

# MEDIaweek

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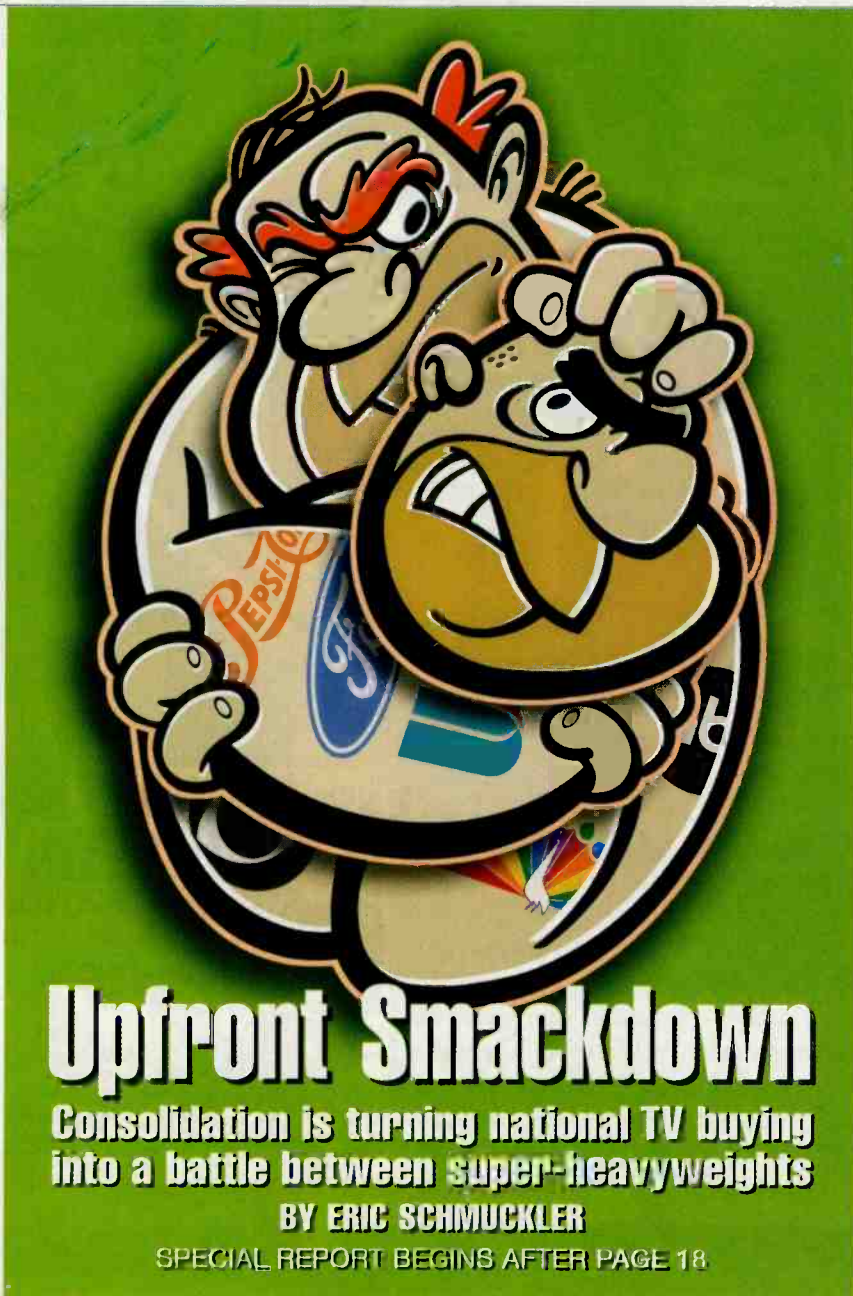
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## Upfront Smackdown

Consolidation is turning national TV buying into a battle between super-heavyweights

BY ERIC SCHMUCKLER

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### MARKET INDICATORS

#### NATIONAL TV: ACTIVE

Upfront ad dollars were starting to trickle in last week, most notably to the WB. Business is not expected to begin in earnest until NBC makes some deals, possibly this week.

#### NET CABLE: WARM

Agencies' focus last week was on planning broadcast upfront buys. Some cable networks have taken in early upfront dollars as part of multiplatform deals tied to broadcast nets.

#### SPOT TV: BUILDING

Rates are tripling in markets with hotly contested political contests, particularly the governor's race in Texas. Telecom, retail, entertainment and auto remain active.

#### RADIO: BRISK

Demand is accelerating for June and July, driven by categories including auto, summer recreation, entertainment, cellular and financial. Business is pacing ahead of last year in the high single-digits.

#### MAGAZINES: MOVING

Financial and insurance segments are buying ads in news and business books for the third quarter. Pharmaceuticals, autos are strong.

EDISON

“Age hasn’t slowed me down. It’s only made me realize how much there is still left to do.”

*-Pat Shaine, Designer, 60*



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# At Deadline

## ■ SENATORS URGE MEDIA OWNERSHIP PROBE

Three U.S. senators want the Federal Communications Commission not to act on media ownership rules until the agency examines whether media concentration is throttling diversity in TV programming. The request came in a letter last week to FCC Chairman Michael Powell from Sen. Ernest F. Hollings (D-S.C.), Sen. Mike DeWine (R-Ohio) and Sen. Herbert H. Kohl (D-Wis.). The three said that given "substantial, ongoing consolidation," they are "extremely concerned" that competition is at risk.

## ■ MORE RIGAS FAMILY MEMBERS EXIT ADELPHIA

Following the exit of Adelphia Communication's chairman John Rigas and CFO Timothy Rigas from the cable company's board two weeks ago, the two remaining Rigas sons, exec vps Michael and James, announced their departure last week. In addition to giving up the four board seats, the Rigases will return \$1 billion in assets to the company. Adelphia's board has been trying to remove the Rigases amid a growing accounting scandal.

## ■ PAYOLA PRACTICES CRITICIZED

A coalition of 10 groups representing the music industry, including the Recording Industry Association of America, last week sent a letter to the Federal Communications Commission and congressional leaders calling for an investigation into current payola practices in the radio business. Clear Channel Communications, which owns more than 1,200 stations and controls the majority of concert venues, was named in the statement. The groups contend the payola practices have squelched competition, increased promotion costs and prevented new artists from airplay. Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wis.) is formulating legislation to curb certain music-promotion practices.

## ■ COMCAST UNLOADS AT&T SHARES

Comcast Corp. sold almost half of its stock in AT&T—42 million shares—to Salomon Smith Barney last week. The company, which plans to acquire AT&T's cable arm AT&T Broadband, said earlier this month that it intended to sell all of its AT&T stock, as well as its holdings in Sprint. (Comcast stock fell 1.49 percent Friday, to \$29.71). The merger of Comcast and AT&T will create the largest cable operator in the country.

## ■ RURAL POLS CONCERNED ABOUT DBS MERGER

The proposed EchoStar-DirecTV merger has some senators concerned about the impact on rural consumers. In a letter sent to

Attorney General John Ashcroft and Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell, 11 senators from the West and Midwest asked that conditions be placed upon a merged EchoStar and DirecTV, saying the combined satellite services could leave rural areas subject to "monopolistic practices" and facing "higher prices, fewer choices and reduced services."

## ■ NBC'S ZUCKER ADDS WEST COAST DUTIES

Entertainment president Jeff Zucker expanded his supervisory duties last week over NBC Studios, NBC Enterprises and the NBC Agency. Zucker assumes the responsibilities previously handled by NBC West Coast president Scott Sas- sa, who was reassigned to work on "strategic projects." The West Coast president post will be eliminated. Zucker was named entertainment chief 18 months ago, after serving as executive producer of NBC's *Today* show. NBC's top brass believe that placing all units under Zucker will create better synergy for the network.

## ■ 1STQ TV SPENDING UP 3.5 PERCENT

Broadcast TV ad revenue increased 3.5 percent in first quarter to more than \$9.9 billion, despite a 12.6 percent drop in syndicated TV spending (to \$709 million), according to CMR data released by the Television Bureau of Advertising. Network TV grew 6.6 percent to more than \$5.5 billion. Local TV was up 2.5 percent to more than \$3.6 billion. Auto advertisers, the largest contributor to local TV, upped spending by 7.9 percent.

## ■ ARBITRON DATA RANKLES WGTW

Arbitron last week unveiled the first TV station and cable ratings generated by the portable people meter, which the company is testing in Philadelphia. The April data for radio and March data for TV and cable were given to the media outlets only; agencies will get the information next month. WGTW-TV, an independent outlet in Philadelphia owned by Brunson Communications that only recently began encoding its signal and was not included in the release, objected to the Arbitron data, calling it "inaccurate."

■ **ADDENDA:** Lifetime president **Carole Black**, who has been without a contract since March, announced last week that she will stay at the women's cable network for at least three more years...**Lachlan Murdoch**, News Corp. deputy COO and son of chairman/CEO Rupert Murdoch, will replace Ken Chandler as publisher of the *New York Post*. Chandler stepped down last week after three years at the helm.

**INSIDE MEDIAWEEK**

John Hogan discusses Clear Channel's cross-media unit  
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## First-Quarter Ad Spending Shows Signs of Recovery

Following sharp declines in 2001, advertising is beginning to exhibit signs of a rebound, according to two leading media-research services that track advertising expenditures. In this year's first quarter, total ad spending climbed 1.8 percent, reported Nielsen Monitor-Plus, a division of Nielsen Media Research; CMR posted a more conservative increase of 0.4 percent.

"Ad spending is steadily coming out of its slumber and is showing some signs of recovery for the year," said David Peeler, president/CEO of CMR. "We expect to see modest increases in spending by the third quarter."

Although the two services use different methodologies and track different media segments, they reported similar trends of overall growth.

Among the media posting first-quarter gains were network and spot TV, and local and network radio. Magazines, syndicated TV, newspapers and Internet advertising all declined. According to CMR, the medium with the biggest first-quarter spending falloff was cable, down nearly 16 percent. Nielsen Monitor-Plus reported cable up slightly, by 0.4 percent.

Much of the advertising gain in the first quarter was led by the automotive category, which increased spending 10 percent to \$1.9 billion, according to Nielsen Monitor-Plus, and Procter & Gamble, which boosted spending by 12 percent to \$480 million, reported CMR. The Winter Olympics also lifted advertising sales for network and spot TV in February. —*Katy Bachman*

## Justice May Still Prevail As Lead Arbiter of Media Deals

Under heavy pressure from Congress, federal officials last week retreated from plans to eliminate the Federal Trade Commission's role in reviewing media mergers. But within hours, speculation was mounting that the ultimate outcome might still have the Justice Department becoming the lead arbiter of big media deals. That's (continued on page 6)

# Upfront May Move This Week

Buyers waiting for Big Four net, probably NBC, to get market in gear

**TV PROGRAMMING** By John Consoli

**B**roadcast television upfront ad dollars began trickling in last week, in a marketplace that network and media agency executives project could reach the \$7.3 billion mark, up about \$400 million or 6 percent over last year. A consensus of broadcast upfront sellers and buyers expects that NBC will be the market leader, taking in \$2.4 billion, followed by CBS with \$1.7 billion, ABC at \$1.3 billion, Fox at \$1.2 billion, the WB with \$500 million and UPN at \$225 million.

Buyers said that the WB was the only network that brought in any significant upfront business last week in advance of the Memorial Day holiday. WB officials would not discuss any deals or rates paid, but one executive of the network said that a handful of proposals were "good enough to say 'yes' to." Since the network is a much smaller player compared to the big-volume Big Four, most media buyers were not rushing out last week to begin spending their clients' budgets based on the WB's activity, preferring to wait for one of the top networks, probably NBC, to set the tone for the marketplace. Buyers said that business could begin in earnest this week if one of the top nets begins making deals.

Walt Disney Co. made a three-year, \$100 million cross-platform pact with Home Depot in a deal that includes ABC, cable networks ESPN and Lifetime, and a merchandising agreement to create a Disney brand of children's paint that will be sold in Home Depot stores.

Meanwhile, buying unit OMD was still trying to put together a large cross-platform deal with one of the major media companies. But OMD was having difficulty getting any of the broadcast nets to agree to a mega-volume deal at cost-per-thousand decreases from last year. Talks were continuing, but as one network executive noted: "No one really has a handle on the marketplace yet. If you do a

deal that large and the marketplace turns out to be stronger, your network could be finished for all of next season."

While buyers and sellers were trying to make each other blink first, media agency research departments were completing their audience-share estimates for all the new shows after spending the past 10 days watching pilots. Agency share estimates provide a strong indication of how advertisers will

### TEN PICKS TO CLICK

NEW SERIES	TIME SLOT	PROJECTED HI SHARE	TIME-PERIOD RANK
STILL STANDING (CBS)	Mon. 9:30	16.8	2nd
CSI: MIAMI (CBS)	Mon. 10	15.7	2nd
WITHOUT A TRACE (CBS)	Thurs. 10	13.5	2nd
GOOD MORNING MIAMI (NBC)	Thurs. 9:30	13.1	2nd
AMERICAN DREAM (NBC)	Sun. 8	10.6	2nd
BOOMTOWN (NBC)	Sun. 10	10.6	3rd
MEDS (ABC)	Wed. 10	10.5	2nd
PRESIDO MED (CBS)	Wed. 10.	10.3	3rd
8 SIMPLE RULES (ABC)	Tues. 8	10.3	2nd
HIDDEN HILLS (NBC)	Tues. 9:30	10.3	2nd

Source: Estimates from three top TV-buying agencies

spend their budgets in the new programming during the upfront.

The new series that is expected to win the largest share of audience in its time period, according to share estimates from three major media buying agencies, is the CBS sitcom *Still Standing* (Monday at 9:30 p.m., following *Everybody Loves Raymond*), with a household share estimate of 16.8. The new show with the second-highest share estimate is CBS' spinoff *CSI: Miami* (Monday at 10 p.m.), with a 15.7. Both shows are expected to finish second in their time periods opposite ABC's *Monday Night Football*, which earns the top shares from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. Buyers believe *CSI: Miami* will overtake NBC's *Crossing Jordan*, the highest-rated new drama this past season. Buyers expect *Jordan* to average a 13 share next season.

Roy Rothstein, vp of research at Zenith Media, said that a choice time slot will definitely help *Still Standing*, but he also noted that the show is getting better reviews among buyers than *Becker*, CBS' veteran Monday 9:30 p.m.

comedy that will move to Sunday this fall.

None of the top 10 new shows based on share estimates is projected to finish first in its time slot, but eight are expected to finish second. *Without a Trace*, a new CBS drama that will air on Thursday at 10 p.m. following the hit *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, is projected to earn a respectable household audience share of 13.5 but will still finish far behind NBC's *ER*, projected to get a 22. Likewise on Thursday at 9:30 p.m., NBC's new comedy *Good Morning Miami* is projected to attract a 13.1 share but will be a distant second to *CSP's* 22.5.

NBC's new Sunday 10 p.m. drama, *Boomtown* (10.6), is projected to finish third in its time period, behind ABC's veteran *The Practice* (14.5) and the *CBS Sunday Movie* (12.0). In a head-to-head battle of two new medical shows, agency researchers project ABC's *Meds* (10 p.m. Wednesday), with a 10.6 estimated share of audience, will nose out CBS' *Presidio Med* (10.5), with both finishing behind time-period powerhouse *Law & Order* (21).

ABC's new 8 p.m. Tuesday sitcom *8 Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter* is projected to earn a solid 10.3 share against CBS veteran drama *JAG*, which skews more male and is expected to pull a 16.5 share.

The new Fox series that is expected to earn the highest household share next season is

producer David E. Kelley's *Girl's Club* (Monday, 9 p.m.), projected to average a 9.5. That solid performance would place *Girl's Club* fourth in projected audience share for all Fox programs, behind its lead-in drama *Boston Public* (11.5), *The Simpsons* (11.5) and *Malcolm in the Middle* (10.5). Agencies expect that Fox's returning drama *24* will average a 9 share.

Turning to the new series that agencies expect will have a difficult time catching on next season, the NBC sitcom *In-Laws* (Tuesday, 8 p.m.) is projected to earn an 8 share, the same as ABC's Tuesday 9 p.m. sitcom *Less Than Perfect*. Fox's *Fastlane* is expected to earn a 7 share on Wednesday at 9 p.m.; ABC's *Dinotopia*, a 7 on Thursday at 8 p.m.; Fox's *Firefly* (Friday, 8 p.m.) is projected at a 6.5; and the network's *Septuplets* has been pegged for a 5 share on Thursday at 9 p.m. when it premieres in midseason.

Sales executives for the broadcast networks would not comment or could not be reached for comment on the agencies' share projections.

Steve Sternberg, executive vp of research for Magna Global USA, said this year's fall schedules are unusual for their scarcity of counterprogramming. "On Tuesdays, there are 10 comedies between 8 and 10 p.m. up against one another," Sternberg noted. On Wednesday, there are two comedies with predominantly African American casts facing off



**Everybody loves Jami: Agencies expect CBS' *Still Standing* (starring Gertz and Mark Addy) to earn solid shares following *Raymond*.**

(Fox's *Bernie Mac* and ABC's *My Wife and Kids*). *Birds of Prey* (the WB) and *Twilight Zone* (UPN) will air in the same time period with similar sci-fi themes, Sternberg added. There are the two opposing medical dramas on Wednesday (ABC's *Meds* vs CBS' *Presidio Med*), and there is CBS' cop drama *RHD/LA* against NBC's *Law & Order: SVU* on Friday.

"What are the networks thinking, putting on shows that appeal to the same audiences in the same time periods?" Sternberg asked. "Viewers who want to watch a show with another sensibility might be switching to cable." ■

## '02-'03: Not a Lock for NBC

While network has strong position heading into fall, CBS will be in the hunt

**F**resh off its May sweeps and 2001-02 season victories in prime time across all major viewer demos, NBC executives were confident last week that the network's strong results will carry over into next season. NBC entertainment president Jeff Zucker crowed that with 150 hours of original prime-time programming set for the summer, NBC will be able to effectively promote its fall schedule and continue to best its rivals.

Media buyers note, however, that with cable steadily increasing its share of homes using television (the Big Four networks' total prime-time audience declined 3 percent this past season) and the nets tightly bunched in many ratings categories, a couple of new hits or weakening veteran shows could propel one network past another next season.

Steven Sternberg, executive vp of research for Magna Global USA, said that a May sweeps win provides "no momentum"

for a particular network heading into the following season. The nets are "so close together in the ratings that any one of them can win a sweeps with a few successful specials," Sternberg said. "Media agencies don't buy a network based on its cumulative ratings—they buy shows."

NBC won the May sweeps in households with a 9.0 rating/15 share, the adults 18-49 demo with a 5.5/15, the 18-34 demo with a 5.0/15 and the 12-34 demo with a 4.3, according to Nielsen Media Research. Those numbers mirror NBC's full-season wins with an 8.8/15 in households, 5.3/14 in 18-49 and 4.4/14 in 18-34.

CBS had a solid May sweeps, finishing second in households (8.4/14) and adults 18-49 (4.0/11). CBS closed out the season second in households (8.1/13) and third in 18-49 with a 3.9/10, behind Fox's 4.0/11.

NBC's numbers for this season show how quickly a network can make up ground.

In 2000-01, NBC ranked third in households, behind CBS and ABC. This season, NBC won in households, behind a 10 percent increase. While NBC took the 18-49 demo race both seasons, its 2001-02 ratings were up 10 percent. That gain can be attributed in part to the Winter Olympics in February, but many of NBC's hits like *Friends* and *Law & Order* drew stronger ratings throughout the season.

While NBC will probably win the 18-49 demo crown again next season, agency researchers said that CBS is likely to recapture the household ratings honors with its potentially strong crop of new shows. In another close race, CBS could edge out Fox in 18-49, agency executives predict.

Agency researchers project that CBS will average an 8.3 household rating in prime time next season, besting NBC's 8.1. ABC is expected to average a 6.3, while Fox is projected to earn a 5.2. In the 18-49 demo, NBC is projected to register a 4.8 next season, followed by CBS with a 4.0 and Fox with a 3.9. The WB is expected to top UPN in 18-49, with the networks finishing in a tie in households. —JC

because the agencies would go back to operating as they did before the now-abandoned agreement to eliminate the FTC's role. Mergers would be assigned by agency expertise on a case-by-case basis. Under this scenario, Justice would get media cases because it has more recent experience in that area.

Not so fast, says U.S. Sen. Ernest F. Hollings (D-S.C.), who argues that the FTC has experience stretching back decades. Hollings wants the FTC involved in media mergers, noting that the agency considers public interest issues while Justice focuses on antitrust concerns. The senator says he'll cut agency budgets, if necessary, to get his way. Hollings spokesman Andy Davis pointedly noted that the appropriations process is continuing. "Hollings is going to keep an eye on this," Davis said. —*Todd Shields*

## Belmont Stakes Spots Nearly Sold Out on NBC

With War Emblem just one win away from taking horse racing's rare Triple Crown, ad time for the June 8 Belmont Stakes on NBC is nearly sold out. The going rate for a spot is about \$175,000 per :30 on the 90-minute telecast.

TV ratings traditionally rise sharply for coverage of the Belmont Stakes in a year when a horse has a chance to win the final jewel of the Triple Crown. That's why NBC Sports is eagerly anticipating the telecast, during which War Emblem will try to become the first horse since 1978 to accomplish the feat.

In 1997, when ABC aired the Belmont and Silver Charm had a chance to win the Triple, TV ratings jumped from a 2.6 rating to a 5.3. In the next two years on ABC, with horses again contending for the Triple Crown in the Belmont, ratings jumped to 5.9 and 6.0. Last year, with no Triple Crown at stake, NBC's coverage of the Belmont earned a 4.5.

NBC's telecast of the second leg of the Triple Crown, the Preakness Stakes, earned a 5.7 on May 18, the Preakness' highest rating in a decade. The Kentucky Derby on May 4, War Emblem's first jewel in the Crown, earned a 7.1 rating, down 12 percent from last year's Derby. —*John Consoli*

# A Walk Down Memory Lane

The nets are hoping viewers find comfort in new nostalgia-flavored series

**TV PROGRAMMING** By Alan James Frutkin

Advertisers were hardly surprised when the networks announced four new shows for the fall steeped in nostalgia: ABC's *That Was Then*, Fox's *Oliver Beene*, NBC's *American Dreams* and the WB's *Do Over*. In the wake of Sept. 11, broadcasters still want to put comfort food in prime time.

But as last year's events continue to alter the national mood, predicting what audiences will want in four months remains risky. "I think these shows may have been successful had they aired this past November, December and January," said Stacey Lynn Koerner, senior vp and director of broadcast research at Initiative Media. "It's hard to tell where people will be at in September."

Ideally, creators of these nostalgic shows believe they also can provide audiences with a view of their present. Fox's *Oliver Beene* and NBC's *American Dreams* take place in the 1960s. ABC's *That Was Then* and the WB's *Do Over* propel their protagonists back to the 1980s. Neither era was without its upheavals. And *American Dreams* creator Jonathan Prince said having survived them as a nation could make today's headlines seem less threatening.

"There might be some sense of reassurance in the fact that those were hard times, and we made it through them," said Prince, whose pilot ends with the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Prince began developing *Dreams* prior to Sept. 11, as did *Do Over*'s Kenny Schwartz and Rick Wiener. But for *Do Over*'s comedy team, what might have seemed like a simple ploy to capitalize on the growing retro-'80s bandwagon took on added weight after the



ABC's *That Was Then* flashes back to the '80s.

attacks on New York and Washington.

