand. "And he lets us use our personality. So we do more laugh-out-loud things—and serious journalism—at this paper than any place I know."

Tuckwood is a good example of the freedom Sears gives the newsroom. The masthead lists her as "associate editor"—the usual newspaper code phrase, she notes, for someone who is doing a little of everything or nothing at all—but "creative director" might be a more accurate job description. She's involved in packaging just about every editorial project, and she serves as institutional memory. Tuckwood is not just a Florida native, like many people on the staff (including Sears), but a local as well. She returned home from *The Denver Post* to redesign the paper and stays, she says, because innovation is still welcome. "Creativity by committee just doesn't exist—and Eddie believes that, too," she says. "Eddie has a good stomach. He's an instinct man."

Journalists stay at the *Post* for two other reasons: the competition, and the compensation. "You get talented people, partly at least, if you're willing to pay the bucks," says former managing editor O'Hara. "And they came up with the money for these people. [Publisher] Giuffrida and Cox deserve the credit, but Eddie was willing to go up the food chain to get the money."

The *Post* is also willing to be flexible on non-salary issues, says reporter Christine Evans, who, along with John Lantigua, was lead writer on the migrant-worker series. When she was recruited from the *Miami Herald*, she had a young daughter and would soon be starting the time-consuming process of adopting a child from



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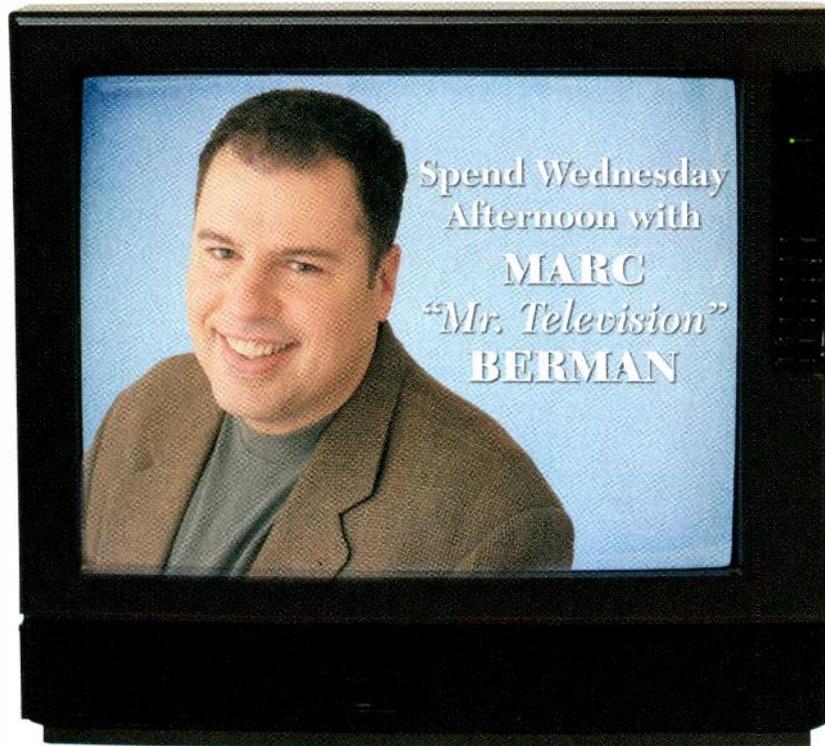


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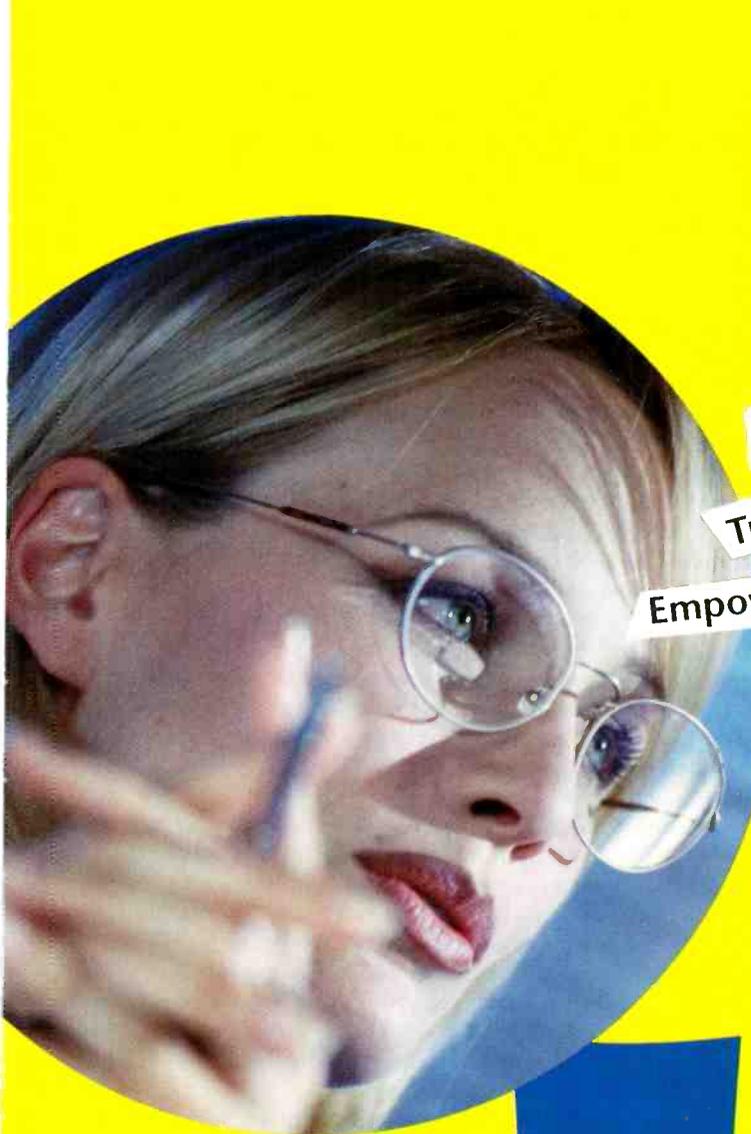
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Cambodia. The paper was able to work out an accommodation. "The *Post* is really progressive in that way—and that's because of Eddie," Evans says.

In the nearly two decades Sears has been editor, the newsroom has grown to 280 full-time employees with another 30 or so part-timers, far more than the circulation rule of thumb would dictate. Its photography staff has won many awards. For more than 16 years, the mid-sized paper has had a full-time ombudsman, C.B. Hanif, who was recruited from an Atlanta paper where he was very happy. "Eddie says he would never want to edit a paper that didn't have an ombudsman," Hanif points out. Sears says readers need a place like Hanif's "Listening *Post*" column, even when it publicly notes mistakes by the paper: "When I read his column sometimes, it's mortifying. I want to jump out the window."

Palm Beach has also turned out to be the epicenter of many stories



"Eddie's a great instinctive newsmen. Some leaders are like John Glenn, who fly by the book, and some are like Chuck Yeager, who fly by feel. Eddie is Chuck Yeager." TUCKWOOD

that become national news: the recount, the first anthrax case, the William Kennedy Smith rape trial. The 9/11 terrorists hung around there. "There are substantive stories and there are weird stories—there's never any shortage of those in south Florida, ever," notes editorial page editor Randy Schultz. The paper won the Deadline Reporting prize from the American Society of Newspaper Editors last year for articles on a local bishop implicated in the Catholic sex scandal.

Sometimes the *Post* itself is the story. That happened most recently when Gov. Jeb Bush pointedly refused to invite anyone from the newspaper to his annual year-end interviews.

Bush apparently finds little to like in the *Post*, from its constant reporting of alleged flaws in his school-vouchers program to Don Wright's pungent editorial cartoons—plus an editorial policy that Sears defines pretty succinctly: "If you want to call us liberal, you can call us liberal." Sears shrugs off the interview incident and shakes his head over Bush's evident loathing of the newspaper: "I think this is the only paper in Florida that he has never [visited]." And despite Florida's sweeping public records law, the Bush administration drags its heels when a request for information comes from the *Post*, Sears suggests. "They don't have it, or they can't find it or they can't get it yet," he says.

Bush's communications director, Jill Bratina, declined to talk about the relationship with the paper, and instead e-mailed a message previously sent to the Florida Capital Press Corps. The e-mail suggested, without giving details or names, that *Post* reporters had acted "in an unprofessional manner."

The *Post*'s piece of south Florida is a pressure cooker of competition. Tribune Co.'s *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* in Fort Lauderdale is the most relentless competitor for news and advertising in the *Post*'s circulation area. This month, the competition begins on a new front: On Feb. 6 the *Post* launched *La Palma*, a free broadsheet weekly in Spanish. The *Sun-Sentinel* already has a weekly called *el Sentinel* and is expected to be one of the next Tribune markets to get the company's

national Spanish-language daily tabloid *Hoy*.

In the northern region, the so-called Treasure Coast, Scripps Howard Newspapers contends with the revitalized *News/Press-Tribune*. The *Miami Herald* weighs in on any big story, but has largely pulled back from day-to-day coverage of Palm Beach County.

When Eddie Sears first arrived as *Palm Beach Post* executive editor in the fall of 1985, the *Herald* was already in town—big-time. The *Herald* bureau was huge, with 20 reporters, two or three photographers and even its own hierarchy. Tom O'Hara was city editor of the Palm Beach bureau. "We were kicking their ass, journalistically," he recalls. "The *Post* was sort of in a slump at the time."

Says editorial page editor Schultz, "When Eddie came here, he had to do a lot quickly. That first year I won't say was frenetic, but it was very intense. Eddie's job then was basically to keep mashing the accelerator down and say to us all, 'Come on, let's go.'"

Sears quickly set a new tone, recalls editorial writer Jac VerSteege: "It was a news meeting, and I remember we had gotten a picture over the wire of a two-headed snake. In the old days that would definitely have gone into the paper. While people are talking about the news budget, Eddie takes the picture, holds it up, looks at it, and without saying a word tears it in half. And that told us that no more pictures of two-headed snakes would be running in the newspaper."

The new editor also had the task, at once brutal and delicate, of folding the *Post*'s longtime afternoon sister paper, the *Evening Times*, and combining the two newsrooms. But Giuffrida knew he could do it because he had seen him do it in Atlanta, when the two worked together (Sears as managing editor and Giuffrida as general manager) on the papers that became Cox's flagship, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. It wasn't a job Sears particularly enjoyed. "My job was to put together the Israelis and the Palestinians," he says of the two newsrooms. When it was done, he figured he would happily spend the rest of his newspaper career in Atlanta.

But when Giuffrida was named publisher of the *Post*, he suggested Sears come, too, although he didn't expect he could persuade him from the bigger paper. "I was rather surprised when he took the job, frankly," Giuffrida says. "I didn't know the extent of his Florida roots."