Both Schwartz and Wiener said the series—about a loser who time-travels back to high school and repairs his and his family's mistakes—offers viewers a sense of hope. "Instead of pitching a show simply about a dysfunctional family, this is about someone who makes his life better," Schwartz added. "After 9/11, I think [the WB] might have been more receptive to that idea."

Sentiment aside, some buyers said nostalgic content also offers a strategic upside. Shows that take place in the 1960s "fit particularly well with the adult 18-49 bull's-eye that most networks aim for, while the '80s shows target the younger end of that demographic," noted John Rash, senior vp/director of broadcast negotiations at Campbell Mithun.

As with most programming, success is most dependent on its execution, and while Rash said the historical gimmickry of both '80s shows and of *Oliver Beene* might wear thin, he likes *American Dreams*. "This could be NBC's dream of re-establishing a consistent Sunday-night audience," he added. ■

## Letting Bygones Be Gone

History Channel hopes to draw younger males with more contemporary focus

**CABLE TV** By Megan Larson

In an effort to engage younger male viewers as it passes 81 million subscribers, The History Channel last week added series and specials to its 2002-2003 schedule that attempt to make history more palatable for younger audiences.

Joining the network's traditional program-

ming focus on ancient worlds and early American history are its first reality series, *Basic Training*, which follows raw Army recruits through basic training, and specials *Fire On the Mountain*, about a devastating Colorado fire in 1994, and *The Ship*, a modern re-enactment of one of Captain James Cook's jour-

# LIFETIME SUNDAY

Television for Women



The Division

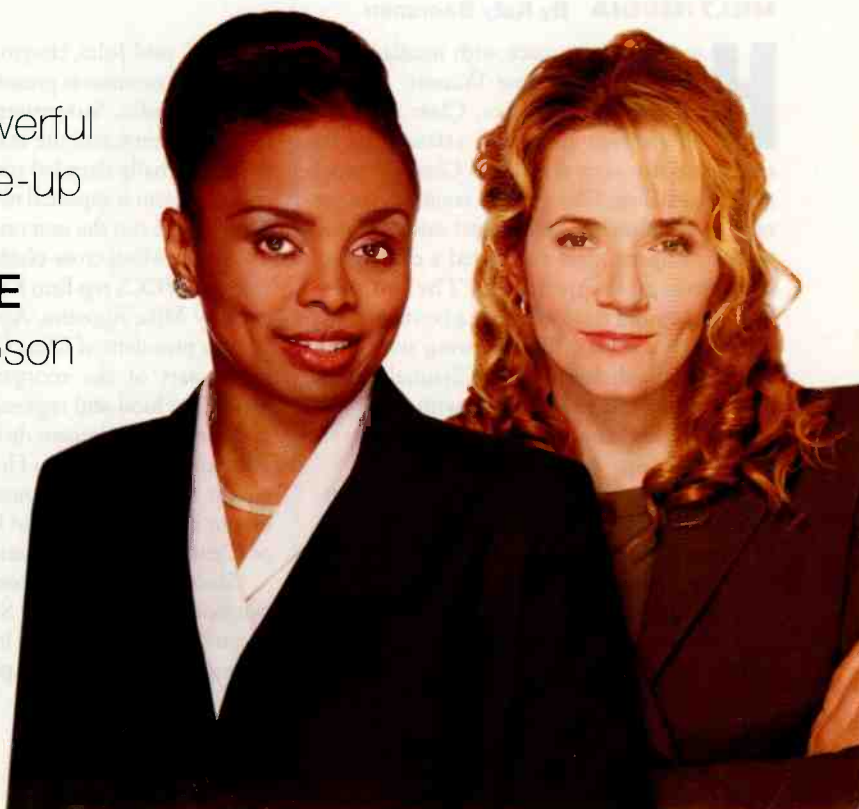


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**Basic Training is History's first reality series.**

neys in the Pacific by mostly young sailors.

"History is centuries old, but we have found that people want to know about what has happened in their lifetimes within a historical context," said Abbe Raven, History's executive vp and general manager. "Research has indicated that young men are interested in seeing history as it relates to their lives or their father's lives."

The new original programming is the most ever produced by History. While the bulk is dedicated to topics such as Teddy Roosevelt and Russian tsars, History is also striving to be more current.

"It is a little different for us," said Raven about *Basic Training*, "but it's another opportunity to show history in contemporary life."

The idea for *Basic Training*, which follows six recruits as they endure their first weeks in the Army, came during production on *Long Gray Line: The Spirit of West Point*, a July special that celebrates the 200th anniversary of the founding of the military academy. The two-hour special juxtaposes the history of West Point with the lives of current cadets.

*The Ship*, a six-part series, also has a touch of reality TV, as several young shipmates recreate and film on digital video one of Captain Cook's epic adventures. Finally, *Fire on the Mountain*, based on John Maclean's book about Colorado's Storm King Mountain fire, is very recent history, going back only 8 years and likely remembered by younger audiences.

"Like every branded cable network, you try to find a core audience and then retain that core while slowly expanding into new viewers," said Brad Adgate, senior vp of research at Horizon Media.

The network's household ratings in prime time year-to-date have dipped slightly, to 0.8. However, the History Channel's audience growth year-to-date among male viewers 18-49 and 25-54 is up 2 percent (256,000) and 8 percent (321,000), respectively.

"We are not abandoning our mission [men 25-54], but we will continue to deliver on our promise to deliver young men," Raven said. ■

## A Clear Advantage?

Clear Channel takes another stab at cross-platform sales, forming new unit

**MULTIMEDIA** By Katy Bachman

**H**oping to keep pace with media giants such as AOL Time Warner, Viacom and Walt Disney Co., Clear Channel Worldwide last week relaunched its cross-platform sales division as Clear Channel Advantage. Clear Channel, the country's largest radio station owner and largest out-of-home media company, first attempted a cross-platform synergy in April 2001. The initiative made a handful of deals with advertisers, including Toys R Us, Miller Brewing and Coca-Cola. But the division, Clear Channel Group Sales, was unable to land deals with other potential clients because there was no centralized leadership.

Last week, San Antonio-based CC introduced Clear Channel Advantage, which is organized at a higher corporate level and will be able to execute deals across the company's 1,223 radio stations, 19 TV outlets, 770,000 outdoor displays and 135 live-entertainment venues. "Before, there was no single point of decision-

making," said John Hogan, who will oversee CCA and continue as president/COO of Clear Channel Radio. "Advertisers found that situation frustrating, and the inability to get things done internally derailed many cross-platform deals." Hogan is expected to soon name a director who will run the unit on a day-to-day basis.

The previous cross-platform unit was operated out of CC's rep firm Katz Media and managed by Mike Agovino. Agovino continues at Katz as president of Clear Channel radio sales.

As part of the reorganization, CC will merge the local and regional sales teams of its radio and entertainment divisions. The merged sales force will report to Hogan. "We've come a long way in cross-promoting our live events on our radio stations," said Brian Becker, CEO of Clear Channel Entertainment.

Since Clear Channel completed its acquisitions of AMFM Inc. and SFX Entertainment in late 2000, reorganizing local assets has been among the company's top priorities. ■

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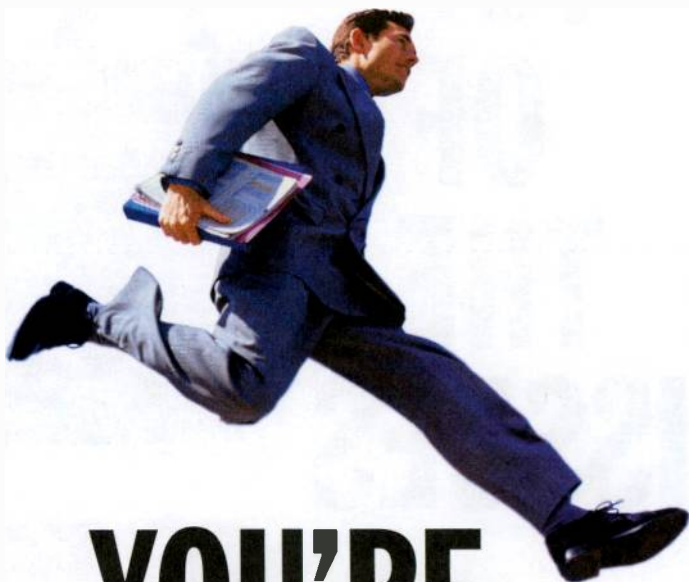
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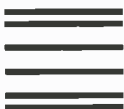
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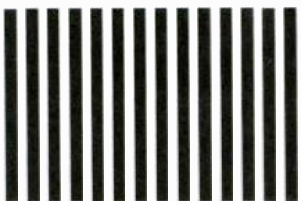
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# Local Media

TV STATIONS | NEWSPAPERS | RADIO STATIONS | OUTDOOR | MAGAZINES

## DENVER TV STATIONS

# Avalanche Postseason Power-Plays Sweeps

BY IGNAZIO MESSINA

**P** rime time in Denver during the May sweeps was swept away for the second straight year by Colorado Avalanche hockey playoff games on UPN affiliate KTVD-TV and on ESPN. While last year's National Hockey League Stanley Cup champions are hugely popular in the market, many local station executives—whose prime-time and 10 p.m. news ratings have been hip-checked by the playoffs—might be secretly rooting for a speedy end to the Avalanche's current postseason run.

KTVD posted household ratings as much as 10 times higher than its usual prime-time performance for Avalanche playoff games the station aired on April 25 (the first night of the sweeps period), April 29 and May 8 and 13. Regional cable sports network Fox Sports Rocky Mountain aired a prime-time game on May 15, and ESPN also aired two Avalanche games nationally in prime time, on May 20 and 22 (the sweeps' final night). Overall, the seven playoff telecasts drastically altered Denver's prime-time ratings picture in May.

Avalanche playoff games have "become kind of an annual mini-Super Bowl for us," said Greg Armstrong, general manager of KTVD, which is owned by Channel 20 TV, a division of privately held Newsweb Broadcasting. "Hockey in this market is huge—it really brings us a lot of eyeballs."

On game nights, KTVD spiked as high as a 23.1 rating/34 share, Armstrong said. "At one point, we topped out at a 51 share for a quarter hour. [The Avalanche] really allows us to dominate the competition." KTVD's overall performance for 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays during the sweeps was a considerably more humble 4.6/7.

The May 13 telecast marked the end of KTVD's carriage of the Avalanche. The team's current conference finals playoff series against the Detroit Red Wings (Detroit led the best-of-seven-game series 2-1 going into last weekend) is being carried nationally on



The Avalanche, anchored by goaltender Patrick Roy, enthralled Denver-area TV viewers in May.

GARY C. CASKEY/REUTERS

ESPN and locally in Denver on ABC affiliate KMGH-TV.

NBC affiliate KUSA-TV, the top-rated station in Denver, felt the impact of the Avalanche both in prime time and in its 10 p.m. local news ratings. "The Colorado Avalanche games are tremendous [ratings earners], and they are running up against our [prime time] and news," said Mark Cornetta, general sales manager of Gannett Broadcasting's KUSA. "We had a great May sweeps book, but when the team played, the numbers were a little bit tainted." Most local TV advertisers in the market recognize that Avalanche playoff-game nights are not completely indicative of how stations are performing during the May sweeps, Cornetta added.

KDVR, Fox Broadcasting's owned-and-operated outlet in Denver, saw its 9 p.m. news program take a hit. "Because many of the Avalanche games aired on Monday and Wednesday nights, typically two of our strongest

news nights [when the station's newscast follows *Ally McBeal* and *Bernie Mac*, respectively], they had a significant impact," said KDVR gm Bob Simon. KDVR's ratings erosion during the May sweeps was compounded by the fact that the game telecasts drew a significant number of viewers 18-49—a large segment of the Fox network's audience.

Fox Sports Rocky Mountain, the local TV rights-holder to the Avalanche, sold a package of games for broadcast to KTVD that included games from the first two rounds of the Stanley Cup playoffs. FSRM retained all of the advertising inventory on the game telecasts and produced the half-hour pregame shows. KTVD sold the inventory adjacent to the games, including the pregame programs.

KTVD used the Avalanche playoff telecasts to promote *That '70s Show* and *Dharma & Greg*, both of which are scheduled to join the station's lineup in syndication this fall with daily double-runs. The outlet also promoted its other off-network shows, including *Home Improvement*, on the hockey telecasts.

KTVD's three-year deal with FSRM to carry 20 regular-season Avalanche games has concluded. Armstrong said that the station is interested in negotiating for a package of games next season.

## RADIO

### Citadel Set to Go Public

Citadel Communications, the country's sixth-largest radio group with more than \$252 million in annual revenue, could soon be returning to public ownership. Forstmann Little & Co., the New York-based investment firm that last year purchased Citadel in a deal valued at \$2 billion and took the company private, is planning to go public with the Las Vegas-based radio group sometime this summer in a \$500 million offering.

The move is not unexpected, particularly following the company's hiring in February of Farid Suleman, Infinity Broadcasting's longtime CFO, to serve as Citadel's CEO and as a special limited partner in Forstmann. What is not clear is whether the company, which operates 205 radio stations primarily in midsized markets, is a buyer or a seller.

Companies that could be on Citadel's acquisition or merger list include Beasley Broadcast Group, which has openly stated its intention to grow, and Regent Communications, which is also searching for acquisitions. —*Katy Bachman*

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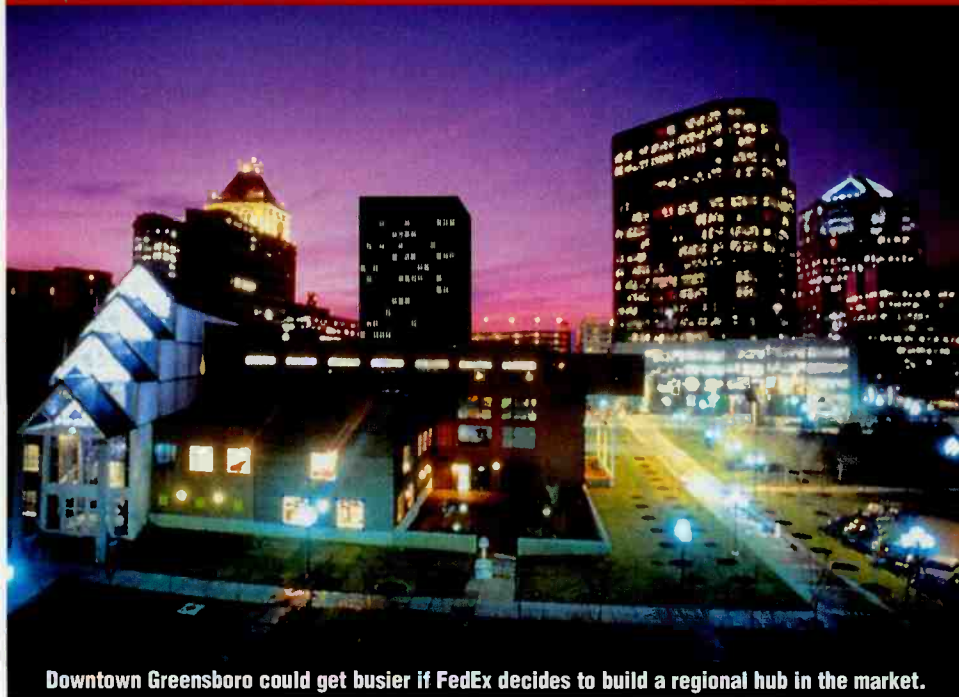
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# Market Profile

BY EILEEN DAVIS HUDSON



Downtown Greensboro could get busier if FedEx decides to build a regional hub in the market.

GREENSBORO AREA/CTB

## Greensboro, N.C.

KNOWN AS THE FURNITURE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD, THE GREENSBORO/HIGH POINT/Winston-Salem, N.C., market has long relied on furniture and textile manufacturing jobs to support the local economy. However, the national economic downturn in 2001 helped fuel a local recession

that caused a number of textile companies to file for bankruptcy, slash staff or close up shop altogether. According to some estimates, more than 27,000 textile jobs in the state of North Carolina were lost in 2001, many of them in the tri-city area, known as the Piedmont Triad.

However, while the area fell into recession—unemployment has ballooned beyond the national average to about 6 percent—its population is surging. So much so that in the beginning of 2002, the market jumped to No. 44 from No. 47, according to Nielsen Media Research. And while quality of life and a wide variety of outdoor activities are partly responsible for the population spike, area leaders hope new jobs will soon also be a draw.

Local political and business leaders are working to attract new companies that could replace the thousands of jobs lost in the past year. One ray of hope is FedEx, which wants to open a regional hub in the market.

The planned \$300 million facility, which

would be located at Piedmont Triad International Airport in Greensboro, has drawn strong opposition from some residents who fear increased noise pollution. But if FedEx follows through with its plans, the hub would open sometime in 2006 or 2007 and create several thousand jobs.

The economic blow dealt to area manufacturing has led to local advertising revenue declines taking place in concert with the national ad slowdown.

Further exacerbating the difficult situation for local media is a wrangle over how legislative districts should be mapped after recent changes were found to be unconstitutional by the North Carolina Supreme Court. The matter is still pending as they await the judge's latest ruling. However, the May 7 primary remains indefinitely suspended and politicians are keeping a tight lid on their campaign coffers until the matter, which has dragged on for months, is resolved.

Also, the state is supposed to get a new seat in the U.S. House, but the candidates' campaigning has been stalled. In 2001, North Carolina redrew its congressional map using the 2000 Census. Based on population growth, N.C. would get the new House seat instead of Utah. But Utah brought a suit challenging the way the Census was conducted. The matter is pending.

One race expected to generate ad revenue for local media is the bid to fill the seat being vacated by retiring Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.). Republican Elizabeth Dole and Democrat Erskine Bowles are the two leading contenders in a packed field. Meanwhile, broadcast TV outlets in the market, which has 634,130 TV households, are trying to ride out the recession.

Sinclair Broadcasting's ABC affiliate WXLV-TV has been particularly hard hit by the tough economic conditions. The station, which had struggled for six years to become a viable contender in the already competitive news race, shuttered its entire news operation on Jan. 11 and fired about four-dozen staffers. Station executives say the news operation was suspended because it wasn't profitable.

Since WXLV had been a lagging player in the local news race—averaging 1 ratings in the key demos—its withdrawal from the news game had no real impact on the other three news outlets, who are in a very tight battle. However, its exit from the news business did cause some confusion for viewers, some of whom thought the station was going dark altogether and leaving the market without an ABC affiliate. WXLV replaced its 6 and 11 p.m. news with *Access Hollywood* and *Spin City* reruns, respectively.

One hurdle WXLV has struggled to clear is its 1995 affiliation swap. WXLV had been the market's Fox affiliate and WGHP its ABC affiliate. While WXLV had to build its news from scratch, WGHP was able to capitalize on viewer loyalty from its years with ABC.

WGHP, which Fox Television Stations purchased in 1996, produces 6 hours of local news a day, more than any other station in the market. The station is the only network-owned and-operated outlet in the market. Karen Adams, WGHP vp and general manager, says stability has helped her station hold its market-leading position in the key 18-49 and 25-54 demos in nearly all the news time periods over the last half-dozen Nielsen books.

With Nascar's huge popularity in the area, WGHP has also benefited from Fox having the

## RADIO LISTENERSHIP / GREENSBORO

STATION	FORMAT	Avg. Qtr.-Hour Share	
		Morning Drive, 12+	Evening Drive, 12+
WTQR-FM	Country	9.2	7.7
WQMG-FM	Urban	7.3	6.2
WJMH-FM	Urban	6.7	9.3
WKZL-FM	Contemporary Hit Radio	6.7	6.0
WMQX-FM	Oldies	6.5	7.6
WVBZ-FM	Rock	5.7	4.4
WMAG-FM	Adult Contemporary	5.6	6.7
WSJS-AM	News/Talk/Sports	5.5	3.4
WKRR-FM	Classic Rock	4.0	3.9
WOZN-FM*	Modern Adult Contemporary	3.5	3.4

\*Previously WKSI-FM; changed during the Winter 2002 measurement period. Source: Arbitron Winter 2002 Radio Market Report.

broadcast rights to those races. The station has a sizeable 16.1 average household rating for Winston Cup races so far this year, the highest of any Fox station in the country.

Gannett Broadcasting's CBS affiliate WFMY-TV is the oldest station in the market and was, at one time, the undisputed news leader. The station is now in a neck-and-neck ratings race each book. On the programming front, WFMY-TV, which carries *Oprah* and *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, will replace the departing *Rosie* with *The Dr. Phil Show* at 11 a.m. The station has also produced a live, half-hour, local high school sports show called *Friday Night Fever* for the past dozen years.

Deborah Hooper, WFMY president and gm, believes that once the national economy recovers, it will take an additional year for the local economy to come back. "The market has been dramatically hurt by the recession," she says. "It's been a challenging year."

WXII, Hearst-Argyle Television's NBC affiliate, had been in third place in news but has experienced notable ratings growth. Over the last 18 months, the station has grown its household numbers for its newscasts at 5, 6 and 11 p.m. For example, its news at 6 climbed to a 9.1 average household rating this past February from a 7.8 for the same time period the year before. "We really started seeing our most significant growth during the week of Sept. 11, during that horrible tragedy," says WXII president and gm Hank Price. That week, the station premiered its \$1 million set and newsroom renovation and a new digital television station.

Price attributes WXII's ratings growth to more aggressive news and to a major push into Greensboro about a year and a half ago. Previously, WXII, which is based in Winston-Salem, did not cover Greensboro. "That's the largest city, and if you're going to win the whole market, you've got to have a piece of it," says Price.

Pappas Telecasting has also invested significant resources into its WB affiliate, WT-WB-TV. The station, formerly WBFX, increased its signal strength by going from transmitting at 350,000 watts of power on an approximately 1,000-foot tower to transmitting at 5 million watts on a 2,000-foot tower. After remaking itself, the station relaunched with new call letters in September 2000. Station gm Kathi Lester arrived at the station in June 2000 after a 15-month stint as gm at WNOL-TV, the WB affiliate in New Orleans. Before that, Lester served as general sales manager of Sinclair's duopoly in the

## NEWSPAPERS: THE ABCS

	Daily Circulation	Sunday Circulation	Daily Market Penetration	Sunday Market Penetration
<b>Guilford County: 172,643 Households</b>				
(Greensboro) News & Record	63,612	78,091	38.8%	45.2%
High Point Enterprise	17,069	17,913	9.9%	10.4%
<b>Forsyth County: 126,788 Households</b>				
Winston-Salem Journal	53,603	59,035	42.3%	46.6%
(Greensboro) News & Record	1,023	1,966	0.8%	1.6%
<b>Davidson County: 58,011 Households</b>				
High Point Enterprise	6,040	6,659	10.4%	11.5%
Salisbury Post	5,204	6,458	9.0%	11.1%
(Greensboro) News & Record	2,021	3,043	3.5%	5.2%
<b>Alamance County: 52,985 Households</b>				
(Burlington) Times-News	25,500	26,992	48.1%	50.9%
(Greensboro) News & Record	3,236	4,499	6.1%	8.5%
(Durham) The Herald-Sun	601	846	1.1%	1.6%
The (Raleigh) News & Observer	424	675	0.8%	1.3%
<b>Randolph County: 50,954 Households</b>				
Asheboro Courier Tribune	13,955	15,017	27.4%	29.5%
High Point Enterprise	5,863	6,263	11.5%	12.3%
(Greensboro) News & Record	5,588	7,758	11.0%	15.2%
<b>Stokes County: 27,851 Households</b>				
Winston-Salem Journal	4,952	5,573	27.7%	31.2%
<b>Yadkin County: 14,823 Households</b>				
Winston-Salem Journal	3,809	4,629	25.7%	31.2%
<b>Davie County: 14,202 Households</b>				
Winston-Salem Journal	3,997	4,685	28.1%	33.0%
Salisbury Post	794	870	5.6%	6.1%

Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations

Piedmont Triad. Sinclair owns WXLV and UPN affiliate WUPN-TV.