Florida is where Eddie Sears was born 59 years ago and Fort Lauderdale is where he began his newspaper career as a high school student, working as late as 1 a.m. every night, taking scores on the sports desk. In college (he was a University of Florida Gator), Sears continued to write for a local wire service. He was elected editor of the *Florida Gator* in 1966 and went into the military the next year.

It was while stationed in Georgia that he realized the true potential of newspapers. "I began to read Ralph McGill, the great editorial page of the *Atlanta Constitution*, Gene Patterson," he says. Sears was introduced to McGill just before he died in 1969. (A book signed to him by the legendary journalist is close at hand in his office.) In 1970 he joined the *Constitution* as a makeup editor. He quickly moved up to reporter, then city editor and, in 1978, managing editor. He was just 33. By 1985, when the *Post* editorship opened up, he was looking forward to some competition: "It wasn't as fun without that."

Sears says he's having fun now. He and his wife, Jo Ann, live with their 18-year-old daughter Mateer in a rehabbed Mediterranean-style house a few blocks from the newspaper, where, he says, he lives by a simple management philosophy: "Put the right people in the right job and give them freedom—and you will be rewarded." ■

Mark Fitzgerald is editor at large with Editor & Publisher and is based in Chicago.

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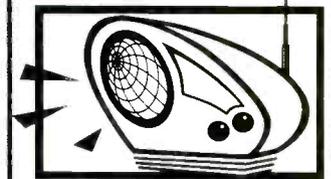
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Movers

MAGAZINES

Paul Fichtenbaum, a senior editor at Time Inc.'s *Sports Illustrated*, will become managing editor of SI.com when it moves from Atlanta's CNN Center to the magazine's headquarters in New York later this month.

RADIO

At Westwood One, **Larry Michael** was promoted to senior vp of sports, from executive producer of sports programming. And **Chris Castleberry** was promoted to vp of sports programming, from producer of Notre Dame football, the Olympics and other sports programming. **Karl Alonso Meyer** was named general manager of Entravision Communications' six stations in Los Angeles. He had been senior vp of sales for Radio Unica... At Jones Radio Networks, **Jon Holiday** was promoted to senior director of programming for contemporary formats and promotions, from director of contemporary programming.

NEWSPAPERS

At the Newspaper National Network: **Tom Cook** was promoted to vp, East Coast sales director, from sales director of the region. **Sondra Gage** was promoted to New York sales manager, packaged goods/pharmaceutical, from senior account executive; and **Steve Sapp** was promoted to director of marketing, from senior account exec.

CABLE TV

Howard Bolter was named to the new position of senior vp of network and production operations for E! Networks. Most recently in his own consulting practice, In-House Production Group, Bolter will oversee production operations for E! and Style Network... **Jim Corno**, general manager for Fox Sports Net Chicago since 1983, will join Comcast SportsNet Chicago as senior vp and general manager. The new 24-hour regional sports network, jointly owned by Comcast Cable, the Chicago Bulls, Blackhawks and White Sox, and Tribune Co., is set to launch in October.

MEDIA SERVICES

Trafficmac has named **Bill Kunkel**, former senior vp of CBS International Media, as CEO. Kunkel recently led the \$2 million equity financing investment for the New York-based provider of automated advertising operations services.

media elite

EDITED BY ANNE TORPEY-KEMPH

Quicktakes

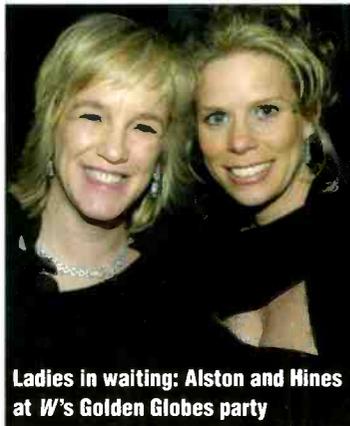


New York liberal: Former MPR host Lanpher will co-host on Progress Media's talk net.

IT WAS THE "BEST INTERVIEW I'VE ever had, and I'm not just blowing smoke up your ass." That's how Al Franken signed a copy of his book for **Katherine Lanpher** after he guested on her Minnesota Public Radio talk/call-in show, *Midmorning*, about 14 months ago. Their harmonious riffing brought him back for several more guest spots, and now it has brought her to New York—to take the mic next to Franken's as co-host of Progress Media's new liberal talk radio network (as yet unnamed). "We won't pretend to be objective...I strive for 'fair and accurate,'" says the 44-year-old Lanpher, who was shopping for apartments and finding the buttons on her first cell phone when *Mediaweek* caught up with her last week. Anything from the last 24-hour news cycle will be fair game, she says, noting that the news sources she relies on each day are her "five favorite food groups": *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Wall Street Journal* and a smorgasbord of regional papers and cable news nets. The network is set to launch from its new Times Square offices in late March...When syndicated conservative talker **Dr. Laura Schlessinger** is replaced on D.C. Talk station WMAL-AM, listeners can expect a lot of humor com-

binated with commentary from new host **Michael Graham**. The former afternoon-drive host on WRVA-AM in Richmond, Va., has also been a political consultant and stand-up comedian. On a recent WMAL broadcast, Graham said of presidential candidate Howard Dean: "He's too weird to be president. He doesn't have cable TV. He doesn't know any of the Sopranos." In announcing the replacement, WMAL management cited concern about Dr. Laura alienating the station's male audience and a need to be "live and local" in the morning...A-listers including Uma Thurman, Chloë Sevigny and Kim Cattrall lit up the geodesic dome that *W* had custom built at the Pacific

Design Center in L.A. for its pre-Golden Globes party, but vp/publisher **Alyce Alston** gravitated to actress Cheryl Hines of HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. Alston is pregnant with her third child, Hines with her first, so they commiserated about swollen bellies and feet...Later that night, Prince rocked *InStyle* execs when he popped in on the magazine's Golden Globes after-party at the Beverly Hilton and hopped on stage to perform a guitar rendition of his '80s hit "Kiss" with the band. He then blew kisses into the crowd, which included Nicolas Cage, Jessica Simpson, Nick Lachey and Hilton sibs Nicky and Paris. But *InStyle* president **Stephanie George** didn't let "the purple one" get away before planting a kiss on his cheek...It was a slippery slope he was heading down, but Eric Rayman had to do it, for business reasons. When RJ Reynolds marketing manager Sylvia Green broke her ski in the amateur race at *Budget Living's* recent "The Flip Side of Aspen/Snowmass" event, she had to ski down half the mountain on one ski. *BL* COO Rayman skied behind her carrying her other ski. Now *that's* value added. ■



Ladies in waiting: Alston and Hines at *W's* Golden Globes party

Flip Side of Aspen/Snowmass" event, she had to ski down half the mountain on one ski. *BL* COO Rayman skied behind her carrying her other ski. Now *that's* value added. ■

The **Radio Advertising Bureau** will hold its annual **sales, management and leadership conference** Feb. 5-8 at the Adams Mark Hotel in Dallas. Communications expert Mimi Donaldson will keynote the Friday luncheon. Contact the RAB at 800-917-4269 or visit rab.com.

American Business Media will present the **Fast Track Media Management Program** Feb. 6 at the NYU midtown campus. The seminar covers critical media disciplines and synergistic relationships between print products, Web sites and events. Contact: 212-661-6360, ext. 3320.

The **American Association of Advertising Agencies' 11th annual Media Conference & Trade Show** will be held at the Royal Pacific Resort in Orlando, Fla., Feb. 11-13. Contact: 212-682-2500 or visit www.aaa.org.

Interp's **Power of Urban Radio Symposium** will be held Feb. 24 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago. Renetta McCann, CEO of Starcom, will keynote. Contact: Sherman Kizart, 312-616-7204 or sherman_kizart@interp.com.

Katz Media Group will present the **Women's Career Summit** March 3 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York. The full-day event, for women and men in broadcast media and advertising, includes sessions addressing career advancement, diversity initiatives and life-work balance issues. Contact: Anne Kenny, 212-424-6485.

The **Syndicated Network Television Association** will present the first of its **spring conferences** March 11 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York. For more information, visit snta.com.

The **National Association of Broadcasters** will present its annual **conference and exhibition** April 17-22 at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. Sessions cover content creation, management and delivery of electronic media. Featured speakers include FCC commissioners Michael Copps and Jonathan Adelstein. Contact: 202-429-5300.

Penthouse Relaunch to Target Lads

General Media will invest a reported \$50 million in the fall relaunch of *Penthouse*. The adult magazine will clean up its X-rated image and target readers of laddie books such as Dennis Publishing's *Maxim*. The relaunch plan comes after an investment group including Absolute Return Europe Fund and PET Capital Partners took on General Media's \$45 million debt. A bankruptcy court last month approved the company's reorganization. Though there will be a new management team, *Penthouse* founder Bob Guccione will stay on as publisher emeritus.

Cox to Succeed Coonrod as CPB Chief

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting on Jan. 27 announced that Kathleen Cox will become president and CEO on July 1, succeeding Robert Coonrod, who has served in that role for seven years. Cox is executive vp and COO of the private nonprofit corporation that oversees the federal contribution to public television and radio.

OC Register Launches Paid Web Model

The *Orange County Register* of Santa Ana, Calif., last week launched a paid-subscriber Web model. Premium OCRegister includes subscription to E-Register, which contains the newspaper exactly as it appears in print (including ads) as well as archives back to November 2002. The service is available for \$3.92 for four weeks or \$48.36 for a year. OCRegister.com, the paper's standard site, will continue to operate as a free service offering breaking news.

WSKQ Extends *Vacilon's* Morning Run

Spanish Broadcasting System-owned WSKQ-FM in New York has extended its popular morning show, *El Vacilon de la Mañana*, by one hour. The move comes after *El Vacilon*, hosted by Louis Jimenez, knocked the market's longtime morning-radio leader, Howard Stern, out of the top ratings spot. Like the four hours preceding it, the 10-11 a.m. extension, called *Vacilon on Overtime*, features comedy, entertainment and a taste of salsa and merengue music.

New Design, Brand Effort for *El Diario*

In an attempt to keep pace with the rapidly shifting Latino demographic in the New York area, *El Diario/La Prensa*, the nation's oldest Spanish-language daily newspaper, last week

announced a new design and rebranding campaign. The paper, which enjoys a daily readership of 287,000, now has a crisper graphic presentation and more photography. Editorially, it has expanded local, national and international news sections, as well as culture, sports and community coverage. *El Diario* has also enhanced its coverage of education and entertainment and added a gossip column.

AMI Taps Rogers to Lead *Star* to TV

American Media Inc., publisher of the revamped *Star*, has tapped former Primedia CEO and CNBC veteran Tom Rogers as a senior adviser to help develop television programs based on the celebrity magazine's content. AMI will explore programming for a host of outlets, including cable, broadcast, satellite and video on demand. AMI also owns Weider Publications, publisher of *Shape* and *Men's Fitness*.