WTWB, ranked fourth sign-on-to-sign-off, also picked up some key syndicated fare last fall in *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *Just Shoot Me*. It has also purchased syndie shows *That '70s Show* and *Will & Grace* for this fall for early fringe and access. "We position ourselves as the entertainment station in the market," says Lester. The station does not program news.

WUPN has made a number of program changes in the past year. Except for *The Simpsons*, which still airs at 6 p.m., the station com-

pletely revamped its lineup from 5 to 7:30 p.m. WUPN also now runs *Star Trek Voyager* at 10 p.m., filling its previous slot at 11 p.m. with paid programming. Paxson Communications' WGPX is working hard to find its footing in the market. The station's strongest programming is *Diagnosis Murder* reruns at 10 p.m., which earned a 2 household rating in February (see Nielsen chart on page 17).

According to Scarborough Research, cable penetration in the market is 66 percent, slightly below the national average of 69 percent for the top 50 markets. Sandwiched between sev-

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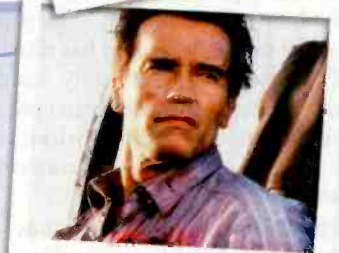
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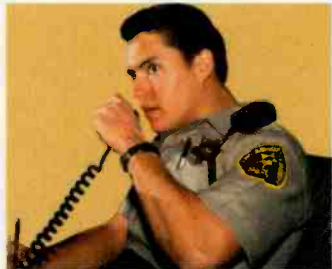


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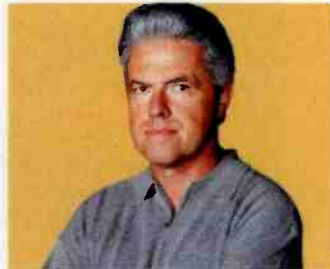
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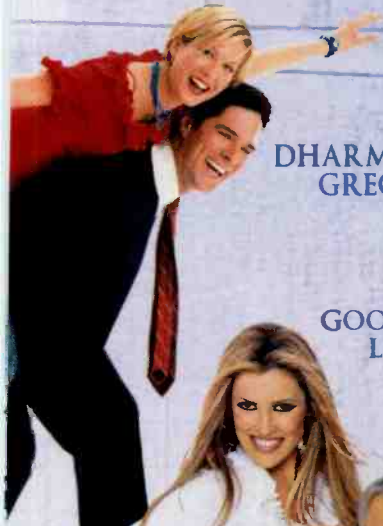
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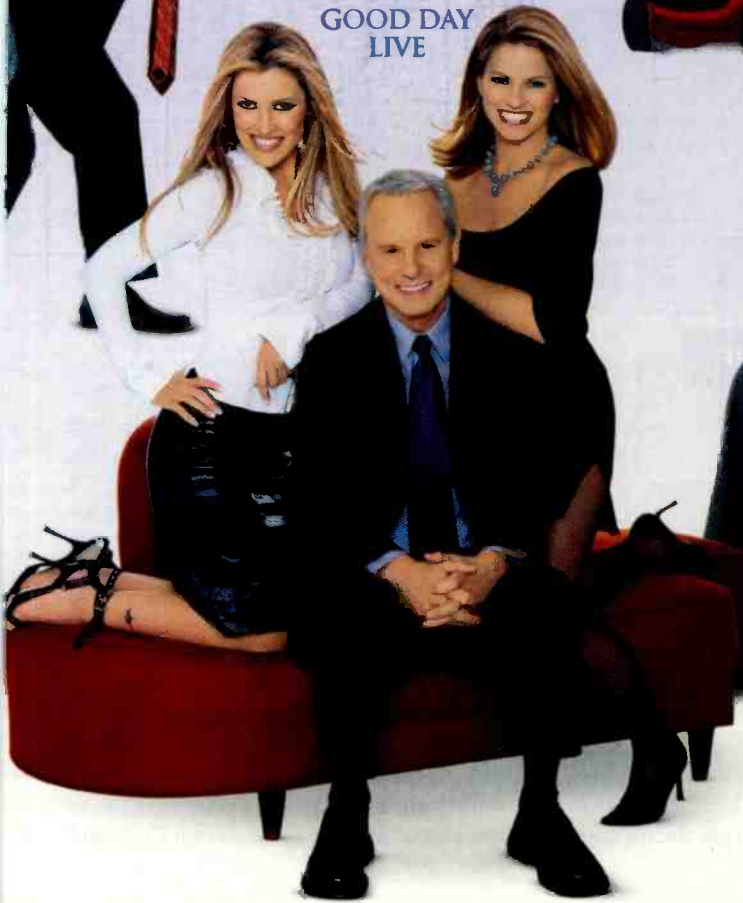
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# Market Profile

eral mountain ranges and the Carolina coastline, the Piedmont Triad has 24 percent of its households connected to satellite service, far exceeding the top-50 market average of 15 percent. Time Warner Cable is the dominant cable service provider in the area.

One medium with no shortage of competitors is local newspapers. The area supports a daily paper in each of the three cities and a number of community weeklies.

The largest daily is the *News & Record* in Greensboro. Owned by Landmark Communications, the paper's daily circulation for the six months ended March 31 was 93,436 (comparison figures for the same period in 2001 were not available because of a change in reporting). Its Sunday circ for the period was 112,056, flat year-over-year.

"We have really put a focus on circulation," says *N&R* editor John Robinson. The paper circulates in 10 area counties and has editions for High Point and Randolph County. And for the first time, the paper has recently stepped up its circulation efforts for Winston-Salem, says Robinson. In April 2001, the *N&R* converted to a narrower, 50-inch width.

Although located in Guilford County, the locally owned *High Point Enterprise* does not consider itself a direct competitor of the *N&R*. "We do circulate into the edges of Greensboro, but mostly in southwestern Guilford County, Davidson and Randolph Counties and a small portion of Forsyth County," says editor Tom Blount. Its daily circulation for the six months ended March 31 was 29,276, flat compared to the same period in 2001; its Sunday circ was 30,686, down 1.4 percent from a year ago.

Blount says the reason for not going after more Greensboro subs is a matter of minding the bottom line. "If we were to concentrate on Greensboro, we'd have to put an awful lot of resources to compete with the larger daily," he says. The *Enterprise* also publishes a number of other local papers, including *Triad Business News*, one of two weekly business papers in the market. American City Business Journals owns the 4-year-old *The Business Journal*.

Media General's *Winston-Salem Journal* had a daily circ of 86,544 and a Sunday circ of 97,811, both flat year-over-year. The *Journal* publishes a state edition and a city edition and circulates in 11 counties, says *Journal* vp and gm Pat Taylor, who is holding off on any major new initiatives for now. "I think we've just been trying to get past the recession," he says.

Last year, Winston-Salem's local economy was hit by the merger of First Union and Wachovia banks and the relocation of the headquarters to Charlotte, N.C., from Win-

## SCARBOROUGH PROFILE

### Comparison of Greensboro

TO THE TOP 50 MARKET AVERAGE

	Top 50 Market Average %	Greensboro Composition %	Greensboro Index
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>			
Age 18-34	31	29	94
Age 35-54	41	41	101
Age 55+	28	30	105
HHI \$75,000+	28	18	63
College Graduate	12	10	82
Any Postgraduate Work	11	8	71
Professional/Managerial	23	18	77
African American	13	16	127
Hispanic	13	#	#

#### MEDIA USAGE - AVERAGE AUDIENCES\*

Read Any Daily Newspaper	56	56	101
Read Any Sunday Newspaper	64	66	103
Total Radio Morning Drive M-F	22	22	101
Total Radio Evening Drive M-F	18	17	96
Total TV Early Evening M-F	29	29	100
Total TV Prime Time M-Sun	38	38	98
Total Cable Prime Time M-Sun	13	16	122

#### MEDIA USAGE - CUME AUDIENCES\*\*

Read Any Daily Newspaper	74	78	105
Read Any Sunday Newspaper	77	79	103
Total Radio Morning Drive M-F	75	75	100
Total Radio Evening Drive M-F	73	73	99
Total TV Early Evening M-F	71	76	106
Total TV Prime Time M-Sun	91	89	98
Total Cable Prime Time M-Sun	59	64	109

#### MEDIA USAGE - OTHER

Access Internet/WWW	62	53	85
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#### HOME TECHNOLOGY

Own a Personal Computer	68	59	86
Purchase using Internet	37	32	85
Connected to Cable	69	66	96
Connected to Satellite/Microwave Dish	15	24	162

#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. \*\*Media Audiences-Cume: 5-issue cume readers for daily newspapers; 4-issue cume readers for Sunday newspapers; cume of all listeners within a specific daypart for radio; cume of all viewers within a specific daypart for TV and cable. Source: 2001 Scarborough Research Top 50 Market Report (August 2000-September 2001)

## RADIO OWNERSHIP

OWNER	STATIONS	Avg. Qtr.-Hour Share	Revenue (in millions)	Share of Total
Entercom Communications	2 AM, 4 FM	27.0	\$15.2	33.9%
Clear Channel Communications	4 FM	20.4	\$15.2	33.9%
Dick Broadcasting	2 FM	9.2	\$6.6	14.7%
Infinity Broadcasting	3 AM	5.4	\$3.4	7.6%
Davidson County Broadcasting	1 FM	2.4	\$0.6	1.3%

Includes only stations with significant registration in Arbitron diary, returns and licensed in Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point or immediate area. Ratings from Arbitron Winter 2002 book; revenue and owner information provided by BIA Financial Network.

ston-Salem. The move meant the loss of a number of high-paying executive positions and other jobs as the companies worked to streamline operations. Taylor says in the short term, the merger benefited local newspapers because the banks wanted to get the message

out that they would retain the Wachovia name. That ad money has since dried up, he says. "Winston-Salem is pretty resilient," says Taylor. "I think we'll be OK."

Arbitron defines the radio market as Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point and

## NIELSEN RATINGS / GREENSBORO

EVENING AND LATE-NEWS DAYPARTS, WEEKDAYS

### Evening News

Time	Network	Station	Rating	Share
5-5:30 p.m.	Fox	WGHP	8.8	18
	CBS	WFMY	7.3	15
	NBC	WXII	6.2	12
	WB	WTWB*	2.4	5
	CBS	WXLV*	2.2	4
	UPN	WUPN*	1.5	3
	Pax	WGPX*	0.3	1
5:30-6 p.m.	CBS	WFMY*	9.1	17
	Fox	WGHP	8.8	18
	NBC	WXII	6.2	12
	WB	WTWB*	2.3	4
	ABC	WXLV*	2.2	4
	UPN	WUPN*	1.5	3
	Pax	WGPX*	0.3	1
6-6:30 p.m.	CBS	WFMY	10.9	19
	Fox	WGHP	9.8	17
	NBC	WXII	9.1	16
	UPN	WUPN*	2.3	4
	WB	WTWB*	2.2	4
	ABC	WXLV*	1.2	2
	Pax	WGPX*	0.9	1

### Late News

10-10:30 p.m.	Fox	WGHP	9.0	14
	WB	WTWB*	2.6	4
	Pax	WGPX*	2.0	3
	UPN	WUPN*	1.5	2
10:30-11 p.m.	Fox	WGHP	9.0	14
	WB	WTWB*	2.6	4
	Pax	WGPX*	2.0	3
	UPN	WUPN*	1.5	2
11-11:30 p.m.	NBC	WXII	10.0	20
	CBS	WFMY	8.7	17
	Fox	WGHP*	4.2	8
	WB	WTWB*	1.7	3
	ABC	WXLV*	1.1	2
	Pax	WGPX*	0.7	1
UPN	WUPN*	0.5	1	

\*Non-news programming. Includes Olympics/Late News telecasts. Source: Nielsen Media Research, February 2002

ranks it No. 43 in the country.

Entercom Communications and Clear Channel Communications are the area's top radio players. According to BIA Financial Network, each company controls about a third of the market's advertising revenue, pulling in about \$15.2 million in ad dollars apiece (see *Radio Ownership chart on page 16*). Knoxville, Tenn.-based Dick Broadcasting, which owns two stations in the market, has a 14.7 percent slice of the advertising pie, generating about \$6.6 million in ad revenue, according to BIA. Infinity Broadcasting also has a presence, carving out a 7.6 percent chunk of the ad market, or \$3.4 million in billings.

Among recent changes, Entercom's Modern Adult Contemporary station changed its call letters to WOZN-FM from WKSI-FM. Entercom acquired WKSI and Gospel station WPET-AM from Bahakel Communications this past February.

About a year and a half ago, CC, which already had the dominant Country station in the market in WTQR-FM—it's also the top biller—launched a second Country outlet. The company flipped its Rock station WXRA-FM to Country and changed the call letters to WWCC-FM. The station has seen a ratings decline since the change.

Greensboro-based Fairway Outdoor Advertising is the largest outdoor advertising player in the market. The company controls about 450 14-foot-by-48-foot and 10-foot-by-36-foot permanent and rotary bulletins, as well as about 900 30-sheet posters and some 8-sheet junior posters. Other smaller players in the market are Lamar Advertising, Infinity Outdoor and Greensboro-based Triad Investment. ■



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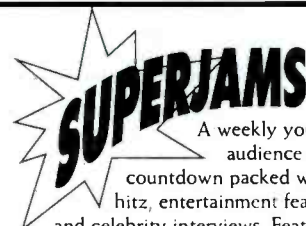
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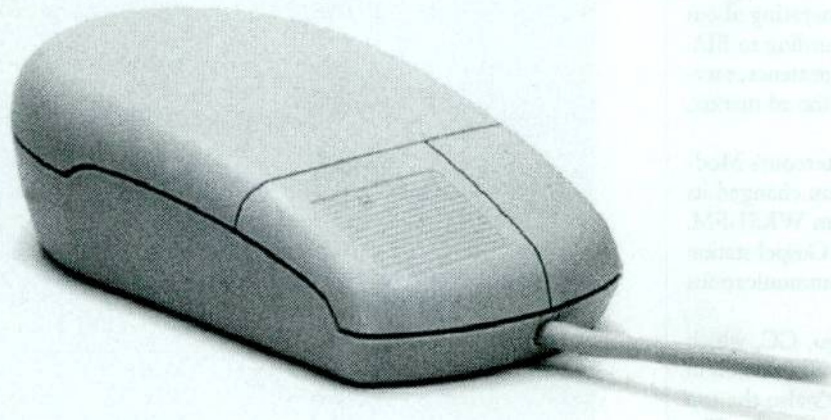
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MAY 27, 2002

» **UPFRONT: THE PROGRAMMERS**

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**VETERAN PRODUCERS**  
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## » verbatim

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JEFF ZUCKER, NBC ENTERTAINMENT PRESIDENT



...Tuesday 5/14 "With young hits like *Smallville*, *Reba* and the *Jamie Kennedy Experiment*, we are poised for growth in the future."

JORDAN LEVIN, THE WB ENTERTAINMENT PRESIDENT



...Tuesday 5/14 "No one is expecting us to jump into first place next year. The core goal is to stop the downward trend in our ratings."

SUSAN LYNE, ABC ENTERTAINMENT PRESIDENT



...Wednesday 5/15 "Our strategy has always been to maintain our core audience while bringing in younger viewers."

LES MOONVES, CBS PRESIDENT AND CEO



...Thursday 5/16 "We are the home for adults 18-34 ... Who knew I would someday be talking about adults 18-34?"

LES MOONVES, AT THE UPN PRESENTATION



...Thursday 5/16 "As we say goodbye to *Ally McBeal* and *The X-Files*, we say hello to the next generation of shows on Fox."

GAIL BERMAN, FOX ENTERTAINMENT PRESIDENT



# Upfront

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BY MARC BERMAN

Cover Illustration: Dorothy Szemiot



A SUMMER PLACE: 'Sonny and Cher' made a splashy summer debut

## The beat goes on

Summertime, and the living isn't easy for network programmers, who are trying to keep up with cable BY MARC BERMAN

There was a time when summer was the programmer's holiday. Repeats, busted pilots and original episodes of canceled series dominated the network schedules during the summer. Seems everyone took a breather before the highly anticipated fall season.

Most times, these shows went the way of the *Ken Berry* "Wow" Show. But once in a while, a show would catch on—and then hang on, as it found a place in the coveted prime-time lineup. It happened in the summer of 1971, with *The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour*, which went on to four successful seasons as part of CBS's prime-time lineup. It happened again in the summer of 1990, when *Northern Exposure* exposed viewers to the quirky inhabitants of Cicely, Alaska. And in 1999, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* made one of TV's splashiest debuts in recent history.

But summer, once a dumping ground, has turned into a testing ground for original programming. "With the broadcast networks still losing audience to cable, it's necessary to be as aggressive as possible with different programming options all season long," says John Rash, senior vp, director of broadcast negotiations, for Campbell Mithun, Minneapolis. "While it's a given we'll always see leftover original programming in the summer, the rise of reality shows, game shows and news-magazines in particular means that the ratio of original to repeat programming on the networks in the summer

is beginning to equal out."

And, as in any programming season, the networks will be looking for breakout hits. One with potential is *Crime & Punishment*, a non-scripted drama-documentary from *Law & Order* creator Dick Wolf. It premieres on NBC Sunday, June 16, at 10 p.m., following Wolf's *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*. "This is what you would call the real-life *Law & Order*," says Wolf. "Nothing is staged, nothing is reenacted—we present the real thing. It's perfect counter-programming and an ideal way to build momentum for NBC overall in the summer."

Brad Adgate, senior vp of research at Horizon Media, says *Crime & Punishment* should be the summer hit. "It's catchy, it's real and it incorporates the successful *Law & Order* formula—three reasons why this looks like a can't-miss."

Also on NBC, look for new in-studio game show *Dog Eat Dog*, reality game show *Meet My Folks* and the return of the *Candid Camera*-like *Spy TV*.

Looking to rebuild some of its lost audience momentum, ABC estimates that more than 45 percent of its entire lineup this summer will consist of original programming. Some of those shows are original episodes of canceled series, like reality show *The Mole: The Next*

*Betrayal*, which was yanked after three low-rated episodes last fall.

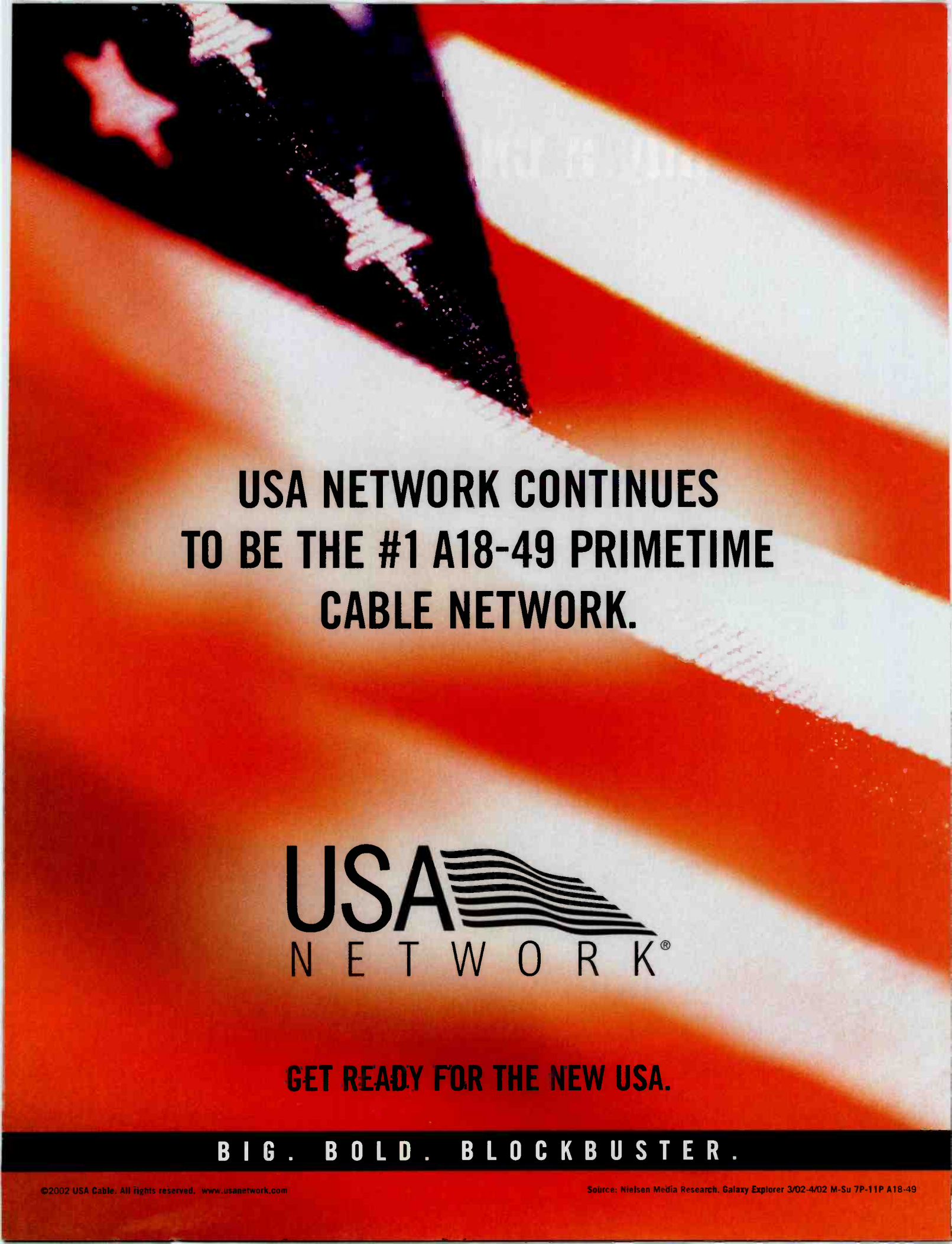
But two new, limited, entertainment series—dating-oriented *The Diary Affairs* and six-part reality hour *Houston Medical*—will debut at to-be-determined times. From ABC News, the network will roll out the four-part *ICU: Arkansas Children's Hospital*, *In Search of America with Peter Jennings* and *State Vs.*, a five-part courtroom series that takes viewers inside the jury room. The news division will also introduce *Boston 24/7*, a medical reality series, which is the follow-up to *Hopkins 24/7* that aired two summers ago.

On Fox, summer is off to an early start with the debut of new reality hour *I Want a Husband: Alaska* on Thursday, May 23, at 8 p.m. *American Idol: The Search for a Superstar*, will premiere on Tuesday, June 11, from 8:30-10 p.m. Fox's *Beyond Belief*, CBS's *Big Brother* and *Celebrity Boot Camp*, also are designed to keep viewers in front of their TVs this summer.

"With more aggressive programming in the summer likely to result in increased viewing levels, the networks will have a stronger promotional platform for the new season," says Rash of Campbell Mithun. "If more viewers tune in, the networks could ultimately benefit all year long."

Marc Berman is a senior editor at Mediaweek.



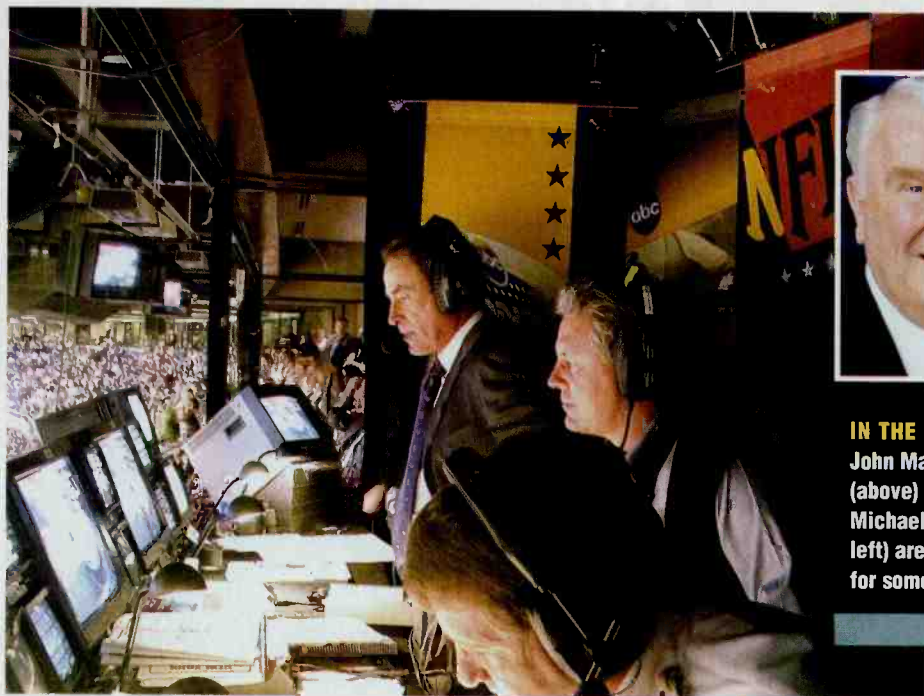


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**IN THE BOOTH:**  
John Madden  
(above) and Al  
Michaels (far  
left) are ready  
for some football

## ABC's new team

John Madden joins Al Michaels on the Monday Night Football roster **BY JOHN CONSOLI**

*Monday Night Football* has taken a lot of heat for its declining ratings over the past several years, but the fact is, the show has a higher position among the most-watched TV shows in prime time today than it did at its ratings peak in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Whether this fall's new broadcast-booth team of John Madden and Al Michaels will raise the ratings is a big question mark, but executive producer Frank Gaudelli contends the show doesn't really need a lot of fixing.

*MFN* reaches the most 18- to 49-year-old men of any regular telecast in prime time. Last season the show posted an all-time low household rating of 11.5, but was still ranked the seventh-highest-rated show for the season. That ranking is higher than the show's ranking in 1971, when *MNF* recorded a 20.9 rating but was ranked 25th, or in 1981, when it posted a 21.8 rating but was ranked 11th.

"Thank you for pointing that out," says Gaudelli, entering his second year as executive producer of weekly TV's most watched football telecast, when informed of those numbers. He has been annoyed, he says, that most stories about *MNF* fail to put them in context.

Gaudelli, who spent 10 years producing ESPN's Sunday night NFL telecasts before moving over to sibling network ABC, replacing Don Ohlmeyer as *MNF*

producer last season, will get a better chance to put his own signature on the telecast this fall.

Last season, Gaudelli inherited Ohlmeyer's three-member broadcast-booth team of Al Michaels, Dan Fouts and Dennis Miller, along with sideline team Eric Dickerson and Melissa Stark. This coming season, with Fouts and Miller released, and premiere football analyst John Madden leaving Fox to sign a new long-term contract with ABC, the telecast will have a two-man broadcast booth for the first time in the franchise's 33-year history.

While Gaudelli is realistic enough to admit that the quality of the game matchups go a long way toward determining the ratings, he says he believes the interaction between veteran play-by-play announcer Michaels and Madden will bring added value to the telecasts each week.

"We have the best analyst of any sport at any time and the best play-by-play announcer," he says. "The telecast will clearly revolve around these two guys—their insights into the game and into the league. John will appeal to both the hard-core fan and the soft-core fan. I believe the interaction between the two will be a showcase. Also, since John has always done Sunday games, he has never before had an opportunity to do a

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game topping off a week, where he can reflect how that night's game fits into what happened the day before with the rest of the league."

A two-man booth offers more room for in-depth discussions and debates between the play-by-play announcer and the analyst, and Gaudelli says he believes Michaels will challenge Madden and vice versa.

"How the game is covered from a production standpoint will change very little, but what the broadcast will offer will change," Gaudelli says.

While expressing his excitement over the possibilities of the Michaels-Madden team, Gaudelli defends Ohlmeyer's move to bring comedian Dennis Miller into the *MNF* booth, and believes the Michaels-Miller-Fouts team would have done well this year if the network was not able to lure Madden onboard. "Dennis Miller was a breakthrough idea," said Gaudelli, who was producing the ESPN Sunday night game when Ohlmeyer made that decision.

In addition to the new team in the booth, fans will notice some other, more minor, changes on *MNF* this fall. Last season, while Gaudelli changed the opening of the telecast and tweaked in-game production a bit, the network was pretty much committed to continuing the telecast as Ohlmeyer had structured it. "When I was hired, [ABC Sports president] Howard Katz told me he wanted to continue in the same direction that Don had started," Gaudelli says. This fall, the *MNF* opening theme song by Hank Williams Jr. will be back, with some small changes, and the opening visuals will change a bit. The creative skit that opens each week's telecast,

Gaudelli also plans to make better use of the telestrator, a trademark of Madden's, used to diagram plays on the screen. "We hope to design a different type of telestrator, one with a more sophisticated look, to jazz it up with more of a *Monday Night Football* flare," he says.

That's where Gaudelli's background in TV production will come in. Gaudelli, who originally wanted to be a play-by-play announcer himself, got his first taste of the production side as an intern on New York City's Channel 5, working on the *Sports Extra Show*, hosted by Bill Mazur in the early 1980s. He joined ESPN in 1983 to work in the mailroom and soon landed a job in the remote production department. Gaudelli moved up the ladder to ESPN's college football telecasts, where he produced the on-screen graphics; later he produced sports features for ESPN and became producer of ESPN's Thursday night college football telecast, before being named executive producer of ESPN's *Sunday Night Football* telecasts.

When Gaudelli got the call from ABC Sports president Katz two years ago to replace the departing Ohlmeyer as *MNF* producer, Gaudelli leaped at the chance. "In sports, it's the show everyone aspires to do," he says. "It has a 32-year history, it's in the pop culture."

The first *MNF* telecast this season will be the pre-season Hall of Fame game from Canton, Ohio, on Aug. 5, and while observers will be watching the ratings, it will be hard to draw many conclusions from a preseason telecast, which usually get sparse ratings, even with strong matchups. The first real test of the new broadcast-booth team will be on Sept. 9, and Gaudelli thinks that the regular season opener's ratings will be enhanced by viewers wanting to check out the Michaels-Madden pairing.

History, however, has proven that the game matchups matter much more than the announcing teams. For example, in the 13 years the controversial Howard Cosell mouthed off as one of the trio in the booth, *MNF* ranked no higher than the 10th most-watched prime-time show, and that was in his last year, 1983. During the Cosell years, the show opened at 25th and twice fell out of the Top 30 before cracking the Top 10. The drop out of the Top 30 occurred when Don Meredith left the booth as an analyst after the 1973 season. Meredith returned for the 1977-78 season and *MNF* did a 21.5 rating for the season, up only slightly from the 21.2 it recorded the previous season. *MNF* scored its highest rating of Michaels' tenure, an 18.4, in his first year in the booth in 1986, although the telecast was ranked 18th at that time.

Regardless of who is in the booth, it seems, and despite Gaudelli's best production efforts, it will still come down to the game matchups. And since those are determined when the NFL releases its schedules in April, *MNF* is at the mercy of the teams who play the games, telestrator or no telestrator. ■

*John Consoli writes about network television for Mediaweek.*

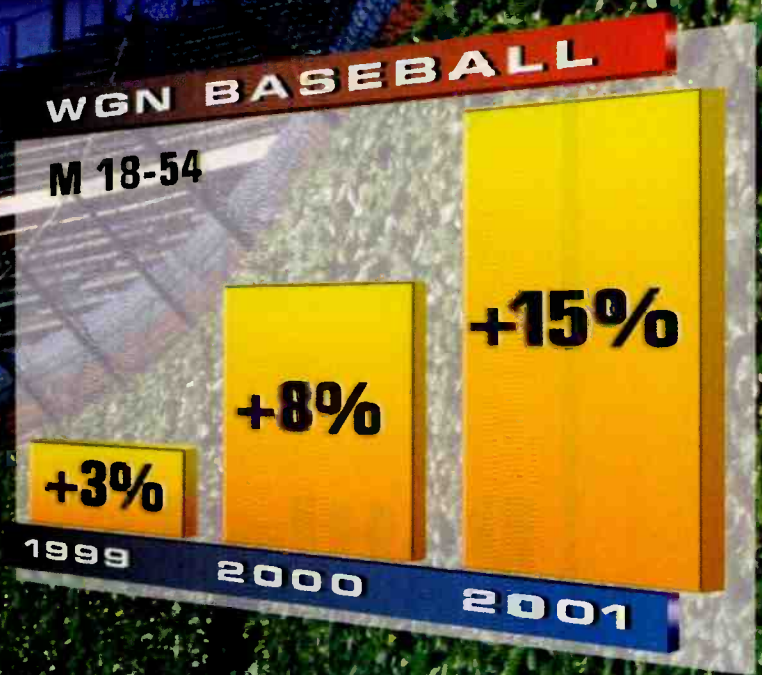


**The game matchups matter much more than the announcing teams. In the 13 years Howard Cosell was in the booth, *MNF* ranked no higher than 10th.**

**ANALYZE THIS:** Howard Cosell and Frank Gifford were part of *MNF*'s broadcast-booth team in the 1970s and '80s.

instituted by Gaudelli last season, will be back. Halftime will take on a different look, perhaps tying in with some celebrity guests. Last season several celebrities visited the booth, including Samuel L. Jackson, Tom Hanks, Lennox Lewis, Paul McCartney and Sting. "We are pursuing bringing celebrities on, but they have to be the right fit," Gaudelli says. "They have to be sports fans or people who are in the news, which would make their visit timely."

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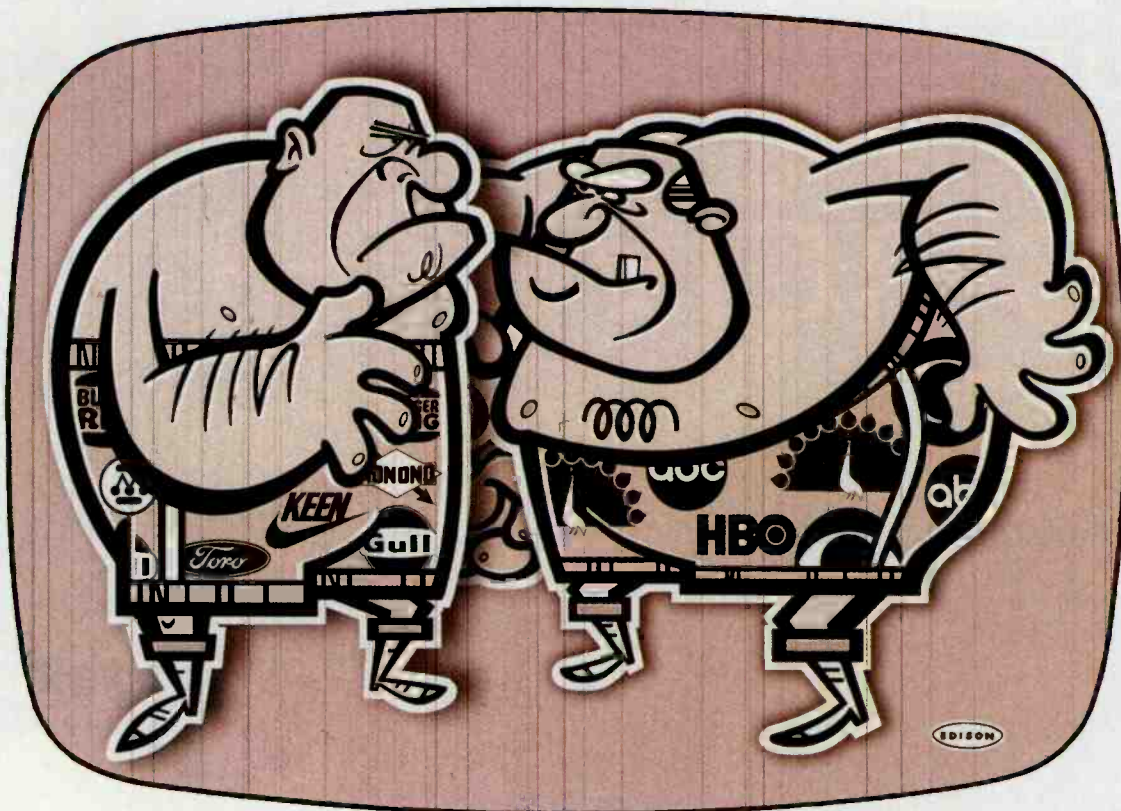
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Source: Nielsen Media Research, NHI:PNF II. Average all games April-September (1998, 1999, 2000, 2001). Audience based on M18-54 (000s). Subject to qualifications which will be made upon request.



If one idea has dominated the media and advertising business over the last decade, it is that Bigger Is Better. Ad agencies, media buyers and the media themselves have consolidated into a state of humongousness that would make the Jolly Green Giant blush. Accumulating size was a *raison d'être* for the media agencies spun out of full-service shops. What used to be called “clout” is now more trendily known as “scale,” but the song remains the same.

There are other compelling reasons for scale, such as achieving operating efficiency and having the wherewithal to develop research tools. But the major premise is that more spending firepower will force lower prices. This simple notion,

## Battle for clout

**Does size matter  
in the media-  
buying world?  
Yes, say shops  
both big and small.**

**BY ERIC SCHMUCKLER**

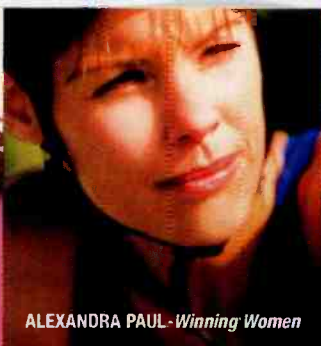
ILLUSTRATION BY EDISON

though, is fiercely debated. While the big guys believe they can win price concessions, others say it ain't necessarily so. “You can't beat the market when you *are* the market,” notes Jon Mandel, co-ceo of MediaCom.

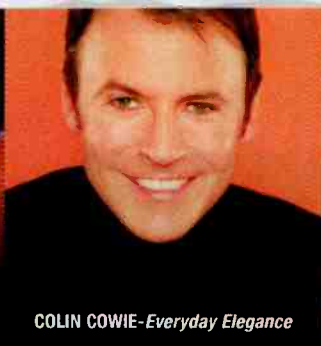
Three gigantic organizations stand bestride the U.S. media landscape. WPP melded the media units of Ogilvy & Mather and J. Walter Thompson into Mindshare, while Omnicom agglomerated the media functions of BBDO, DDB and TBWA into OMD. In the starkest statement yet of the belief that clout pays, Interpublic last summer created the \$40 billion (worldwide revenues) Magna Global as a super-negotiating unit representing its two media agencies, Universal McCann and Initiative Media. Magna—in control of an estimated one-fourth of all national TV spending—is the poster child for scale, but its innovative and misunderstood structure raises a special set of questions (see sidebar, next page).



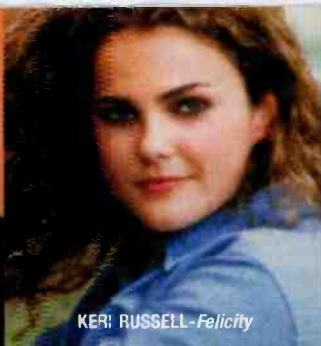
NADMI JUDD - *Between Us*



ALEXANDRA PAUL - *Winning Women*



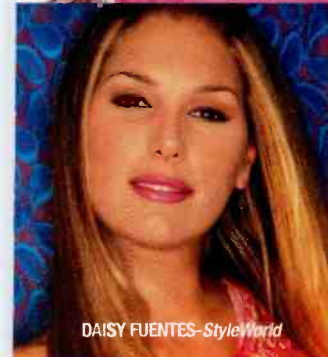
COLIN COWIE - *Everyday Elegance*



KERL RUSSELL - *Felicity*



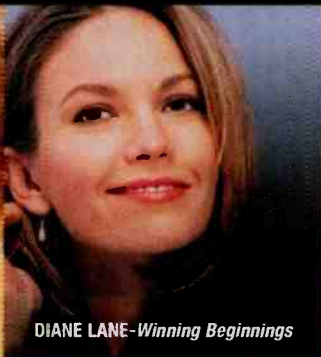
KATE - *Cinematherapy*



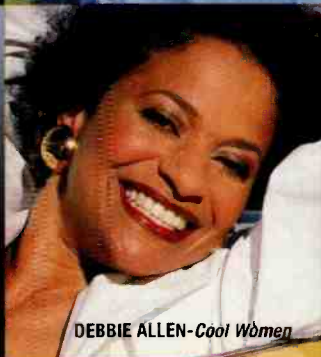
DAISY FUENTES - *StyleWorld*



FAYE DUNAWAY - *The Yellow Bird*



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JESSIE - *Cinematherapy*

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## The equalizer

Interpublic's Magna is a bellwether of clout. In conducting its first full upfront this spring, the unit's performance will be scrutinized—not only on price but also maneuverability, execution and service. If Magna succeeds, it could help push the pendulum toward even more consolidation.

Magna is a pure negotiator, separate from the rest of the media function. IPG's media agencies, Universal McCann and Initiative Media, will continue to negotiate upfront deals with vendors for their clients—CPMs, unit rates, flights, value-added, the whole schmeer. Once the outlines of a deal are struck, Magna will aggregate all the dollars—sans client info—and negotiate a discounted final price. "The individual agencies talk to suppliers and raise the clients' flag," says Magna Global USA chairman Bill Cella. "In my case, it's a volume purchase. If the market is plus-four and we're at plus-two, we win."

Cella is confident Magna will deliver value to its clients in this upfront and beyond: "Our two agencies represent a phenomenal range of blue-chip clients; everyone wants them on their air. We're not the whole market, but we're a pretty big portion. A vendor has a lot to offer and a lot to lose; you've gotta be real careful with us." Still, he says, "We're not going in to beat people up. The street will determine whether we're successful."

Rival agencies and media sellers are nonetheless skeptical. Jon Mandel wonders why any seller would talk seriously about price with the constituent agencies before its Magna negotiation. "[Cella] wants vendors to throw this Magna discount on it," he says. "So you hold back 2 percent and do your deal with McCann, then it goes to Billy and they give him 2 percent off. It was always there." Mandel finds the whole structure unwieldy: "Magna sets the price and the agencies work out the programming. What happens in January when they have all the wrong inventory? It's this dysfunctional thing."

"I just don't understand it," says another competitor. "How can Magna effectively represent a client if they don't even know who the client is? A toilet paper client has different priorities than a luxury car client."

Magna is designed to capitalize on Interpublic's scale while finessing client conflict. It will negotiate spending for competitive clients such as Home Depot vs. Lowe's. This is a nonissue in the Magna structure because its negotiations are blind, or "agency neutral." Yet several holding companies maintain separate media

brands (Starcom Media and MediaVest, Zenith Media and Optimedia) just to defuse such conflicts. "Every client wants to know how they are managing the conflicts within their portfolio," says Starcom's John Muszynski. "I can't imagine all of these clients are OK with the same guy negotiating his competitor's dollars."

"There are a lot of detractors, and that's understandable," replies Cella. "Small agencies need to justify their existence. Our agencies still own the relationship with the client. We've got very open communications, [we're] making sure our information is consistent. It's always a work in progress, but we're pretty organized."—E.S.

**"Our agencies still own the relationship with the client. It's always a work in progress, but we're pretty organized."**  
**BILL CELLA**

Magna, Mindshare and OMD form a top tier of media buyers with \$5 billion to \$8 billion in national TV spending. Another half-dozen media agencies are a rung lower, in the \$2 billion to \$4 billion range. Then come the smaller shops with billings under \$1 billion, full-service agencies like Fallon and The Richards Group, and media independents like Horizon. Players at all levels claim their size gives them an advantage in the media marketplace. The debate may be unresolvable, but the issues surrounding it will come heavily into play when upfront ad sales begin in the coming weeks.

This market is ultimately ruled by supply and demand. While TV networks do their utmost to increase the supply of rating points (though they may hold some back for negotiating purposes), it is demand—in the form of ad budgets—that remains the crucial variable. And it is a truism that clout is a blessing in a soft market but can be more challenging in an up market, when sellers can pick and choose.

Does the advent of massive scale affect the workings of the upfront marketplace? "I think it does change the game," says Dan Rank, managing director of OMD. "In the past, the networks knew what spending was long before the buyers, and now it's the other way around. When you have 20 percent of market like we or Magna do, you know the strength of the market before the sellers. The top 12 categories represent 81 percent of upfront spending, and we have representation in all of them. Between our planning, account and client groups, we can project upfront spending very accurately, even for advertisers we don't have, before the networks do. If you believe information is power, that's a big power shift."

"It does make a difference," concedes Joe Abruzzese, CBS president of sales. "It gives them more information than in the past. They see more, but they still don't see all of it. Maybe Magna has 25 percent of the knowledge, but I have 90 percent and I still can't tell you where the market will come out. It's always a question."

Magna Global USA chairman Bill Cella says his company was formed in part to counter network mergers. "With all the consolidation on the seller side, I think that inevitably helps create Magna. They control a lot of GRP's [gross rating points] and we level the landscape a bit. Rather than be overwhelmed by certain suppliers and being force-fed [unwanted programs or cable networks] in a strong market, I think we're an equalizing factor."

The impact of scale will depend on the nitty-gritty workings of the marketplace—how well, for instance, the big shops can manage disparate clients with a wide range of CPM histories at the networks. The nets, of course, love the pricey accounts but want to take as few low-cost dollars as possible. "I'd be hesitant to do one overall deal, because some of the business is good and some of it sucks," says a broadcast seller. "People will do what they can to pick it apart [at the big shops]." Replies Cella, "They can try, but we're going in as a unified group. There's not a lot of picking and choosing as far as I'm concerned."