Lamar Signs for Scarborough Service

Outdoor heavyweight Lamar Advertising has signed with Arbitron for its Scarborough USA+ service. The research service will give Lamar the ability to profile likely national and regional outdoor audiences by more than 1,700 brands in more than 70 retail categories. Lamar intends to use the service in pitching its NFL, NCAA and other sports-sponsorship programs. Scarborough Research is a joint venture of Arbitron and *Mediaweek* parent VNU.

USRN Adds Third Racing Program

United Stations Radio Networks last week added a third program covering Nascar racing and motor-sports events, *The Final Lap With Kerry Murphey*. The daily, 90-second program features news, results and statistics for the growing universe of racing enthusiasts. USRN's other racing programs—the weekly *Thunder Road*, added in 1998, and *Racing Rocks!*, added last year—air on nearly 175 stations.

Hearst-Argyle Grows in New England

Strengthening its foothold in New England, Hearst-Argyle Television last week acquired the assets of WMTW-TV, WMTW Broadcast Groups ABC affiliate serving Portland-Auburn, Maine, for \$37.5 million in cash. With WMTW, Hearst-Argyle will own four stations in the region, including WCVB-TV, the ABC affiliate in Boston; WNNE-

TV, the NBC affiliate in Burlington/White River Junction, Vt.; and WMUR-TV, the ABC affiliate in Manchester, N.H., which the company purchased in 2001 for \$185 million.

FX Orders Denis Leary Drama

FX has ordered 13 episodes of *Rescue Me*, an original drama series starring Denis Leary. It is the third original drama for FX following the success of *The Shield* and *Nip/Tuck*, which this year are headed into their third and second seasons, respectively. *Rescue Me*, created and written by Leary and Peter Tolan, follows the lives of New York City firemen, focusing on one (played by Leary) who is battling post-9/11 traumatic stress syndrome.

Saga Adds to Radio Portfolio

Saga Communications, owner of radio and TV stations, has announced two deals to add to its radio holdings. Expanding its portfolio of farm and state news networks, which

includes the Illinois Radio Network, the Michigan Radio Network and the Michigan Farm Radio Network, Saga has agreed to acquire the assets of the Minnesota News Network and the Minnesota Farm Network from the Greenspring Co., the for-profit affiliate of Minnesota Public Radio, for \$3.25 million. The Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich.-based broadcaster also has agreed to acquire WOXL-FM and WISE-AM, serving Asheville, N.C., where it owns WOXL-AM. Under a time-brokerage agreement, Saga already programs WISE-AM.

MRN Radio Re-Ups With MediaAmerica

Motor Racing Network, the national's largest independent sports radio network providing Nascar and other race coverage to radio stations, has extended its national sales agreement with Jones MediaAmerica through 2006. MediaAmerica has represented MRN since 1994. Separately, Jones MediaAmerica

recently inked a deal to be exclusive national ad sales representative for barter inventory from RCS' AirCheck Broadcasting Monitoring, a broadcast monitoring and commercial identification service. The year-old ad-tracking service is currently used by about 100 stations in the top 20 markets.

OLN Buys Gravity Games

Outdoor Life Network has purchased the action-sports event Gravity Games from Octagon Inc. The Games, featuring competition in cycling, in-line skating, skateboarding, wakeboarding, freestyle motocross and other sports, previously aired on NBC. The upcoming Gravity Summer Games will feature some 225 athletes from 13 countries; a winter event is being planned. Financial terms were not disclosed, but Octagon will continue to manage the event for OLN, providing marketing, sales and event operations support. ■

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Girl Trouble

Ex-LHJ editor Blyth takes her peers to task in her new book, but many say she's taking some real cheap shots

A LITTLE MORE THAN A DECADE AGO, JULIA PHILLIPS SET TINSELTOWN AFIRE, PUBLISHING her scathing tell-all *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again*. Hollywood secrets were exposed and egos were bruised, but the public—starved for the inside story—ate it up. Next month, former *Ladies'*

Home Journal editor in chief Myrna Blyth will also attempt to stir the pot, though this time it's women in publishing and television who are the target. Blyth takes aim at what she calls the "Girls' Club," a liberal cabal of magazine editors and television personalities who, she says, all sell distorted messages that propagate the notion of women as victims. As part of her research, she examined nine women's magazines (dating from January 2000 to December 2002), including Hearst Magazines' *Cosmopolitan* and *Good Housekeeping*, as well as Condé Nast's *Glamour* and Meredith Corp.'s *LHJ*.

For Blyth, one of the grand dames of women's service, writing *Spin Sisters: How the Women of the Media Sell Unhappiness—and Liberalism—to the Women of America* was an attempt at a massive mea culpa. Until her retirement last May, she was, for more than 20 years, editor and publishing director of *LHJ*, and founder of *More*. She is also winner of the

New York Women in Communications' Matrix Award and the Magazine Publishers of America's Henry Johnson Fisher Award.

"I confess, I confess that as an editor I promoted the Female Fear Factor for all it was worth and, just like my colleagues, used scary headlines, month after month, to attract readers," writes Blyth in a copy of her book obtained by *Mediaweek*. (Blyth declined to be interviewed until her publicity campaign kicks off.) "That's why I ought to do a little penance. I can do this, I think, by helping you understand how an army of editors, journalists, TV executives, producers, and publicists, who I know so well, create, pass along, and profit from those constant undermining messages."

Set to be published by St. Martin's Press on March 1, *Spin Sisters* has already begun making the rounds of New York publishing circles. And given the shots Blyth takes at a number of her contemporaries, one has to wonder if she'll be lunching at Michael's anytime soon.