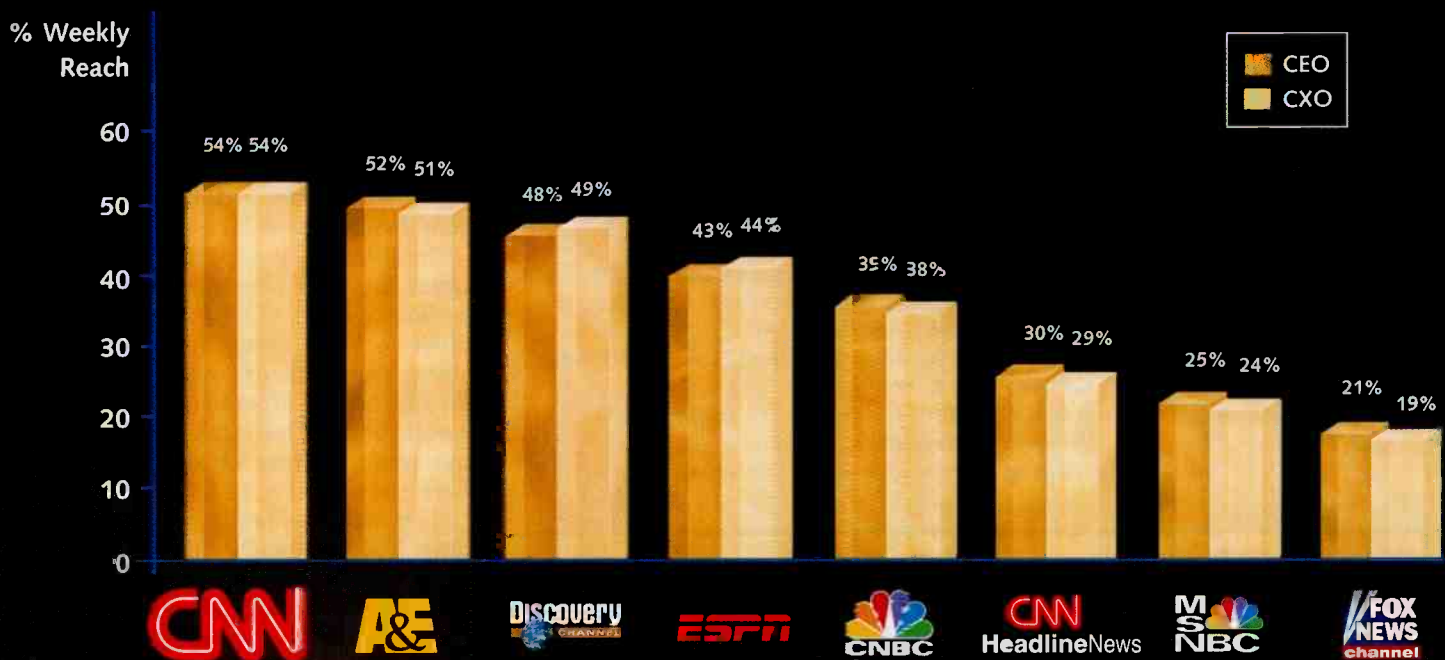
This seller further questions whether all clients benefit equally from scale. "In a soft market, it's great, but in a



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market that's balanced or strong, Coke's business is doing good for Tic Tacs. There's a huge benefit to the little guy, but you can't tell me a General Motors or a McDonald's is benefiting the same way. It creates value for Magna, but what's in it for Coke?" Cella says that for a big client "going in with the backing of a lot more money, it stands to reason the deal should be a little bit better."

The classic knock on clout is that its pumped-up practitioners can become muscle-bound. As Mandel puts it, "Your ability to make a deal is commensurate with your ability to walk." Adds Rich Hamilton, ceo of Zenith Optimedia Group The Americas, "You can definitely be too big—big enough to trip on yourself and have trouble placing your money at competitive rates."

"I went from a small place to a big place, and the pricing was terrible," says a veteran buyer. "This lumbering giant could not be nimble in an upfront. It can be troublesome to maneuver when you're carrying that much money. You can scare a lot of people, but it's hard to threaten to reduce your spending credibly."

Says a seller: "An agency with a couple pieces of business is the kind I want to take care of in terms of pricing. You can get in and out and not have it poison 20 accounts. I love those guys, and there's plenty of that money out there."

"You still have a bunch of little agencies out there, but how do they compete with Magna and OMD and Mindshare?" counters Dan Rank. "Do you think Joey Abruzzese is sweating The Richards Group?"

In fact, Abruzzese believes the small shops are doing just fine, thanks. "I think a shop like Carat benefits won-

best price. It's not buying cheaper, it's thinking smarter, and I don't know that they've added strategic focus at the same pace as buying clout. For my taste, the big players aren't walking the walk."

"There's a shortlist of maybe 10 main customers on the networks' radar screen, and it's invaluable to be on that list," says Hamilton. "As long as you are, it doesn't matter if you're first or sixth." Adds John Muszynski, chief broadcast investment officer at Starcom, "Everything's relative, so it's easier to move \$3 billion than \$8 billion. I've got more than enough scale to get my deals done."

Another issue for the biggest shops is service. "Magna's got 70 or 80 accounts," a rival notes. "If you were a client, wouldn't you want to know that Billy knew you and your business?" A seller adds that the heads of the big shops "are really smart guys and they can be creative, but they're not fine-tuning media buys. The devil's in the details, and that's the downside of these big agencies."

Some believe the megashops have an edge in special opportunities, value-added and multiplatform deals. "If a special opportunity comes up," says Rank, "it's us or Magna or another big agency that gets the call." Multiplatform deals are frequently about scale talking to scale, though the bigger they are, the harder they are to consummate. One seller argues that size in fact confers no advantage in the multiplatform and value-added arena, pointing to Deutsch's deals for Revlon in *All My Children* and for Snapple with Viacom Plus. "The beauty of cross-platform is that it's customized," says this source. "You don't do these deals in bulk."

Adds Hank Close, exec vp of sales at Comedy Central, "Most group or multiplatform deals are driven by share of dollars for price considerations. I'm not seeing people using clout to custom-fit marketing goals; it's all for price."

The increase in scale may change the market in prosaic ways affecting flexibility, precision and pace. "I think it becomes much harder to move money from network to cable or daypart to daypart," says a buyer. "There'll be a lot of scrambling in July and August because the people stewarding the buys aren't the ones who make the deals. There'll be a lot more 'he said/she said.'"

"Is it harder to be nimble?" asks Rank. "Yeah, it's harder and yeah, it takes longer

to get a deal done—which is not to say you can't be nimble. We'll have 42 clients in the upfront, and I can't give you an answer from them in five minutes. So we'll call back in an hour. I can't imagine that'll be a problem this year; it certainly wasn't last year. If the biggest single issue is our quickness, then I'm in great shape."

Rank believes that "for the top five buying groups, clout is a neutral issue. Now that clout is negotiating with clout, we won't be stampeded. You can't afford to screw me and I can't afford to screw you, so let's leave it in the hallway." ■

*Eric Schmuckler is a contributing writer to Mediaweek.*

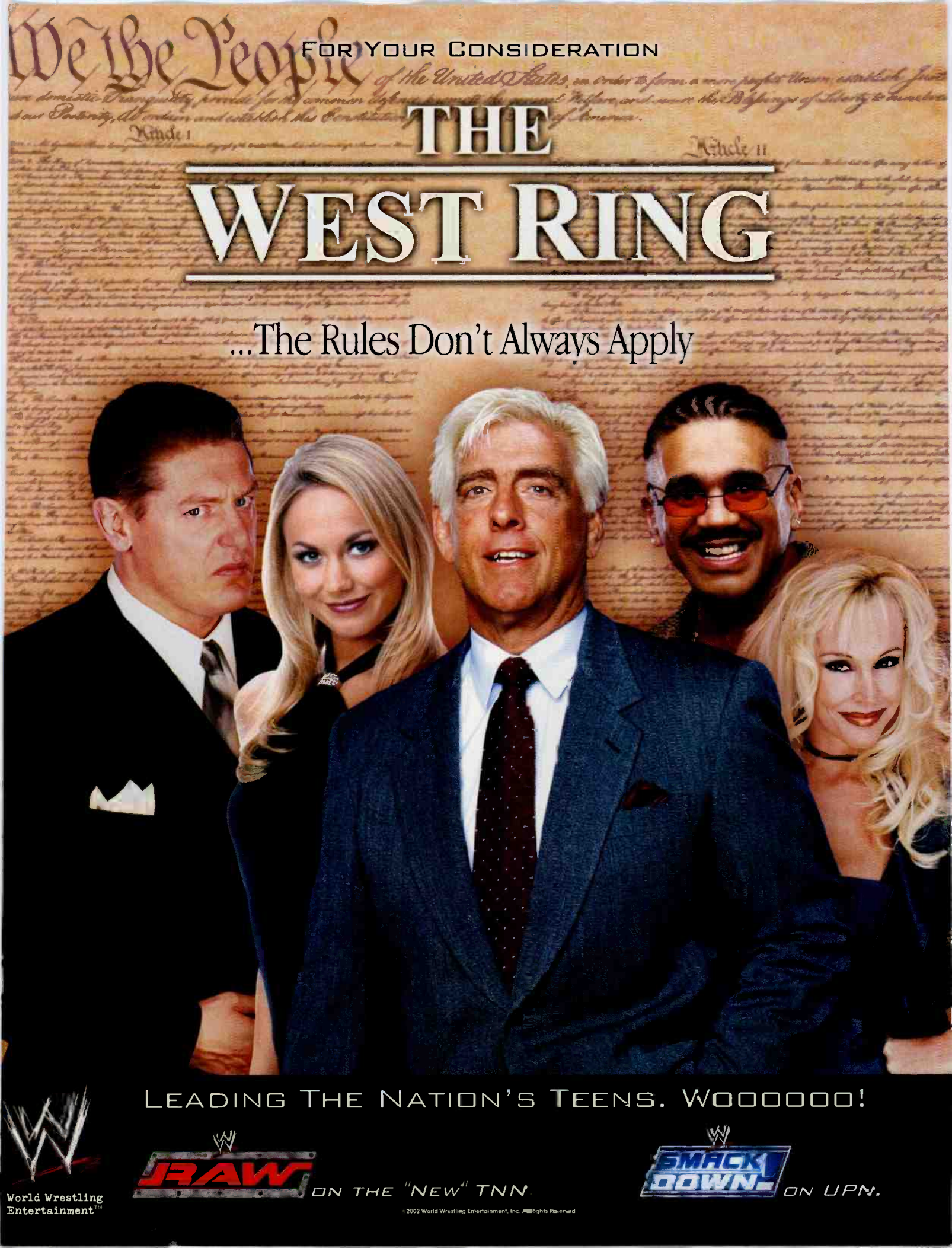
## THE MEDIA AGENCIES

NAME	HOLDING CO.	BILLINGS**	MAJOR CLIENTS
CARAT		\$3.7 billion	Philips, Pfizer, Hyundai/Kia
INITIATIVE MEDIA	IPG	\$10 billion	Gateway, Bell South, Home Depot
MEDIACOM	Grey Global	\$3.6 billion	GlaxoSmithKline, Diageo, Danone
THE MEDIA EDGE	WPP	\$4.1 billion	Pizza Hut, Lincoln-Mercury
MEDIAVEST	Bcom3*	\$4.9 billion	Kraft Foods, Burger King
MINDSHARE	WPP	\$8.5 billion	Bristol-Myers Squibb, 20th Century Fox, Unilever
OMD	Omnicom	\$4.3 billion	Dell, Pepsi, Frito-Lay
STARCOM	Bcom3*	\$4.6 billion	Walt Disney Co., Best Buy, General Motors
UNIVERSAL MCCANN	IPG	\$6.1 billion	Nestle, Coca-Cola, Bacardi
ZENITH MEDIA	Publicis	\$5.3 billion	Verizon, General Mills, United Airlines, Toyota

\*PUBLICIS IS EXPECTED TO ACQUIRE BCOM3 IN AUGUST. \*\*INCLUDES PLANNING AND OTHER MEDIA FUNCTIONS

derfully by its size and so does a GSD&M," says Abruzzese. "The big guys say they can buy it cheaper or for less fee, and that gets stale. And there's such a thing as reverse-clout, where you can't shut someone out. [Scale] may make a difference logistically but in pricing, it can't. If it does, I'm leaving the business. I like to think we're selling value."

Says Lisa Seward, media director at Fallon: "The answer can't just be size anymore. These big shops all stem from a heritage of tonnage and low CPM buying, but with today's media habits, users rarely travel along daypart lines or network versus cable. At Fallon, it has to be the best plan for the client, and then we find the



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The fizzy excitement of the network schedule announcements in May immediately gives way to a hangover of watching pilots, estimating shares, firming budgets and battenning hatches for the upfront market. Even in a zillion-channel universe, handicapping the prime-time grid remains an absorbing and important pursuit. Think of it as a multidimensional chess match with moving pieces that have changeable personalities, representing many millions of dollars of investments by networks, studios and advertisers. We try to look at the board holistically and consider each network's overall position in the game, meaning production arrangements and profitability as well as program squares. Stay tuned—or else we'll all be working in cable.

### NBC

Even competitors agree that entertainment chief Jeff Zucker had a marvelous rookie year at NBC, where Olympic-powered ratings rose in every demographic—despite stink bombs like *Emeril* and *Inside Schwartz*. In the key adults 18-49 demo, NBC was up 11 percent including the Olympics and 3 percent in regular programs, leading CBS and Fox by some 30 percent. As

### SUNDAY NIGHT MATCHUPS/8 PM



FOX **The Simpsons**

VS.

CBS **Bram and Alice**

For anyone surprised to see comedies airing on CBS in the Sunday 8 p.m. hour, don't be. Although it's been many years, Carroll O'Connor as TV's favorite bigot in *Archie Bunker's Place* followed by Linda Lavin as waitress *Alice* anchored a successful CBS Sunday comedy block from 1979-84. With former time-period stalwart *Murder, She Wrote* long gone, *Touched by an Angel* on Saturday, and recent *The Education of Max Bickford* failing to make the ratings grade, the network has decided that comedy is back on the Sunday schedule. But can *Bram and Alice*, a sophisticated comedy about an artsy novelist and his devoted fan who suddenly realize they are father and daughter, compete against *The Simpsons*? Entering its 14th season, the never-aging gang on Fox's animated hit is just one year shy of becoming the longest-running comedy in the history of television. And although ratings are not what they used to be, this unprecedented slice of life in the fictional town of Springfield still has a lock among young adult viewers. If *Bram and Alice* can attract an older-skewing crowd (given lead-in *60 Minutes*, that's a possibility) it could be a keeper. But if viewers find this seemingly one-joke premise unappealing—and that is a possibility—don't get too used to this odd-looking little sitcom. —*Marc Berman*



**LOOKING BACK:** Oliver Beene, a show about a boy in the '60s, is part of Sunday's three-hour block of comedy on Fox.



# Fresh start

Whether they reworked entire schedules or just fine-tuned, every network is ready to make new deals **BY ERIC SCHMUCKLER**

PHOTOS: OLIVER BEENE, FOX; THE SIMPSONS, FOX; BRAM AND ALICE, CLIFF LIPSON/CBS

Zucker relentlessly noted, the Peacock network is No. 1 in every daypart—prime time, news, daytime, early morning and late night. Sports—where NBC is bereft of big-league events—presumably doesn't count.

With such programming dominance, Zucker played a pat hand with only five new shows. Rivals don't fault him for it, but there is cause for concern. "Their high-rated returning shows—*Friends*, *West Wing*, *Law & Order*—did better, which will be hard to duplicate, while last year's new series were mixed," notes Steve Sternberg, senior vp/director of audience analysis at Magna Global USA.

Monday night was vastly improved this season, up almost 30 percent thanks to *Fear Factor*, and hit *Crossing Jordan* at 10. The latter faces a tough test this fall in CBS's *CSI: Miami* spin-off. Analysts rate the two shows neck-and-neck, though Sternberg believes *CSI* may prevail after football season. NBC took the demo lead on Tuesday, mostly because longtime leader ABC collapsed. At 8 p.m. next season, NBC opens with a new comedy, *In-Laws*; few can picture lead *In-Law* Dennis Farina as America's next comedy star. The transplanted *Just Shoot Me* at 8:30 leads into *Frasier* at 9. At 9:30 is *Hidden Hills*, a suburban comedy with some *Malcolm in the Middle*-type absurdity. Wednesday is intact, though *Law & Order* at 10 is facing a bit more competition this year.



**BACK TO THE FUTURE:** *American Dreams*, on NBC, is described by a buyer as "the absolute right show at the right time for all the right reasons."

On Thursday, the need to find a successor to *Friends* is approaching the crisis point—the future of Must See TV and NBC's pocketbook hang in the balance. Sophomore *Scrubs* slides in at 8:30, and while the show is smart, funny and a critical fave, audiences fled when it tried out here last season. "Is this the heir-apparent to *Friends*? I don't think so," says Shari Anne Brill, vp/director of program services at Carat. "It has no broad-ranging appeal." There's little support among buyers for new 9:30 occupant *Good Morning Miami*, although the clips boasted a fair amount of chuckles. As for the mainstays of Thursday, *E.R.* is likely to slip after Anthony Edwards' departure, *Friends* is in its final lap and *Will & Grace* is no *Seinfeld*. CBS, with a hot lineup bolstered at 10, has a real shot at cracking NBC's Thursday dominance a season from now, heralding a major shift in the balance of network power. "This will be NBC's last dominant year on Thursday," predicts Paula Barra, OMD associate media director. You read it here first.

Friday is set and NBC continues to phone it in with a Saturday movie. On Sunday are two promising dramas. *American Dreams* is considered the net's most interesting new series, a 1960s coming-of-age show that will try to tap boomers and teens with drama spiced by vintage clips from *American Bandstand*. One buyer called this "the absolute right show at the right time for all the right reasons," and Zucker says this time slot presents NBC's greatest upside. Sternberg notes that teens will be tough to come by versus *The Simpsons* and the Disney movie, but that the show may well win the time period. Crime drama *Boomtown* at 10 provoked mixed opinion, though it should do better than last year's *UC: Undercover*. As for the net's violent midseason drug-dealer miniseries *Kingpin*—an attempt to grab a little HBO-style glory—one agency exec who's seen it pronounces it "unbuyable."

## CBS

According to full-season figures, CBS was down 3 percent to 6 percent in demos, but the Tiffany net argues that these numbers are skewed by the Olympics. In regularly scheduled programs only (which excludes its high-rated Carol Burnett special as well as NBC's Olympics and Fox's Super Bowl), CBS was up 3 percent in adults 18-49, flat in 25-54 and edged Fox by a tick in 18-49.

## MONDAY NIGHT MATCHUPS/10 PM



NBC *Crossing Jordan*

VS.

CBS *CSI: Miami*

Mirroring NBC's successful *Law & Order* franchise, CBS is spreading the wealth with *CSI: Miami*, a spin-off of mega-hit *CSI* headlined by former *NYPD Blue* star David Caruso. Like *CSI*, which just ended the season as the most-watched drama in prime time (the first regularly scheduled hour to out-deliver NBC's *ER*), *CSI: Miami* will focus on a team of forensic investigators who use a combination of cutting-edge scientific methods and plain old police work to solve crimes. Competing Jill Hennessy drama *Crossing Jordan* on NBC, which regularly wins the 10 p.m. Monday hour (without ABC's *Monday Night Football* in the mix, that is), ranks a healthy No. 26 with 12.72 million viewers. Although the return of football in fourth quarter is poised to attract key target male viewers, will the women who tune into *Crossing Jordan* grab the remote for an ongoing glimpse of the once red-hot David Caruso on *CSI: Miami*? With a stronger lead-in (new CBS sitcom *Still Standing* vs. NBC's *Third Watch*), potential *CSI/CSI: Miami* crossover episodes and a promotional platform on the No. 1 drama on TV, *CSI: Miami* has the momentum, and CBS could have its first Top 20 hit in this time period since *Northern Exposure* in 1993-94. *Crossing Jordan* is solid, but it's not unstoppable. —M.B.



Generally, buyers gave CBS highest marks for its new schedule, which has a decent shot at unseating NBC for bragging rights in household ratings. "This is a schedule that knows its core values; they understand their brand," says Marans. Analysts expect growth on CBS's two most important nights, Monday and Thursday. Monday is improved with *Still Standing*, another working-slob sitcom, but a good one with an appealing lead in Mark Addy, and with the aforementioned *CSI: Miami*. "Normally revamping a hit doesn't work," says OMD's Barra, "but I'll make an exception and says *CSI* is the next *Law & Order* and [star] David Caruso has enough appeal to bring people in." Tuesday is status quo, though surprise success *The Guardian* has fresh legs at 9.

On Wednesday, *The Amazing Race* at 9 p.m. will have to fend off not just ABC's reality series *The Bachelor II* but also fresh young-appeal dramas on Fox, WB and UPN. At 10, it offers *Presidio Med* in battle against ABC's *Meds*. While most say the five female docs of *Presidio Med* are right in CBS's sweet spot, giving it a clear edge over the ABC entrant, Sternberg suggests the CBS show will skew old and thus be more challenged by the hot *Law & Order*. Still, there's upside in this time period after last year's laughable *Wolf Lake*. CBS's improvements on Thursday are well noted. The recently concluded *Survivor: Marquesas* halted the ratings slide, *CSI* is going gangbusters and *Without a Trace*, a missing persons procedural drama at 10, is described as the perfect companion to its lead-in.

Friday brings two dark new dramas. At 9 is *Hack*, with David Morse as a crime-busting cabbie, while Michael Mann's *RHD/LA* at 10 stars Tom Sizemore in yet another hard-edged cop show. "We've seen a rash of dark dramas on Friday and none of 'em stuck," points out Barra, who adds that *RHD/LA* will have a tough time against *Law & Order: SVU*. Sternberg sees too much sameness in the CBS dramas, but says "the programs certainly won't do worse" than last year. But Marans notes that "Tuesday through Saturday, CBS has 10 hours of drama from 9 to 11. How great is the appetite for that even if it's well done?"

On Sunday, CBS puts comedies in its former 8 p.m. drama stronghold: *Bram and Alice* with Alfred Molina as a Lothario author, and the tired Ted Danson vehicle *Becker*. Analysts label this the net's one programming blunder—"I didn't realize they were comedies," cracks Marans—giving NBC a chance to establish *American Dreams*. CBS-ers point out that last season's *Max Bickford* skewed so old that the comedies have to be better, and *Becker* will provide some protection for the 9 p.m. movie. Oliver Platt legal drama *Queens Supreme* waits on the bench for this time slot.

## ABC

Or "poor ABC," as they say in the trenches. Still recovering from its *Millionaire* binge, the network fell some 20 percent in demos to a sickening fourth place in 18-49. Worst of all, ABC is "bereft of hits," says Marans. "They have no entertainment series in the Top 15 in adults 18-



U ndaunted by unsuccessful fall 2001 entries *Dharma & Greg* and *Erreril*, ABC and NBC went back to the comedy drawing board for Tuesday at 8 p.m. next season. On ABC, John Ritter (*Three's Company*) and Katey Sagal (*Married with Children*) return to their sitcom roots in *8 Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter* as the harried parents of two teenage daughters and one unassuming teenage son. Over at NBC, former *Designing Women* star Jean Smart and tough guy Dennis Farina (*Get Shorty*) headline *In-Laws*, a new half-hour from the producers of *Frasier* about a middle-age couple whose recently married daughter and son-in-law temporarily move in with them. In a time period populated by CBS's veteran (and time-period-winning) *JAG*, young adult hit *That '70s Show* on Fox, feel-good WB drama *Gilmore Girls* and the vampire slayer called *Buffy* on UPN, the odds of survival are, unfortunately, stacked against both new comedies. Of the two, look for *8 Simple Rules* to attract the biggest proportion of leftovers thanks to John Ritter, a family-oriented premise and the similarities to former time-period hit *Home Improvement*. Although Jean Smart is a perfect fit as the female lead on *In-Laws*, Dennis Farina seems better suited for *The Sopranos* than a regularly scheduled sitcom.—M.B.

**CBS's improvements on Thursday are well noted. *CSI* is going gangbusters and *Without a Trace*, a missing persons procedural drama at 10, is the perfect companion to its lead-in.**

49, so it's not easy." WB entertainment president Jordan Levin candidly calls ABC "beyond rebuilding—it's more of a start-up network." A development slate that yielded almost 30 pilots was widely seen as, in the words of one buyer, "a train wreck."

Former hit *Drew Carey*, a high-priced show ABC is stuck with for two more seasons, has fallen so precipitously that it was tossed into a throwaway time period on Monday at 8. ABC's best hope is Tuesday at 8, with John Ritter starring in *8 Simple Rules For Dating My Teenage Daughter*. While analysts uniformly thought it a strong entrant, a few dissenters found it shrill and predictable. It ought to flow well into *According to Jim*, which faces NBC's *Just Shoot Me* in the battle of the shows-not-good-enough-to-lead-an-hour. At 9, ABC has high hopes for *Life With Bonnie*, starring Bonnie Hunt, but analysts note that America seems uninterested in this funny lady who has failed in two previous vehicles. With *Frasier* still strong, that doesn't bode well for *Bonnie* or its lead-out,

an undistinguished workplace comedy aptly named *Less Than Perfect*. Says ABC entertainment chairman Lloyd Braun, "We're not expecting *Bonnie* to beat *Frasier*, and we're going to leave it there." At 10, *NYPD Blue* will once again prosper.

So much for the good news. On Wednesday, *My Wife and Kids* will try to hold its own against Fox's hot *Bernie Mac Show*, though the audiences are fairly discrete. People wonder if the weak *George Lopez Show* at 8:30 got a pass because canceling a show with a Hispanic lead would be politically difficult. No one understands why *The Bachelor II* was placed at 9 against *The Amazing Race* when it performed well on Monday and Thursday; Marans warns it could fall off as drastically as did *Temptation Island II*. At 10 is *Meds*, which might be described as "M\*A\*S\*H for an hour without laughs." Thursday is even more of a head-scratcher; leading off with *Dinotopia* into *Push, Nevada*, a bizarre, *Twin Peaks*-like mystery with a reality contest element, ending with *Primetime Thursday*. "They're going from kids to an adult mystery to a really old newsmag, which seems like a strange way to program," Brill notes.

Friday leads off with a reality Band-Aid in *America's Funniest Home Videos*, leading at 9 into *That Was Then*, one of two network shows to send grown-ups back to relive high school. Analysts prefer WB's comic half-

hour *Do Over* to ABC's hour-long dramatic take. It's worth noting that on Sunday, wannabe hit *Alias* at 9 might benefit from *The X-Files'* vanishing act, though *The Practice* at 10 is losing steam.

"ABC was repentant and said this would take time. The problem is, this schedule is for today," says Marans, who decries what he calls the net's "absolute lack of a cohesive strategy." Sternberg says ABC might possibly eke out demo gains on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, though he expects the net to be "flat at best."

Observers are dubious about ABC's attempt to get back its family audience by branding its 8 to 9 p.m.

**"ABC is bereft of hits. [The network] was repentant and said this would take time. The problem is, this schedule is for today." DAVID MARANS, MINDSHARE**

weeknights "ABC Happy Hour." Family viewing is not the way people watch TV anymore, analysts note; networks like Nickelodeon and Disney Channel have a lock on younger viewers in early prime time.

**FOX**

ABC's swan dive last season obscured the troubles at Fox, which lost more than 20 percent in regular program ratings, though sports events kept overall losses closer to 10 percent in demos. Declining stalwarts *Ally McBeal* and *The X-Files* helped pull Fox down, though they were not exactly disasters ratings-wise. Now Fox has rolled the dice big-time, putting 9 of its 15 hours in motion.

Monday remains David E. Kelley night, with *Boston Public* solid at 8 and the new *Girls Club* supplanting *Ally* at 9. Many who rightfully supported *Boston Public* sight unseen two years ago see no reason not to trust in Kelley again. On Tuesday, *That '70s Show* has put down roots, while *Grounded For Life* at 8:30 is a waste; analysts would prefer *Andy Richter Controls the Universe* there, but it may be too smart for that lead-in. People are glad to see the gripping *24* get another chance at 9. The show has built steadily and may capitalize on fresh buzz.

Analysts endorse the move of *Bernie Mac* to lead off Wednesday, even against ABC's *My Wife and Kids*, and most feel *Cedric The Entertainer Presents* at 8:30 offers seamless flow and may pick up urban audience from ABC; a minority note that *Bernie Mac's* wit and edge and *Cedric's* urban comedy-variety are not necessarily the same cup of tea. At 9 is *Fastlane*, a high-octane cop show with plenty of "cars, bikes and hot scenery," as one analyst puts it, from director McG of *Charlie's Angels* fame. While most found the clips incomprehensible and everyone guffawed at the casting of Tiffani Thiessen as the boss, this show could be a sleeper. Grushow sees his biggest upside on Wednesday, thanks to *Cedric* and this show, which "can really tap into young adults today." The tough part will be finding those young adults, opposite two reality shows and two sci-fi shows on the other nets.

Thursday's reality half-hours—*30 Seconds to Fame* is

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT MATCHUPS/10 PM**



**ABC Meds** VS. **CBS Presidio Med**

Although the battle of these two new medical dramas is reminiscent of season one of NBC's *ER* versus CBS's *Chicago Hope* in 1994 (we all know who reigned supreme), those two medical dramas competed with ABC's *Primetime Live*. In this new scenario, ABC's *Meds* and CBS's *Presidio Med* have the difficult, if not impossible, task of airing opposite NBC warhorse *Law & Order*. Can *Meds* or *Presidio Med* (the same-time/almost-same-name situation is as confusing as Fox's *Dark Angel* opposite the WB's *Angel* last season) make a dent in *Law & Order*? With lead-in support critical to the success of any new series, reality hours on both ABC and CBS (*Meds* out of *The Bachelor II*, *Presidio Med* out of *The Amazing Race*) put both dramas on equal footing. Both shows are set in San Francisco, both feature an ensemble cast and both are from an impressive behind-the-scenes creative team (*Legally Blonde* creator Marc Platt on *Meds*; *ER's* Lydia Woodward and John Wells on *Presidio Med*). Given that the key to successful counter-programming is often diversity, two medical dramas with equal lead-in support, opposite juggernaut *Law & Order* are likely to dilute each other's audience. Still, given the early industry buzz, ABC's *Meds* seems to have a better shot at survival in this time period. —M.B.



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a turbo-charged *Star Search*, while *Meet the Marks* is *Candid Camera* on steroids—plus teen soap *Septuplets* at 9 may not do a whole lot better than last year's failed comedies, but Grushow notes that the reality shows “cost \$400,000 a half-hour and *The Tick* was \$800,000, so we can do the same rating and it becomes healthy for our business.” On Friday Fox shows off a pair of new dramas, the sci-fi *Firefly* and *John Doe*, about a crime-busting amnesiac savant. “They’re expensive shows, but the bar is low, single-digit shares,” says Grushow. *Firefly* auteur Joss Whedon has a following, but the show is being redone and “not even the producers know what it is,” says Marans. Most analysts are intrigued by *John Doe*. “Any semblance of success and either show could fly to Sunday if something there doesn’t work,” says Brill.

On Sunday, Fox goes back to its comedy roots with a three-hour sitcom block. “It requires a lot of patience from the viewer,” Marans warns, adding that “it might be nice to use a *Simpsons* or a *Malcolm* elsewhere.” After time-period server *Futurama* comes *Oliver Beene* at 7:30. This highly touted *Wonder Years*-type look at the '60s was not impressive in clips. After perennial *The Simpsons*, *King of the Hill* slides in at 8:30 to protect *Malcolm in the Middle* at 9, which ought to do better than *The X-Files* recently managed. At 9:30 is new show *The Grubbs*, with Randy Quaid highly suspect as a comic lead. Buyers called it cringe-worthy: *Married With Children* minus the smarts and flair.

Although many of the individual pieces may seem underwhelming, analysts point to potential growth on



**PERFECT PAIR:** CBS' *Without a Trace* follows the strong *CSI* to form a tough two-hour block on Wednesday nights.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and maybe Friday and Sunday, with little loss on Thursday and Saturday. “If you look at the whole versus the sum of the parts, they’re in better shape,” says Brill.

## WB

Although WB was essentially flat in the ratings, the network held its own this season despite losing a signature show, gambling (and winning) on Tuesday and Friday and seeing its Sunday comedies collapse. Buyers continue to support the tightly focused weblet. “There’s a clear delineation of audience and what promises to be good writing,” Marans notes. “Now let’s see if it’s rewarded.”

On troublesome Sunday, WB starts at 7 with *Gilmore Girls: Beginnings*. Offering repeats of this acclaimed show’s early seasons is a strategy that certainly helped *Seventh Heaven*. Then come two transplants: *Charmed* at 8 and *Angel* at 9. While *Charmed* isn’t in the toughest time period anymore, and *Angel* might pick up some former *X-Files* viewers, the feeling is that Sunday is where WB sends its old shows to die.

Monday looks much better at 9 with *Everwood*, the net’s ballyhooed quality drama, finally providing a compatible lead-out to *Seventh Heaven*. Though the clips of a fractured family relocating to a small Colorado town were genuinely heart-tugging, star Treat Williams says the show will pump up the humor too, “otherwise it’s just soap opera and I wouldn’t have done it.” Tuesday’s just fine with *Gilmore Girls* and *Smallville*, the latter in the toughest time period in TV and still standing. On Wednesday, buyers were bewildered by *Birds of Prey* at 9. A comic-book action-adventure with a trio of babelicious crime-fighting superheroes, it doesn’t match well with its lead-in, the still potent *Dawson’s Creek*. “Would any young viewer pick *Birds* over *Amazing Race*? I don’t think so,” says Barra.

WB entertainment president Levin cites a “long-term plan” for Thursday: “We’ll take tiny baby steps, and we’ll be the only network with comedies against NBC.” Yet

## THURSDAY NIGHT MATCHUPS/ 8 PM



ABC **Dinotopia**

VS.

WB **Family Affair**

Unless you are NBC (*Friends*) or CBS (*Survivor*), you won’t be populating the Top 10 in this time period anytime in the near future. And since throwing your hands in the air and admitting defeat is not an option, ABC and the WB have a similar idea in mind: try to reach kids and teens. If you’re a fan of TV in the 1960s you will fondly recall *Family Affair*, the feel-good sitcom about a rich bachelor, his proper English butler and the three children (Buffy, Jody and Cissy) who arrive suddenly on their doorstep. Flash to fall 2002 and Buffy is back on the WB, with big-screen *Brady* dad Gary Cole and Tim Curry doing his warm-and-fuzzy imitation as Mr. French. On ABC, *Whose Line is it Anyway?* is out, and kid-friendly *Dinotopia* (which got ample sampling in its recent miniseries format) is in. Can the warmth of friendly dinosaurs and cute sitcom kids garner any interest leading off this formidable night of television? As much as bringing back *Family Affair* is an admirable idea, the WB might have used this remake to fix Friday night rather than expanding to another night of comedies. If ABC can get past the novelty of the special effects and focus on some appealing storylines, *Dinotopia* could, and should, have an edge over *Family Affair*. —M.B.



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## FRIDAY NIGHT MATCHUPS/ 8 PM



FOX **Firefly**

VS.

NBC **Providence**

Like Monday, Wednesday and Saturday nights, Friday night on NBC has been left intact, anchored by the declining, but still dominant, *Providence* for the fourth consecutive fall season. Fox, meanwhile, will open the evening with *Firefly*, a new sci-fi drama from *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* creator Joss Whedon, set 400 years into the future in the wake of a universal civil war. Fox has now revamped the Friday 8 p.m. hour every fall for 10 years straight. As much as Fox is touting the prolific Whedon, the network seems to have conveniently forgotten how poorly *X-Files* creator Chris Carter fared with *The Lone Gunmen*, another Friday night entry. That, in addition to other failures of sci-fi dramas on Fox in this hour (think *Dark Angel*, *Beyond Belief*, *Brimstone* and *The Visitor*), makes one wonder why the network continues to schedule this genre in the Friday night time slot. With young male viewers—the target audience for science fiction programming—not necessarily at home watching TV on Friday nights, Fox might benefit by widening its focus. After all, there is a whole group of women 25-54 watching *Providence* who would probably welcome something new to sink their teeth into. *Providence* will prevail in the time slot, but Fox is handing it to them on a silver platter. —M.E.

## SATURDAY NIGHT MATCHUPS/ 9 PM



FOX **America's Most Wanted**

VS.

CBS **The District**

Aside from comparing Della Reese and company on CBS's feel-good *Touched by an Angel* to Fox's gritty *Cops*, there was only one other option for us to consider on Saturday: returning CBS drama *The District* versus veteran reality hour *America's Most Wanted* on Fox. And what a pity that is, given that Saturday was once the home to classics such as *All in the Family*, *MASH*, *Mary Tyler Moore*, *Bob Newhart*, *Carol Burnett*, *The Golden Girls* and, yes, *The Love Boat*. Those were the days indeed! With CBS the only network to offer scripted Saturday night programming this fall, moving *The District* from 10 p.m. to 9 p.m. means that the network is looking to get things started earlier on Saturday nights, and hoping it will bring more viewers into sophomore drama *The Agency*, which will begin at 10 p.m. While you can't fault a network for trying, Fox mainstay *America's Most Wanted* (which has led to over 700 arrests to date) has a loyal audience that has been tuning in since April 1988. What's scripted on *The District* is real on *America's Most Wanted*. Reality looks like it will win out, and there is every reason to believe that host John Walsh will remain at the helm of this broadcasting tradition years after the demise of *The District*. —M.E.

analysts largely agree the remake of *Family Affair* at 8 looks dreadful, and the clever but fragile *Jamie Kennedy Experiment* at 9 stands little chance against the NBC and CBS powerhouses. Still, the net ought to improve versus its invisible reality shows last season. The only keeper here may be *Do Over* at 8:30, which some would prefer on Friday. WB successfully established that night and now improves it by leading with *What I Like About You*, with Nickelodeon star Amanda Bynes poised for success. *Sabrina* is fading at 8:30, but *Reba* at 9 is going strong. *Greetings From Tucson*, a Mexican-American family comedy rounding out the night, did not garner much support.

"Overall, there's no question WB improved itself," says Sternberg, who looks for growth on Monday, maybe Tuesday, Friday and for sure on Sunday.

## UPN

Now firmly under the wing of CBS ceo Les Moonves, UPN had an outstanding season, rising some 20 percent in its target demo of adults 18-34. Big gains came on Tuesday (up 58 percent) and Wednesday (up 38 percent), courtesy of *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* and *Enterprise*. More important, UPN slipped ahead of rival netlet WB by a tenth of a rating point to proudly claim the mantle of America's Fifth Network. Strangely, though, UPN's schedule elicits little of the excitement that WB whips up. There are only three new shows, and there's lingering skepticism over UPN's ability to make homegrown hits, having stolen *Buffy* from WB, received *Enterprise* through the good grace of cousin Paramount and rented out its Thursday for wrestling.

Another challenge for the net is profitability, since *Buffy*'s a money-loser and Vince McMahon keeps most of the wrestling money. UPN's shows tailed off in the second half of the season, but network execs call this a scheduling problem—previous management shot its wad on originals last summer, which led to too many repeats this spring.

On Monday, *Half and Half* looks like an excellent addition to the urban sitcom lineup on a night that's still growing for UPN. On Tuesday, *Buffy* is still appointment TV for fans. Next up is *Haunted*, featuring a private eye who solves cases with help from ghosts. It received mixed reviews from buyers, but Sternberg believes it will do at least as well as weak sister *Roswell*.

On Wednesday, *Enterprise* could score higher ratings at 9, but the net kept it at 8 to launch a new show, TV's third remake of *The Twilight Zone*, hosted by Forest Whitaker. Some think the original's ironic twists are passe four decades later. "If Steven Spielberg had trouble doing it [with *Amazing Stories*], good luck to Forest Whitaker," says Marans. The rest of the week is stet: *WWF Smackdown!* is in one of its periodic lulls while the Friday movie has been boosted by better theatricals. Sternberg expects the net to score "pretty much the same."

Crucially, UPN still lacks a clear identity. It has strong franchises, but their audiences barely overlap, making promotion difficult. Executives hope *Haunted* will appeal to men and women, and *Buffy* can boost both new dramas. "*Haunted* is the first step," says Moonves. "It starts the process of combining nights and melding the network together. This is evolution, not revolution." ■

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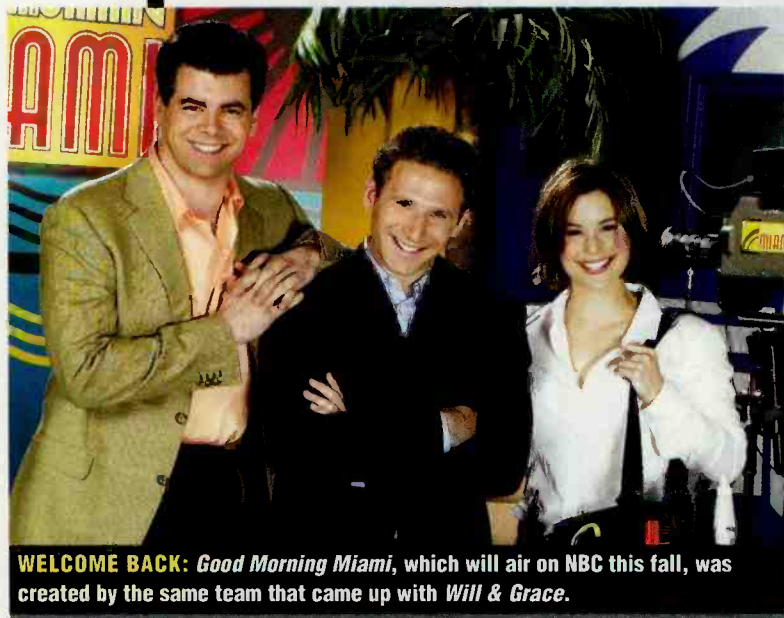
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As prime-time viewership continues to fragment, broadcasters are hoping the industry's top producers can keep churning out the hits. In fact, the networks relied on these creators so heavily for the fall, they offered most of them blind commitments prior to any pilot having been filmed.

Among the producers tapped for episode commitments are: *Frasier's* Joe Keenan and Christopher Lloyd for the CBS father-daughter comedy *Bram and Alice*; David E. Kelley for Fox's attorney drama *Girls Club*;

## Back for more

Networks give veteran producers another shot at creating hits BY ALAN JAMES FRUTKIN



**WELCOME BACK:** *Good Morning Miami*, which will air on NBC this fall, was created by the same team that came up with *Will & Grace*.

*Will & Grace* creators David Kohan and Max Mutchnick for NBC's TV newsroom comedy *Good Morning Miami*; John Wells for the CBS hospital drama *Presidio Med*; and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* Joss Whedon for Fox's sci-fi Western *Firefly*. All these shows will have premieres in the new fall season.

ABC gave *Law & Order* producer Dick Wolf a mid-season order for his yet-to-be-produced *Dragnet*, while CBS's pickup of Jerry Bruckheimer's *CSI* spinoff *CSI: Miami* was a no-brainer. Bruce Helford (*The Drew Carey Show*) developed the Fox comedy *Wanda at Large* as well as this year's ABC mid-season comedy *The George Lopez Show*. Steve Levitan (*Just Shoot Me*) was behind two comedies: ABC's *With You in Spirit* and

Fox's *Oliver Beene*. Although neither producer was offered episode commitments, their chances at landing on next season's schedule were perceived as better than most. So it's no surprise that the *Lopez Show* got picked up for a full season and *Oliver Beene* secured a spot on Fox's Sunday night lineup.

While there are no sure bets on television, attaching veteran producers to any project can't hurt. It may not ensure success, but it often guarantees some sort of initial sampling. After all, producers with proven track records can attract loyal viewers while offering advertisers an assurance of quality, and perhaps even frugality. "Veteran producers are experienced in developing hit shows, and they know how to run a tight ship," says Stacey Lynn Koerner, senior vp/director of broadcast research at Initiative Media. "At a time when everyone is watching their pocketbooks, those can be great assets."

If the greatest hurdle for most returning producers would be to avoid repeating themselves, Koerner says that judging from the past, the risk is relatively minor. "Look, Steven Bochco created *Hill Street Blues* and *NYPD Blue*," she adds.

But with so few franchises that seem to work, the risk is real. Take dramas, for example. The failure this season both of ABC's *The Court* and CBS's *First Monday* put a nail in the coffin of a once-promising genre.

"I think we're always trying to step away and do something different, outside of the traditional franchises, and hope people respond to it," says Wells, who oversaw production on *The Court*. "Sometimes they work, sometimes they don't." If doctors, lawyers, and cops remain the most ubiquitous characters in prime-time dramas, Wells says there is good reason. "There's enough dramatic material in those workplaces to sustain multiple episodes," he notes, adding that nontraditional professions such as journalism (remember Dick Wolf's *Deadline*?) offer stories that often are more difficult to tell, and that feature more complicated nuances.

With *Presidio Med*, Wells has returned to the genre in which he first found success in prime time. But whereas *ER* focuses primarily on a group of medical residents, *Presidio Med* looks at a medical practice that houses a variety of specialists, including an oncologist, a cardiologist, and a pediatrician. Wells says the specialists offer him and his staff a new template from which to create. "Over the last eight years, we've collected a lot of stories that we weren't able to tell," he says. "This is what happens to people after they leave the emergency room."

Like *Presidio Med*, the CBS comedy *Bram and Alice* contains shades of its creators' previous work—although viewers might not notice it at first. The series centers on





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\*Source: Nielsen NHI, M-F/5-6pm, 4/29-5/16/02; Los Angeles A18-49 Ratings, New York HH Ratings



**TELEMUNDO**

a father and daughter who never knew they were related. Alice is an aspiring novelist, Bram is a famous author who has coasted through much of his career on the success of an early work. Alice is buttoned-down, Bram is something of a profligate. The show's tension comes from this father-daughter relationship, and the fact that, as Lloyd puts it, "Bram is a 55-year-old dad who acts 25, encountering his 25-year-old daughter who acts 55."

So what's the *Frasier* connection? Like psychiatry, Bram's occupation as a writer positions him within the exclusionary realm of the intelligentsia. "We'd rather write about smart and complex characters than about a bunch of stupid people," says Keenan. But Keenan seems well aware that too much of a smart thing could alienate viewers. As with *Frasier*, he and Lloyd have tempered the cast with a blue-collar element—the show's second set is a bar located below Bram and Alice's apartment building. "We're going for a similar mix here," Keenan says. "We don't want the show to be too rarefied."

While some TV creators are putting new spins on successful formulas, others are veering as far away as possible from what they've succeeded with in the past.

For their first project since *Will & Grace*, Max

them a number of advantages. "You're starting with a clean slate," explains Kohan. "These actors can inhabit their characters exclusively, and vice versa."

While Kohan and Miutchnick went with new faces for their leads, Keenan and Lloyd knew they needed an experienced actor to pull off the character of Bram. They got it with Alfred Molina. "The trick is to find someone who will make you love him despite his irredeemably bad behavior," Keenan says. "There are very few actors who can make shamelessness charming."