"It's one thing if you look back at something and regret it and want to do some mea culpa," says Kate White, *Cosmo* editor in chief. "But the fact that she wanted to take everyone down

with her I thought was truly pathetic."

"I'm just surprised Myrna is biting the hand that fed her all these years," adds Susan Ungaro, editor in chief of G+J USA Publishing's *Family Circle* and president of the American Society of Magazine Editors.

In addition to exposing the "incestuous" nature of women in media and revealing the lengths magazines and TV shows go to score covers and interviews, Blyth delves into the sloppy reporting that occurs at some titles. Moreover, she spends much of her time critiquing women's magazines' bread and butter—stories on stress, sex, fashion, beauty and health.

Among the first editors Blyth takes to task is *Real Simple*'s managing editor Kristin van Ogtrop, who is described as "very unhappy."

While at *Glamour*, van Ogtrop contributed an essay to *The Bitch in the House*, in which writers sound off on the frustrations of work, marriage and motherhood. Her essay details her



"The fact that she wanted to take everyone down with her I thought was truly pathetic."

WHITE

life of juggling meetings, editing manuscripts and dealing with the nanny. It's as if "the poor girl had been sentenced to life at hard labor in Attica," writes Blyth. She argues that van Ogtrop and other women in media actually have it easy and shouldn't try to compare their lives to the average woman.

"Anybody who knows me—and [Blyth] doesn't—would tell you that I'm a very happy person," responds van Ogtrop. "I think you can be successful and happy and fulfilled six days out of seven and still have frustration."

Blyth also says editors (and TV personalities) create unnecessary fear in health stories to lure readers. She scolds *Good Housekeeping* for its piece on shoulder pain, "The Health Hazard in Your Handbag" (May 2002), and *Glamour* for its report on a pregnancy-related condition, "It's Common, It Can Kill. Why Aren't Doctors Telling Us About This Women-Only Disease?" (May 2002). "It is common, and it can kill," replies *Glamour* editor Cindi Leive. "We got dozens of letters from pregnant women



"I confess, I confess that as an editor I promoted the Female Fear Factor for all it was worth..." BLYTH

Mediaweek Magazine Monitor

WEEKLIES FEBRUARY 2, 2004

who consulted their doctors, two of whom were actually diagnosed with preeclampsia.

"I'm always up for a good debate about women's magazines," adds Leive. "But I found the book to be, in places, startlingly sloppy. Her use of anecdotes and coverlines was fairly selective." Blyth does go pretty easy on *LHJ*. One editor did her own research on Blyth and pointed to a slew of incriminating coverlines over the years. Among them: "Could Your Doctor be Hooked on Drugs?" and "Fatal Mistakes: The Scandal in Our Medical Labs."

Perhaps most damaging, however, is Blyth's attack on *Cosmo*. In discussing "victim-of-the-month" stories she says women's magazines are so inclined to do, she refers to *Cosmo*'s report on "The Surprising Thing That Can Make You a Target for Rape."

"Maybe reading *Cosmo*," Blyth suggests. "Yes, it is exactly your *Cosmo* girl great-in-the-sack sexiness and your party-all-night availability that makes you such easy prey."

"I think she's misunderstood something very significant about the magazine," replies *Cosmo*'s White. "We talk about sex not as a one-night-stand experience—we don't judge anyone who chooses to have a one-night stand—but in context of a healthy relationship as part of the glue of the relationship."

Blyth saves her most sharpened knife for *Today* show co-host Katie Couric, who might present herself on TV as your average American woman but who leads a far more privileged life. One might find Couric at Michael's, "probably nibbling her salad like a perky little rabbit in stylish sandals and a trim little suit." Couric also gets dinged for her liberal bias in interviews (as did other editors and TV hosts) and how low she will go in "getting the 'get.'" After four boys fell through ice and drowned, Blyth says Couric kept pressing a 9-year-old on how he tried to save one of the children. "I would imagine that if Katie's own 7-year-old daughter had been in that little boy's shoes, she would not have wanted her to be prodded by a television interviewer—by anybody—to stop crying and speak up about what was clearly an emotionally devastating experience." Couric declined to comment.

"Myrna is really smart. She has a point of view that a lot of people don't share in a public way but might share privately," contends Jackie Leo, vp/editor in chief of *Reader's Digest*, who previously oversaw Meredith Interactive and was editorial director of ABC's *Good Morning America*. "It takes a lot of courage to swim upstream, and that she has." —LG

	ISSUE DATE	CURRENT PAGES	ISSUE DATE LAST YEAR	PAGES LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE	YTD PAGES	YTD LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE
NEWS/BUSINESS								
BusinessWeek	2-Feb	32.53	3-Feb	50.13	-35.11%	154.29	174.88	-11.77%
The Economist	24-Jan	37.00	25-Jan	52.00	-28.85%	122.00	143.00	-14.69%
Newsweek ^E	2-Feb	26.66	3-Feb	32.48	-17.92%	113.90	143.26	-20.49%
The New Republic [@]	2-Feb	3.00	3-Feb	5.32	-43.61%	16.65	22.13	-24.76%
Time ^E	2-Feb	37.69	3-Feb	27.62	36.46%	164.52	152.50	7.88%
U.S. News & World Report [*]	2-Feb	17.72	NO ISSUE		N.A.	98.76	80.88	22.11%
The Weekly Standard	2-Feb	7.50	3-Feb	6.66	12.61%	24.76	28.82	-14.09%
Category Total		162.10		174.21	-6.95%	694.88	745.47	-6.79%