One thing on which most of these veteran producers can agree is that it has never been tougher to create a hit series. "Every year that goes by, there are more viewing alternatives," says Wells. "I think all of us marvel at what a successful rating can be today. [Especially] those of us who remember when *China Beach* got canceled for low ratings. That would be a top show today."

With more viewing options, many producers believe the audience has become more sophisticated in its taste. "It's harder to surprise them," Levitan says. "And you have to work harder to find new ways to tell stories."

With few comedies experiencing breakout success this season, Levitan agrees that the prime-time landscape has become much tougher. "Think about the hurdles you have to jump over to create something different enough to break through the clutter, but not so different that it alienates everyone along the way," he says.

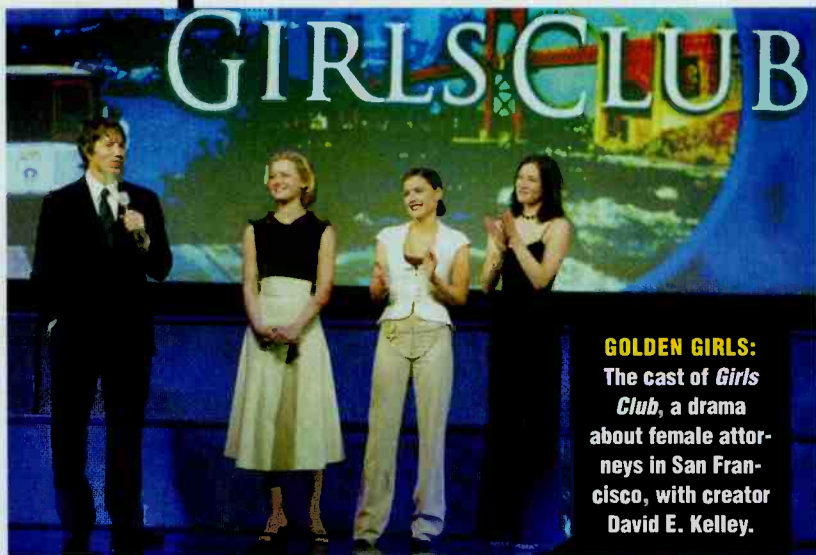
While viewers might be more sophisticated, Keenan and Lloyd say shows clearly are not. They believe that the movement toward edgier comedy has resulted in more crass comedy. "People have bought into the idea that things need to push the limits, whether that means bad language or baring someone's ass," Lloyd says. "The networks have always been scared of shows that feature real people with real emotions, but they're more scared now than they were even 10 years ago."

Even if a show's content conforms to what the networks believe viewers want to see, success is still often just as dependent on elements such as time slots and network promotion. And no one knows that more right now than Levitan. While the producer was developing ABC's ensemble sitcom *With You in Spirit* and Fox's retro-comedy *Oliver Beene*, he was watching his mid-season comedy *Greg the Bunny* fall steeply in the ratings.

"We aired six times in three different time periods," he says. "This is a show with a high learning curve. There are adults out there who don't realize a puppet show could be for them. You have to let a show like this take hold over time, and I don't know if any of the networks have that sort of patience anymore."

In the end, Levitan says success in prime time is a balancing act. "You have to get through the development process with your vision intact," he explains. "You have to have the right time period, your show has to be supported and promoted by the network, you have to have the right cast, good writers. And if one of those elements goes wrong, everything that was done right goes right down the toilet."

Alan J. Frutkin covers the creative community in Los Angeles for *Mediaweek*.



**GOLDEN GIRLS:**  
The cast of *Girls Club*, a drama about female attorneys in San Francisco, with creator David E. Kelley.

Mutchick and David Kohan travel far from Manhattan. *Good Morning Miami* is a fairly traditional comedy in which a young, ambitious hot-shot producer winds up steering the morning show of a struggling TV station—all because of a girl.

"The idea that in a romantic comedy, the romantic leads can kiss is a real departure for us," Kohan joked. All jokes aside, Mutchnick says *Miami* offers the two a much broader palette than the comedy of their NBC hit. "*Will & Grace* is written very tightly, it's a very specific world that you can write to," he explains. On *Miami* they poke fun at a wide range of subjects, including alcoholism and gambling. "I like the idea that we can go to fresh places."

Once the story line is hammered out, most producers turn their thoughts toward casting. For *Miami*'s two leads, the creators consciously chose unknowns in Mark Feuerstein and Ashley Williams. This, they say, offers

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# Worn out

Some shows that were renewed have seen better days

BY MARC BERMAN

» last word

If you have ever worn an old sweater that is difficult to discard—apparently the apparel of choice for many network programmers—you might understand the concept of seeing an aging, and deteriorating, series overstay its welcome.

Although *The X-Files*, *Ally McBeal*, *Dharma & Greg*, *Spin City* and *Felicity* all rightfully met their makers this month, the equally tired *Drew Carey Show*, *Whose Line is it Anyway?*, *Touched by an Angel*, *48 Hours*, *America's Funniest Home Videos*, *Futurama*, *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*—and even *Sabrina*, the non-teenage witch on the WB—got life-saving shots of adrenaline.

Every year without fail, shows that have aged without grace, and without much audience left, manage to land on the fall schedule. Is there a reason behind renewing a low-rated series?

One common explanation is a theory called Band-Aid programming, which holds that renewing a low-rated returnee like *Touched by an Angel* or *America's Funniest Home Videos* is better than wasting a new series by putting it into a dead-in-the-water time period. So, instead of scheduling something new Saturday at 8 p.m. and potentially watching it sink into oblivion, CBS opts for Della Reese and her band of angels as a temporary time-period fix. And rather than watch a relatively new series like *The Mole* go up in smoke Friday at 8 p.m., as it did last fall (the show was yanked off the schedule after three low-rated episodes), ABC decided there are more than enough homemade videos to warrant another season (or two or three) of *America's Funniest Home Videos*.

Cost, of course, is a key factor. *America's Funniest Home Videos* has to be one of the cheapest shows to produce, so renewing it year after year (the series is entering season No. 13 this fall) is an inexpensive way to plug up an hour. Ditto for ABC's Drew Carey-hosted *Whose Line is it Anyway?* and CBS's overused *48 Hours*, which will probably become even less expensive to produce now that Dan Rather has jumped ship. Look for *48 Hours* in its new format, *48 Hours Investigates*, Friday

at 8 p.m. and *Whose Line?* Monday at 8:30 p.m. (following *The Drew Carey Show*). NBC's *Dateline*, which didn't set the ratings world on fire this season, will also return in multiple telecasts (three in total) mainly because it is far less expensive to do than a scripted drama.

In the case of *Futurama*, although Fox Entertainment President Gail Berman raved about the series at the network's upfront presentation, renewing the low-rated animated sitcom was more a case of burning off unused original episodes than a strategic maneuver. Although the WB's aging *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* is also coming back (isn't it time to call this show "Sabrina, the Twentysomething Witch?"), the web-

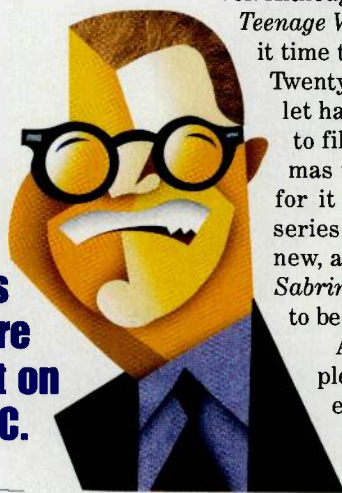
let had so many other time periods to fill (four comedies and two dramas will premiere), it made sense for it to renew an already peaked series than overextend itself with new, and unfamiliar, entries. Unless *Sabrina* comes alive, expect 2002-03 to be its seventh, and final, season.

Although the WB takes great pleasure in pointing to audience erosion for its former drama *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*, which now airs on UPN, picking up the once-red-hot young adult drama for two more years last spring was a business maneuver that sent out a message to the industry that UPN was a serious contender. And expensive as *Buffy* may be to produce, UPN is back on the map on Tuesday.

As for *The Drew Carey Show*, the only logical explanation for renewal is pure misjudgment on the part of ABC. The aging sitcom was re-upped for three additional years in the middle of the show's sixth season last year. Drew and company jumped the shark (created an outrageous plot, signaling the show's decline) last season when Drew's cross-dressing brother married Mimi and they had a child. What were the producers thinking? How many plot lines can involve bad fashion? Now, ABC is stuck with the expensive-to-produce sitcom through 2004, which will be its ninth season.

There comes a time when that favorite sweater is no longer comfortable, but unseemly. No matter how attached a network is to a show, it's better to put it away before it's only a shadow of its former self. ■

As for 'The Drew Carey Show,' the only logical explanation for the show's renewal is pure misjudgment on the part of ABC.





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# Calendar

The **SCTE Cable-Tec Expo** will be held June 4-7 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio. Contact: 800-542-5040.

The Radio Advertising Bureau will present the **Radio Mercury Awards**, recognizing outstanding creative talent in radio advertising, June 6 at New York's Waldorf-Astoria. Bill Ludwig, chief creative officer of Campbell-Ewald, is chief judge. Contact: 212-681-7207.

The Ad Club will present an evening seminar, "**Kathy Aaronson's Compensation Negotiation Training**," June 11 at the Ad Club's New York offices. Contact: 212-533-8080.

The **All-Star Salute to the Museum of Broadcast Communications** will be held June 15 at the Hilton Chicago. The benefit will celebrate the 15th anniversary of the museum, founded by radio and TV personality Bruce DuMont. Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert will serve as honorary chair. Contact: 312-629-6038.

The **PROMAX/BDA Conference and Expo** will be held June 26-29 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Keynote speaker will be Turner Broadcasting System CEO Jamie Kellner. Contact: 310-788-7600.

The Cable and Telecommunications Association for Marketing will present the **CTAM Summit** July 14-17 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. Keynote speakers will be Mel Karmazin, president and COO, Viacom; and Sergio Zyman, chairman and founder, Zyman Marketing Group. For more information, visit [www.ctam.com](http://www.ctam.com).

The **ANA/AAA Marketing Conference and Trade Show** will be presented July 15-16 at the New York Hilton. Highlights will include a Forrester/ANA study presentation on marketing automation, an IRI presentation of a year-long study on what brands and messages work best in the online arena and a McKinsey presentation about digital marketing. Contact: 212-697-5950.

# Inside Media

## NEWS OF THE MARKET

### Supreme Court Tunes Out EchoStar

EchoStar Communications Corp. last week lost a bid to overturn a federal law that keeps satellite companies from beaming local network television programming to remote markets. The U.S. Supreme Court, without comment, declined to take up the company's challenge to the law. EchoStar called the development a loss for consumers. The National Association of Broadcasters said it was pleased. Broadcasters fear satellite rebroadcast of distant stations will undermine local affiliates' viewership and advertising bases.

### Radio Ends Quarter Slightly Down

Radio stations ended the first quarter with advertising sales down 1 percent, following a 1 percent gain in combined national and local sales for the month of March. According to figures released by the Radio Advertising Bureau, local sales for the quarter were off 1 percent, while national sales rebounded from double-digit decreases last year to a 1 percent increase. Positive advertising figures for March came after disappointing results in February, when combined local and national sales were off 5 percent, due in large part to an absence of TV-station tune-in advertising from non-NBC TV affiliates that chose not to compete with Olympics coverage. With the first-quarter results now posted, RAB president Gary Fries said: "History has shown that

radio is the most resilient of all advertising media and the first medium to post positive growth following a downturn."

### Sirius Roll Out to 10 More States

Sirius Satellite Radio has increased its national distribution to 10 more states, bringing to 28 the number of states where consumers can sign up for the 100-channel subscription radio service. The added states are Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Sirius' service, which is already available in the western U.S. and parts of the Midwest, is expected to complete its national rollout by July 1. The New York-based company also announced a new agreement with DaimlerChrysler, which will make Sirius radios a dealer-installed option on select 2003 models, available this fall. Sirius' only competitor, XM Satellite Radio, completed its national rollout last November.

### Smithsonian to Launch VOD Service

Plans are in the works for the Smithsonian Institution to launch a video-on-demand service, a source close to the museum said last week. Aside from former PBS series *Smithsonian World*, the museum is not in the programming business. However, it is home to thousands of hours of archived films of lectures and events that have taken place at the Washington, D.C.- (continued on page 28)



**June Is Bustin' Out All Over**

In June Trio will air unedited versions of various theatrical films and documentaries during the network's "Uncensored Month." And due to the controversial themes of the programming, everything aired under the "Uncensored" banner will run without commercials. The schedule includes two original specials, *Art & Outrage* and TV's *Most Censored Moments*, and the six-part documentary series *The History of Pornography*. The films include *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, Stanley Kubrick's *Lolita* and *Last Tango in Paris*. Sandra Bernhard will host. To promote the programming, Trio last week had four live models striking poses as Michaelangelo's *David* handing out copies of the First Amendment in New York's Times Square. Ironically, a 35-foot high promotional billboard there has been censored by the billboard company, Viacom Outdoor (see photo).

**Live "Davids" in Times Square help promote Trio's "Uncensored Month."**

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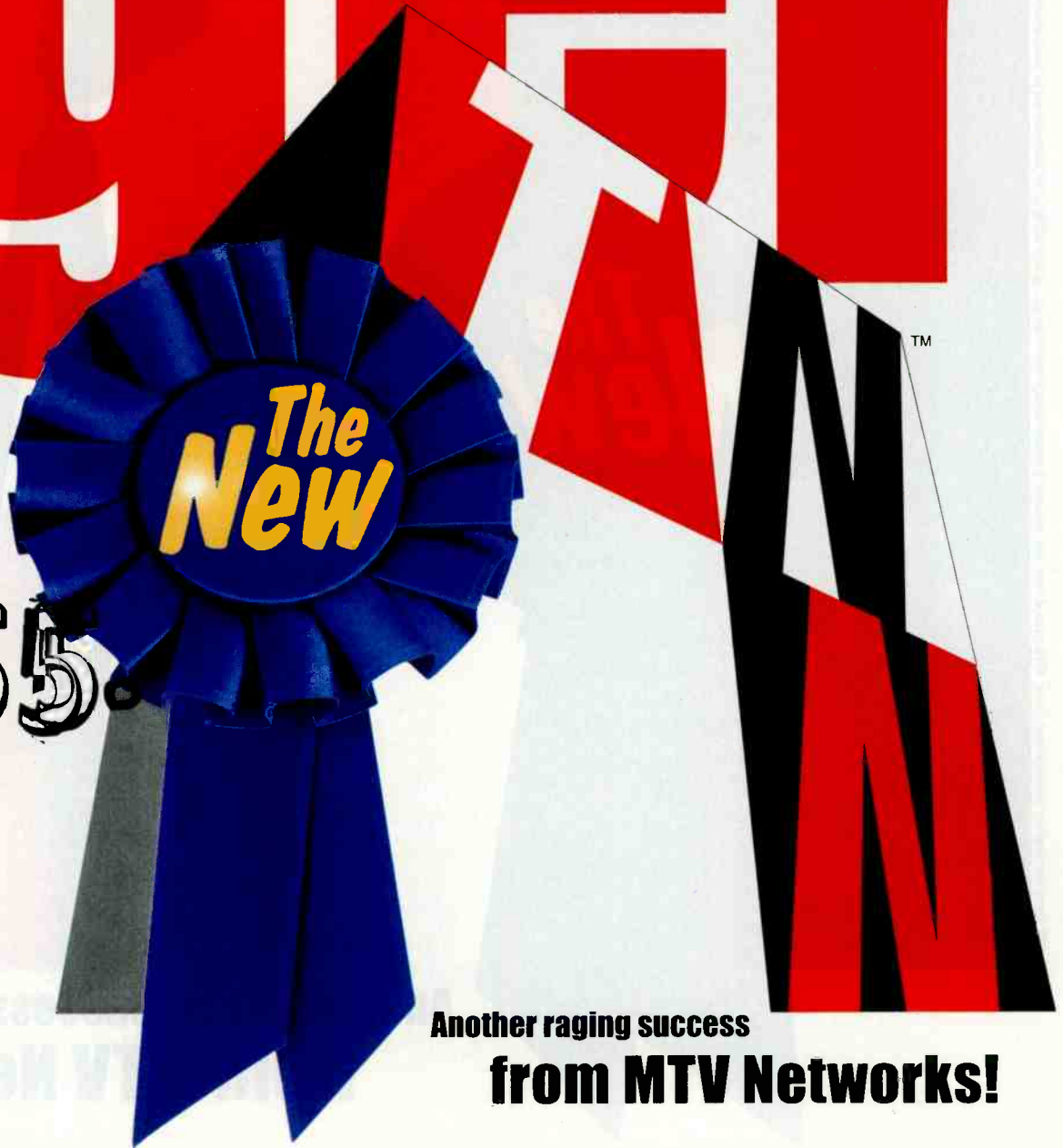
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# Bigger younger richer

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(continued from page 19)

based institution that can be converted into documentary features, the insider said. The service, which is spearheaded by Smithsonian Business Ventures, will likely launch within the year if funding is available. Executives are currently talking to cable operators and are hoping that the VOD service will be offered free of charge on the digital tier, though no decision has been made. The service will not be ad-supported, the source said, adding, "The whole world of educational and informational programming lends itself to VOD."

## No Tiger in Buick's Tank

Buick and ESPN/ABC Sports will have to get along at next week's Buick Classic golf tournament without Tiger Woods. Woods, who as a Buick endorser typically plays in most of the brand's sponsored events on the PGA Tour, has decided to sit out the Classic (June 6-9 in Harrison, N.Y.) to practice and prepare for the U.S. Open, to be played the following week. The Buick field will feature defending champ Sergio Garcia, Phil Mickelson and 2001 Open champ Retief Goosen. ABC and ESPN will carry 9½ hours of coverage over the four days.

## Jones Replaces Overnight Country Host

Danny Wright, afternoon host on WGAR-FM, Clear Channel's Country radio station in Cleveland, is the new host of Jones Radio Networks' overnight Country show. The current host, John Hendricks, who began hosting *John Hendricks Overnight* last year, has decided to step aside to spend more time with his family. Launched last year, *Country Overnight* airs on more than 60 stations.

## Fisher Takes Lifetime Entertainment Post

Universal Studios executive Barbara Fisher was appointed executive vp of entertainment at Lifetime, a position that has been vacant since seminal Lifetime programmer Dawn Tarnofsky-Ostroff left earlier this year to take over as president of entertainment at UPN. Fisher begins June 1. Fisher told *Mediaweek* she is in the learning phase right now. She was vague on her specific plans for Lifetime but said she would like to ramp up the production of original dramas. "Everything Lifetime has done has performed, so I would like to capitalize on that by stepping up drama production. I am just not sure when," she said. Most recently, Fisher was president of network programming at Uni-



## Pageantry Suits Simms

CBS football analyst Phil Simms will take on a different role this week when he joins actress/model Daisy Fuentes to host the Miss Universe Pageant, to air on the network May 29 at 9 p.m. Simms, former New York Giants quarterback, isn't the first former National Football League player-turned-analyst to host a televised beauty pageant. Former New York Jets QB Boomer Esiason hosted the 1998 Miss America Pageant on ABC. CBS has also lined up Latin Grammy winner Marc Anthony to perform for this year's Miss Universe event.

versal, where she developed series including NBC's *Just Shoot Me*. Before that, she was president of Universal Television Entertainment, where she worked on made-for-TV movies including Peter Benchley's *The Beast*. At Lifetime, she will be responsible for development and production of Lifetime's series, movies and documentaries as well as programming for Lifetime Movie Network and Lifetime Real Women.

## XM Adds ESPNEWS

XM Satellite Radio recently began broadcasting ESPNEWS on a dedicated channel. The channel, featuring round-the-clock updates of the latest sports scores, stats and news, replaces CNN/SI, which is being discontinued by AOL Time Warner. ESPNEWS is one of five XM channels dedicated to sports, including ESPN Radio, Fox Sports Radio, Sporting News Radio and Nascar Radio.

## TV-Station Sales Up After Long Slump

Television-station sales are picking up after an exceptionally slow two years, but the price of the average station has decreased. According to BIA Financial Network, the number of stations sold in 2000 was more than 30 percent lower than the number sold in 1999. However, last month 41 stations sold for a total of \$639 million, compared to no station sales in April 2001. The average station price now stands at \$25.5 million, 40 percent lower than the \$42.2 million tag on stations through April of last year.

## Salem to Add 5th Honolulu Station

Salem Communications, the largest radio group programming religious and family-friendly-themed stations, agreed last week to purchase KJPN-AM in Honolulu from

International Communications Corp. for \$650,000. The deal gives Salem, which owns Honolulu stations KAIM-AM/FM, KGU-AM and KHNR-AM, its fifth station in the 62nd-largest radio market. Salem is likely to change KJPN's current programming, which targets Honolulu's Japanese population. Including pending acquisitions, Salem, the 14th-largest radio group in terms of revenue, will own and/or operate 83 radio stations, including 57 in the top 25 markets.

## Details Takes Full Frontal Approach

*Details* magazine has joined with MetroChannel's *Full Frontal Fashion* TV program in a cross-media promotion, the Cablevision-owned regional cable network's first partnership with a magazine. The men's lifestyle monthly will develop men's fashion segments for the show for the week of July 15. An 8-page special ad section will also run in *Details'* June/July issue. TV and print advertisers include Via Spiga, Cole Haan, Rado Watches and Silhouette Eyewear.

## Urban Latino Cleared in L.A., Miami

*Urban Latino TV* firmed up its scheduled launch in syndication this fall by gaining two key clearances last week. In Los Angeles, the No. 1 Latino market with more than 6 million Latinos and 15.4 percent of all U.S. Latino households, ABC owned-and-operated station KABC-TV has signed on for the series. KABC will offer *Urban Latino* in a weekend-afternoon time period, with a second weekend run likely. In Miami, the No. 3 Latino market with more than 1.5 million Latinos, *Urban Latino* has cleared on CBS O&Os WFOR (CBS) and WBFD (UPN). WFOR will offer the show during weekend access, with a likely second run on WBFD.



# Culture Trends

## The Hollywood Reporter's Box Office

For weekend ending May 19, 2002

This Week	Last Week	Picture	3-Day Weekend Gross	Days in Release	Total Gross Sales
1	New	Star Wars: Episode II...	80,027,814	4	110,169,231
2	1	Spider-Man	45,036,912	17	285,573,668
3	2	Unfaithful	10,013,104	12	29,535,202
4	New	About a Boy	8,557,630	3	8,557,630
5	3	The New Guy	6,478,078	10	17,305,157
6	5	Changing Lanes	3,106,537	38	61,563,318
7	4	The Scorpion King	2,912,675	31	85,191,780
8	6	The Rookie	1,727,205	52	70,510,783
9	7	Murder By Numbers	1,672,454	31	29,911,694
10	11	My Big Fat Greek Wedding	1,135,207	31	5,669,706
11	8	Ice Age	1,057,726	66	172,369,005
12	9	Panic Room	906,698	52	94,427,638
13	14	High Crimes	651,945	45	40,222,825
14	16	Y Tu Mama Tambien	597,585	66	10,235,525
15	13	Hollywood Ending	536,430	19	4,461,634
16	14	Monsoon Wedding	460,546	87	10,458,255
17	12	Deuces Wild	425,191	3	5,803,814
18	19	The Lord of the Rings	411,515	152	310,078,970
19	10	Life OR Something Like It	410,444	24	14,049,397
20	15	Jason X	387,119	24	12,376,270
21	17	ESPN's Ultimate X	344,553	10	1,103,114
22	29	Enigma	278,552	31	1,245,544
23	25	The Cat's Meow	241,305	38	2,311,088
24	24	Blade 2	226,352	59	81,426,797
25	23	Frailty	182,303	38	12,807,495
26	27	We Were Soldiers	177,804	80	77,479,274
27	28	A Beautiful Mind	171,405	150	170,498,541
28	21	The Sweetest Thing	156,474	38	24,430,272
29	26	Monster's Ball	144,605	144	30,998,671
30	22	Clockstopper's	134,896	52	36,225,755

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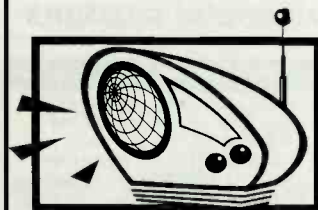
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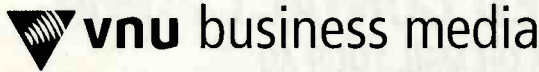
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# Movers

## TV STATIONS

**Rob Ewert** has been promoted to vp and group sales manager of Meredith Broadcasting Group. Ewert was general sales manager at WFSB-TV, Meredith's CBS affiliate in Hartford, Conn. Replacing Ewert at WFSB is **Klarn De Palma**, previously local sales manager.