	ISSUE DATE	CURRENT PAGES	ISSUE DATE LAST YEAR	PAGES LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE	YTD PAGES	YTD LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE
SPORTS/ENTERTAINMENT/LEISURE								
AutoWeek	2-Feb	14.07	3-Feb	19.54	-27.99%	80.25	86.75	-7.49%
Entertainment Weekly			NO ISSUE			92.12	80.86	13.93%
Golf World ^P	30-Jan	19.33	31-Jan	5.50	251.45%	95.82	59.33	61.50%
New York	2-Feb	32.80	3-Feb	19.90	64.82%	159.60	135.80	17.53%
People	2-Feb	46.64	3-Feb	61.82	-24.56%	248.96	291.45	-14.58%
Sporting News	2-Feb	12.50	3-Feb	11.08	12.82%	50.76	54.58	-7.00%
Sports Illustrated	2-Feb	30.55	3-Feb	38.89	-21.45%	137.89	144.68	-4.69%
The New Yorker	2-Feb	23.54	3-Feb	29.68	-20.69%	116.26	131.23	-11.41%
Time Out New York	28-Jan	64.38	22-Jan	48.31	33.25%	225.24	215.68	4.43%
TV Guide	31-Jan	43.87	1-Feb	64.28	-31.75%	250.61	267.53	-6.32%
Us Weekly	2-Feb	19.83	3-Feb	28.83	-31.22%	94.49	103.50	-8.71%
Category Total		307.51		327.83	-6.20%	1,552.00	1,571.39	-1.23%

	ISSUE DATE	CURRENT PAGES	ISSUE DATE LAST YEAR	PAGES LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE	YTD PAGES	YTD LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE
SUNDAY MAGAZINES								
American Profile	1-Feb	9.35	2-Feb	8.10	15.43%	45.25	43.30	4.50%
Parade	1-Feb	10.12	2-Feb	11.78	-14.09%	57.24	56.14	1.96%
USA Weekend	1-Feb	9.64	2-Feb	14.35	-32.82%	46.74	56.28	-16.95%
Category Total		29.11		34.23	-14.96%	149.23	155.72	-4.17%
TOTALS		498.72		536.27	-7.00%	2,396.11	2,472.58	-3.09%

E=estimated page counts; P=2004 issue is PGA Show Preview; @=one fewer issue in 2004 than in 2003; +=one more issue in 2004 than in 2003

BIMONTHLIES JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2004

	RATE BASE (1ST HALF '03)	CIRC. (1ST HALF '03)	CURRENT PAGES	PAGES LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE	YEAR TO DATE	YTD LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE
AARP The Magazine ^M	21,500,000 ^Q	20,018,227	35.23	25.90	36.02%	35.23	25.90	36.02%
American Heritage ^P	340,000	348,080	NO ISSUE			0.00	0.00	N.A.
American Photo	200,000 ^Q	218,555	55.06	40.30	36.63%	55.06	40.30	36.63%
Bride's	None	374,200	338.74	402.86	-15.92%	338.74	402.86	-15.92%
Coastal Living	550,000	570,237	85.70	93.93	-8.76%	85.70	93.93	-8.76%
Departures ⁷	550,000	683,137 ^B	87.01	76.57	13.63%	87.01	76.57	13.63%
Dwell ^B	150,000	162,982	55.00	52.00	5.77%	55.00	52.00	5.77%
Elle Decor ⁷	500,000	511,652	114.38	107.58	6.32%	114.38	107.58	6.32%
Ellegirl	400,000	402,133	50.66	51.67	-1.95%	50.66	51.67	-1.95%
Fit Pregnancy ^F	500,000 ^X	528,214 ^B	117.10	89.28	31.16%	117.10	89.28	31.16%
Garden Design ^F	300,000	305,155	31.99	30.50	4.90%	31.99	30.50	4.90%
Golf for Women	500,000	507,591	53.16	47.70	11.45%	53.16	47.70	11.45%
Islands ^B	200,000	204,481	49.58	61.81	-19.79%	49.58	61.81	-19.79%
Metropolitan Home	600,000	608,598	74.65	70.30	6.19%	74.65	70.30	6.19%
Midwest Living	850,000	862,074	98.76	90.30	9.37%	98.76	90.30	9.37%
Modern Bride	None	399,650	512.40	552.15	-7.20%	512.40	552.15	-7.20%
Mother Jones	170,000	186,458	26.00	25.00	4.00%	26.00	25.00	4.00%
Muscle & Fitness Hers ^{B/C}	250,000	250,253	72.51	94.48	-23.25%	72.51	94.48	-23.25%
Nat'l. Geographic Traveler ^B	715,000	728,231	47.28	51.36	-7.94%	47.28	51.36	-7.94%
OG	300,000	300,681	17.12	19.20	-10.83%	17.12	19.20	-10.83%
Old House Journal	None	129,630	59.97	58.14	3.15%	59.97	58.14	3.15%
Organic Style	600,000 ^Q	593,508	40.52	40.19	0.82%	40.52	40.19	0.82%
Saveur ^B	375,000	377,618	34.61	30.61	13.08%	34.61	30.61	13.08%
SKI ^{B/C}	450,000	460,175	145.34	174.77	-16.84%	145.34	174.77	-16.84%
Skiing ^{7/C}	400,000	406,440	116.32	127.34	-8.65%	116.32	127.34	-8.65%
Spa	None	85,000	67.40	57.56	17.10%	67.40	57.56	17.10%
Southern Accents	400,000	401,474	66.34	74.13	-10.51%	66.34	74.13	-10.51%
T&L Golf	625,000	641,164	78.55	66.74	17.70%	78.55	66.74	17.70%
Traditional Home ^{B/S}	925,000	925,021	92.34	89.44	3.24%	92.34	89.44	3.24%
Veranda	390,000	400,455	89.86	75.24	19.43%	89.86	75.24	19.43%
Workbench Magazine	400,000	401,835	29.50	29.17	1.13%	29.50	29.17	1.13%
CATEGORY TOTAL			2,743.08	2,806.21	-2.25%	2,743.08	2,806.21	-2.25%

Rate base and circulation figures according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations for the first half of 2003 except: B=audited by BPA International, Q=raised rate base during period and X=did not file audit by deadline; C=combined figures of Jan. and Feb. issues; F=Feb./March issue; M=My Generation and Modern Maturity magazines combined as AARP; The Magazine in March/April 2003, 2004 figures compared to Modern Maturity figures; P=no page count yet for Feb./March issue; S=March single issue, no Jan./Feb. issue; 7=publishes seven times; 8=publishes eight times

CHARTS COMPILED BY AIMEE DEEKEN

media person

BY LEWIS GROSSBERGER



Mr. Obnoxious

THIS TRAFFIC BUSINESS JUST KEEPS GETTING WORSE AND WORSE. EVERY YEAR THEY have to make a new version, the situation is so awful. When the thing started on the BBC (then titled, for some unknown reason, *Traffik*), it was just drugs moving around the world. Now it's everything: smallpox-

germ terror, illegal aliens, plutonium, sex slaves, radioactive goblins, God knows what. And the money is corrupting everybody and everything everywhere.

In every single version, the corruption reaches right into some clean-cut, upscale family in the suburbs that you'd never suspect would be connected to dope growers in Afghanistan or Cambodia or Colombia or whatever Third World hellhole is being played by Toronto this time around.

That's the point. None of us is safe from *Traffic*, not even Donald Rumsfeld, even though he probably thinks he is. *Traffic* is taking over the world. The forces of law and order are overwhelmed. Eventually it could even reach the poor innocent schoolteacher on *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiancé*. Her fake fiancé could start smoking hashish at the wedding rehearsal and really freak out her family. Then Joe Pantoliano would have to rush in and bust the whole bunch of them.

Frankly, this *Traffic* situation is too much for Media Person to cope with. It's giving him a nervous breakdown.

He tries to relax by watching Trump. You know, Trump really wanted to star in *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiancé*, as he was perfect for the part, but it was already cast so he settled for *The Apprentice*. This was very gracious of Trump because he would not be playing the title role.

Media Person read somewhere that the Trump boardroom, where he fires somebody every week, isn't even the real Trump boardroom. The producers built one to order just for the show. What's wrong with the real

room? Media Person demands authenticity in his fake reality shows.

And a bigger question: Why does the fired kid always slink away so timidly, pathetically schlepping his wheelie bag 167 flights down to a waiting taxi? Wouldn't a real go-getter prove his toughness by vaulting across the polished mahogany table, seizing Trump by the throat and shouting, "Either I win the job or you die!"? Isn't that exactly the kind of kid Trump wants to carry on his distinguished legacy? That's what Media Person would do, anyway. Vault across the table.

Joe Esterhasz, too. When it comes to over-aggressive, overweening, overwhelming, utterly appalling obnoxiousness, Joe E. will not be outdone. Do not even try. Just gaze

None of us is safe from *Traffic*, not even Donald Rumsfeld, even though he probably thinks he is. *Traffic* is taking over the world.

upon his picture in the newspaper and you already want to kill him, before you've even read about his latest atrocity. Look at that ugly mug!

Every time he shows up in the news, the nation screams as one, "What an asshole!" That would have been Michiko Kakutani's lead on her review of Esterhasz' new book,

but the *Times* copy desk crossed it out.

Esterhasz's new book is about Esterhasz, the world's greatest screenwriter, according to Esterhasz. Anyone who wrote *Showgirls* should not only never utter or write another word but also spend the rest of his life in a monastery sleeping in a hair shirt, scourging himself with a cat-o'-nine-tails every day until he bleeds and begging for forgiveness on a bullhorn.

Instead of firing some poor young schlubs who have not yet attained their full obnoxiousness (though most of them seem well on their way), we ought to have Trump drag people like Joe Esterhasz into his fake boardroom and remove them from public life. "You're exiled!" he would shout if Media Person were running things. And Joe Esterhasz would trudge down to the taxi, wheelie bag in hand. And disappear forever.

As for the business tyros on *The Apprentice*, they would be sent out to make it in the real world—cutting deals with Afghan tribesmen to smuggle heroin over the Khyber Pass. Or bringing container-loads of illegal immigrants into U.S. ports aboard rusting Liberian freighters. Never mind selling lemonade.

Meanwhile, cadet DEA agents under the tutelage of Mariska Hargitay and David Caruso would be dispatched to intercept them. Why isn't Media Person being allowed to run the TV networks? You must e-mail your political, business and religious leaders immediately and demand that this be done.

And Media Person doesn't know why people keep writing articles making fun of Trump's hair. Let Media Person tell you something: *His hair is not the problem.*

Oh, and one other thing: Media Person lied before. If he were fired, he wouldn't vault across the table and grab Trump by the throat, despite that Trump richly deserves it. Actually, MP would go home and become suicidal and weep and narcotize himself with more television. It was just some moment of false bravado that seized him there. He is very sorry. It won't happen again. ■

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