## RADIO

**Tamara Knechtel** was promoted to the new post of vp of operations for Radio One. She will continue as general manager for WDTJ-FM and WCHB-AM, the company's radio stations in Detroit...

**Tom Calococci** was named program director of KBXX-FM, Radio One's station in Houston. Calococci was most recently program director of KZZP-FM, a Clear Channel-owned station in Phoenix...

**Dave Pugh** has been promoted to regional vp and market manager of Clear Channel's stations in Detroit, from Detroit market manager...**Skip Essick** was promoted to regional market manager for Clear Channel stations in Grand Rapids, Battle Creek and Muskegon, Mich., from market manager of the company's stations in Grand Rapids.

## CABLE

**Larry Fischer** was named president of advertising sales at Time Warner Cable. Fischer, most recently executive vp of operations for the Time Warner Cable sales division, will oversee local and national advertising efforts. Prior to going national, Fischer was president of Time Warner CityCable Advertising, which focuses on the company's local channels in New York...**Stephanle Eno** was promoted from manager of programming to director of programming and production at Scripps Networks' newest channel, Fine Living.

## MAGAZINES

*Parade* has hired **Connie Gallo** as New York sales representative. Gallo had been advertising director for *Allure* and *Women's Sports & Fitness*...*Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel* has named **Christy Tanner** to the new position of business development director, overseeing the bimonthly's marketing division. Tanner was marketing director at Kluwer Academic Publishers.

# Media Elite

EDITED BY ANNE TORPEY-KEMPH

## Quicktakes

**TO FETE KATE WHITE'S NEW** whodunnit, a who's who of New York magazine publishing gathered recently at the Manhattan apartment of Hearst Magazines president Cathleen Black.

Joining the *Cosmo* editor—and now novelist—were her journalism peers Mark Whitaker (*Newsweek*), David Granger (*Esquire*), Ellen Kunes (*Redbook*), Susan Ungaro (*Family Circle*), Alex Witchel (*The New York Times*), Caroline Miller (*New York Magazine*) and Helen Gurley Brown.

White humored the guests as they tried to figure out whom among them the characters in *If Looks Could Kill* were based on, though she insists they're amalgams. The murder mystery, the first in a three-book deal with Warner Books to center on the character Bailey Weggins, has already hit the best-seller lists of Amazon.com, *The New York Times* and *L.A. Times*...**Walter Cronkite** received a standing ovation when he walked onto the stage at the Waldorf last week to emcee the Peabody Awards. Taking a seat at the podium, Cronkite pointed out that he was sitting because he'd injured his Achilles tendon in a tennis game. This greatly amused the guests, including TV news icons Dan Rather, Diane Sawyer, Peter Jennings and Ted Koppel and network heads David Westin, Herb Scannell and Judy

McGrath. "Sitting," he continued, "will be a little more comfortable than standing during the ensuing remarks—mostly mine!" The Peabodys recognized 34 winners for excellence

in television and radio...Millennium Sales last week bestowed its first-ever Account Executive of the Year award, to **Ira Berman**. In a surprise ceremony, management cited the 5-year Millennium man for "unwired" deals that have boosted the bottom line significantly.

But another factor that brought Berman to the top of the heap was his role in coordinating last October's "Media All-Stars WTC" musical fund-raiser, which brought together hundreds of media buyers, planners and supervisors at a New York club to aid families of 9/11 victims. Through his side business, NYC Gigs, Berman puts on such events

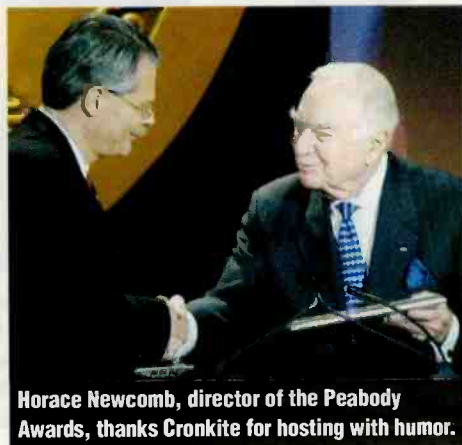


'Tooning in: Hamtaro

monthly, but this one was much bigger in scope and purpose. He's seriously considering a 9/11 anniversary event along the same lines...Advice to pet store owners: Stock up on hamsters. The animated kids series that spurred a pet-hamster craze in Japan is about to hit the U.S., backed by the marketing muscle of distributor ShoPro USA, the folks who brought us Pokémon. **Hamtaro**, the No. 1 kids show in Japan, will launch on Cartoon Network June 3 and air weekdays at 7 a.m. and 4 p.m.. Chronicling an adventurous hamster and his buddies, *Hamtaro* is produced by Shogakukan Music & Digital Entertainment. "They found out that something like one out of four kids in the viewing audience were running out to buy hamsters," said a Cartoon representative. "So many that they had to do PSAs on proper hamster care."



Celebrating with White (r.) on the success of her new novel, Hearst Mags president Black and HGB

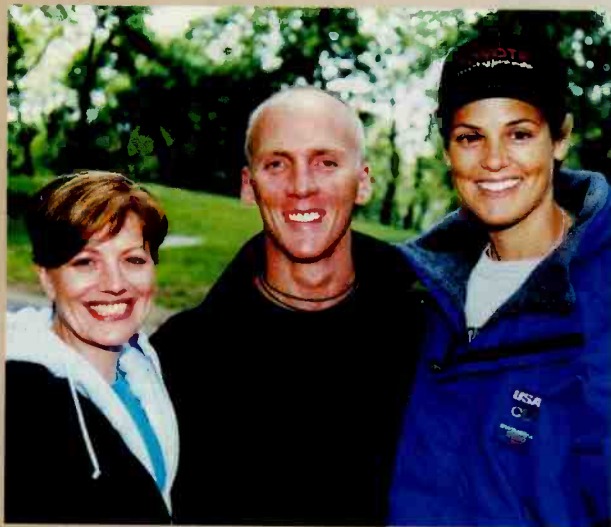


Horace Newcomb, director of the Peabody Awards, thanks Cronkite for hosting with humor.

# Media Elite

Media Dish

**NatGeo Adventure** celebrated its win of two National Magazine Awards (for General Excellence and Personal Service) with advertisers at Sushi Samba in downtown Manhattan. (L. to r.) Chris Sachs, vp/publisher, *Adventure*; Andy Moldovan and Mike Palmgren, media supervisors for Optimedia; and Rich Antoniello, national sales director, *Adventure*



In New York's Central Park for the recent "Allure Marathon Makeovers" event, (l. to r.) Nancy Berger, vp/publisher, *Allure*; fitness guru David Kirsch; and four-time Olympian Dara Torres



**BusinessWeek** recently honored the 13 winners of its annual Awards for Excellence in Corporate Advertising at a ceremony at Bacara Resort in Santa Barbara, Calif. (L. to r.) Bill Kupper, president, *BusinessWeek*; Heidi Kraft, senior vp/group media director, Carat Freeman; Michael Grekin, advertising director, Seibel Systems; and Geoff Dodge, vp/associate publisher, *BusinessWeek*

Everything was in good taste at the recent *Time Out New York Eat Out Awards* event, held at Tribeca Rooftop in lower Manhattan. Patria owner Phil Suarez stepped up to the plate to receive his award for Best Pan-Latino cuisine from *TONY* editor Cyndl Stivers.

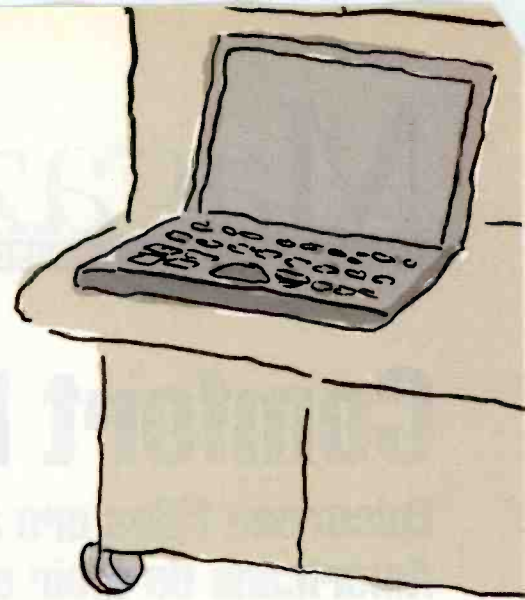


At the Chanel Studio in Manhattan for the *Seventeen/Chanel New Model of the Year* Contest reception, (l. to r.) Arie Kopelman, president/COO, Chanel; Ellen Abramowitz, *Seventeen* publisher; Jean Hoehn Zimmerman, executive vp of marketing and sales, Chanel; and John Loughlin, president and CEO, Primedia Consumer Media and Magazine Group



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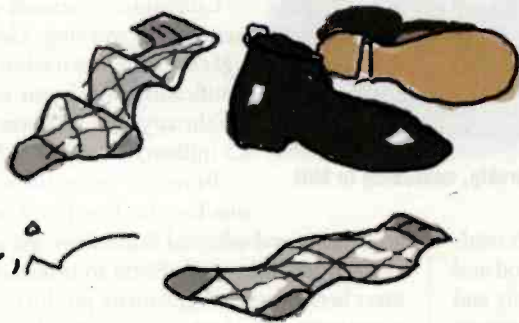
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## Comfort Food

### Epicurean titles are adding readers as more Americans do their entertaining at home

WHILE READERSHIP IN SEVERAL KEY RECESSION-IMPACTED CATEGORIES, INCLUDING business and technology, continues its downward spiral, Americans are hungry for epicurean magazines. In the past year, total audience (defined as total paid circulation multiplied by readers per copy) for food-

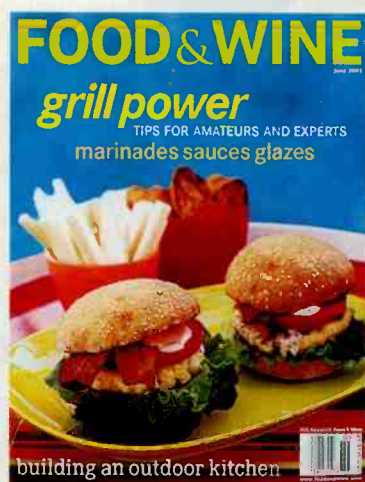
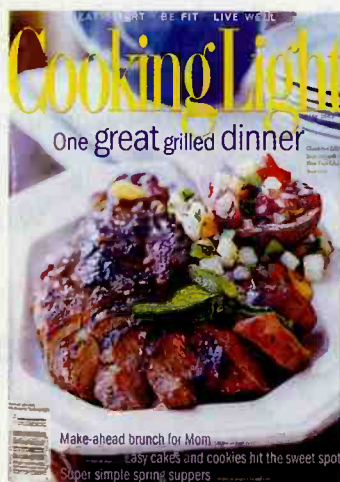
ie titles jumped 12.1 percent, according to Mediamark Research Inc.'s annual spring survey, which covered the 12-month period ended Feb. 28. The epicurean genre had the highest growth of all categories measured by MRI. Across all 206 magazine titles surveyed, total audience increased 1.9 percent.

Epicurean books measured by MRI include Southern Progress Corp.'s *Cooking Light*, whose readership shot up 22.1 percent to 10 million; American Express Publishing's *Food & Wine*, which grew 9.1 percent to 5.5 million; Condé Nast's *Gourmet*, up 2.3 percent to 5.5 million; and *Bon Appétit*, up 1.3 percent to 6.1 million.

The food titles' gains in readership reflect the growing number of consumers that have wanted to stay close to home over the past year, especially since Sept. 11, as well as the magazines' ability to cater to those prevailing consumer moods.

Epicurean titles "gauged the climate in the country very well, and readers gravitated toward the coverage," says Pam McNeely, senior vp/media director for Dailey & Associates. "While they were still identifying trends like Asian food, the magazines came home and started featuring hometown celebrations and garlic festivals, rather than traveling to Sri Lanka." Through April this year, McNeely had poured \$110,000 worth of new business from client Mondavi into *Food & Wine*, according to CMR.

While *Food & Wine* remains less about nesting and more about getting out of the house, vp/publisher Julie McGowan says her



CL and F&W have enjoyed the largest gains in readership, according to MRI.

publication has connected strongly with readers since Sept. 11. "The pleasures of food and wine offer experiences with friends, family and community," McGowan says. "They are more appealing when people are looking for things more soulful."

"People talk about 'comfort food,'" says Alan Jurmain, executive vp of U.S. media services for Lowe & Partners Worldwide. "Food may be a comfort category for advertisers. As we start to target some of our business more on individual passions, epicurean ranks pretty high." Through April, Lowe client Saab increased its spending in *Gourmet* by 61.5 percent to \$151,200 and more than doubled its investment in *Bon Appétit* to \$169,100.

Epicurean's uptick in the new MRI survey should translate into good news for the category on the advertising front. MRI's spring and

fall reports are important media-planning tools used by advertisers. And like most magazines in what is so far a down year for the industry, epicurean books need all the positive research data they can put their hands on to prop up their page counts. Due in large part to the sharp falloff in travel advertising, *Gourmet* and *Bon Appétit*'s ad pages are down 11.5 percent and 15.6 percent respectively through June, according to the *Mediaweek Monitor*. *Food & Wine* is off 3.1 percent. Only *Cooking Light* has seen growth, climbing 4.1 percent.

Chris Allen, vp/publisher of *Cooking Light*, attributes his magazine's gains in part to social trends, which include healthy living, as well as a change in editors. Last year, Mary Kay Culpepper, formerly of Southern Progress' *Coastal Living*, succeeded longtime *Cooking Light* editor in chief Doug Crichton, who moved over to sister Time Inc. publication *Health*. Culpepper has given *Cooking Light* a more "feminine touch," Allen says, with more female-oriented topics and beauty coverage, larger photos and more attractive models.

Culpepper's formula does seem to be working. *Cooking Light*'s female readership rose significantly in the year ended in February, up 22.2 percent to 8.5 million, according to MRI.

In recent years, the magazine has also benefitted on the

advertising and editorial fronts from the packaged-foods industry's efforts to offer consumers better-tasting light-menu products. "On a socioeconomic basis, taking care of yourself has become mainstreamed," says Allen. "It has become accessible and doable." —LG

## A New Ride

### Wallpaper\* gets a Ferrari

Veteran editor Christina Ferrari, who gave up the top job at *Teen People* last year to travel, learn French and live in Geneva, will join Time Inc.'s IPC Media this week as interim editorial director of design and style magazines *Wallpaper\** and *Spruce*. Ferrari will commute weekly to the group's London offices until a replacement is found for Tyler Brûlé, who

# Mediaweek Magazine Monitor

WEEKLIES May 27, 2002

	ISSUE DATE	CURRENT PAGES	ISSUE DATE LAST YEAR	PAGES LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE	YTD PAGES	YTD LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE
<b>NEWS/BUSINESS</b>								
BusinessWeek <sup>X</sup>	20-May	77.97	21-May	71.08	9.69%	1,142.97	1,583.10	-27.80%
The Economist	18-May	65.00	19-May	54.00	20.37%	993.00	1,200.00	-17.25%
Newsweek <sup>EX</sup>	27-May	54.93	28-May	54.35	1.07%	713.33	685.24	4.10%
The New Republic <sup>2</sup>	27-May	3.79	28-May	8.36	-54.67%	162.68	175.14	-7.11%
Time <sup>EX</sup>	27-May	51.69	28-May	55.35	-6.61%	888.25	895.10	-0.77%
US News & World Report	27-May	24.50	28-May	21.43	14.33%	510.47	551.60	-7.46%
The Weekly Standard	3-Jun	7.16	4-Jun	7.00	2.29%	199.79	199.60	0.10%
<b>Category Total</b>		<b>285.04</b>		<b>271.57</b>	<b>4.96%</b>	<b>4,610.49</b>	<b>5,289.78</b>	<b>-12.84%</b>

## SPORTS/ENTERTAINMENT/LEISURE

AutoWeek	27-May	21.05	28-May	27.08	-22.27%	476.09	603.77	-21.15%
Entertainment Weekly	24-May	41.69	25-May	29.21	42.73%	669.05	672.11	-0.46%
Golf World	24-May	21.50	25-May	26.00	-17.31%	641.01	533.59	20.13%
New York <sup>3W</sup>	27-May	30.10	28-May	66.40	-54.67%	1,032.80	1,146.80	-9.94%
People <sup>X</sup>	27-May	91.77	28-May	73.26	25.27%	1,439.06	1,506.70	-4.49%
The Sporting News	27-May	11.58	28-May	11.00	5.27%	293.38	266.08	10.26%
Sports Illustrated	27-May	49.31	28-May	40.59	21.48%	983.81	923.31	6.55%
The New Yorker <sup>S</sup>	27-May	57.86	28-May	72.59	-20.29%	823.91	943.39	-12.66%
Time Out New York	22-May	77.44	23-May	63.96	21.07%	1,354.12	1,369.71	-1.14%
TV Guide	25-Feb	22.82	26-May	42.98	-46.91%	1,036.48	1,264.33	-18.02%
US Weekly <sup>1</sup>	27-May	16.00	28-May	14.33	11.65%	391.00	364.65	7.23%
<b>Category Total</b>		<b>441.12</b>		<b>467.40</b>	<b>-5.62%</b>	<b>9,140.71</b>	<b>9,594.44</b>	<b>-4.73%</b>

## SUNDAY MAGAZINES

Parade	26-May	7.83	27-May	9.89	-20.83%	268.58	265.00	1.35%
USA Weekend	26-May	9.28	27-May	8.27	12.21%	262.79	238.50	10.18%
<b>Category Total</b>		<b>17.11</b>		<b>18.16</b>	<b>-5.78%</b>	<b>531.37</b>	<b>503.50</b>	<b>5.54%</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>743.27</b>		<b>757.13</b>	<b>-1.83%</b>	<b>14,282.57</b>	<b>15,387.72</b>	<b>-7.18%</b>

E=estimated page counts; S=special issue; W=5/28/01 issue includes Weddings special; X=YTD 2001 includes an out-of-cycle issue; 1=one fewer issue in 2002 than 2001; 2=two fewer issues in 2002; 3=three fewer issues in 2002

## BIMONTHLIES May/June 2002

	RATE BASE (2ND HALF '01)	CIRC. (2ND HALF '01)	CURRENT PAGES	PAGES LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE	YEAR TO DATE	YTD LAST YEAR	PERCENT CHANGE
American Heritage <sup>6/A</sup>	340,000	346,046	50.62	52.50	-3.58%	80.79	86.21	-6.29%
American Photo	250,000	253,988	37.18	45.47	-18.23%	128.13	142.47	-10.07%
A. Frommer's Budget Trvl. <sup>E/++</sup>	400,000	557,275	102.05	96.53	5.72%	263.00	252.61	4.11%
Audubon	450,000	456,010	38.84	56.60	-31.38%	162.76	171.95	-5.34%
Bride's	None	382,745	424.99	502.33	-15.40%	1,771.16	2,223.95	-20.36%
Coastal Living	450,000	487,671	133.55	122.34	9.16%	338.93	330.45	2.57%
Country Home <sup>9/+/M</sup>	1,000,000	1,001,611	111.06	110.29	0.70%	303.06	276.38	9.65%
Country Living Gardener	425,000	452,407	48.12	35.90	34.04%	99.32	85.85	15.69%
Departures <sup>7</sup>	500,000 <sup>Q</sup>	603,686 <sup>B</sup>	105.76	144.39	-26.75%	287.34	433.91	-33.78%
Elle Decor <sup>7/M</sup>	450,000	458,209	127.23	162.84	-21.87%	376.63	425.17	-11.42%
Fit Pregnancy <sup>A</sup>	500,000	525,072 <sup>B</sup>	96.97	84.53	14.72%	182.89	137.83	32.69%
Garden Design <sup>6/+/M</sup>	300,000	384,478	34.63	43.55	-20.47%	109.00	127.10	-14.24%
Golf for Women	400,000	381,444	75.84	69.36	9.34%	177.64	183.28	-3.08%
Islands <sup>8</sup>	220,000	235,206	76.64	88.98	-13.87%	253.92	360.16	-29.50%
Metropolitan Home	600,000	605,216	138.74	152.73	-9.16%	286.31	329.32	-13.06%
Midwest Living	815,000	823,525	145.58	116.80	24.64%	383.06	358.46	6.86%
Modern Bride	None	353,774	329.47	428.47	-23.11%	1,308.85	1,815.36	-27.90%
Modern Maturity	17,900,000	17,780,127	42.38	47.07	-9.96%	133.49	149.59	-10.76%
Mother Jones	160,000	177,135	31.67	48.97	-35.33%	99.84	105.80	-5.63%
Muscle & Fitness Hers <sup>J</sup>	175,000	255,064	61.83	63.17	-2.12%	177.67	177.01	0.37%
My Generation <sup>L</sup>	3,400,000	N.A. <sup>C</sup>	44.33	43.89	1.00%	131.07	101.87	28.66%
National Geographic Traveler <sup>3</sup>	715,000	820,000	67.92	68.34	-0.61%	193.36	268.18	-27.90%
OG <sup>6/+</sup>	500,000 <sup>Q</sup>	434,882	31.34	33.41	-6.20%	70.65	136.54	-48.26%
Organic Style	500,000	N.A. <sup>C</sup>	48.63	N.A.	N.A.	117.14	N.A.	N.A.
Old House Journal	140,000	147,988 <sup>X</sup>	56.20	54.10	3.88%	232.58	209.60	10.96%
Saveur <sup>8</sup>	375,000	385,579	35.33	41.00	-13.83%	137.69	137.15	0.39%
Showboats International	50,000	51,413 <sup>B</sup>	147.00	137.00	7.30%	443.00	437.75	1.20%
Ski <sup>8/2</sup>	450,000	454,064	36.17	41.75	-13.37%	201.02	256.38	-21.59%
Skiing <sup>7/2</sup>	400,000	400,929	NO ISSUE	N.A.	N.A.	136.67	200.71	-31.91%
Southern Accents	375,000	411,825	119.02	129.52	-8.11%	297.95	337.02	-11.59%
Traditional Home <sup>6/++</sup>	800,000	823,999	115.03	132.21	-12.99%	281.84	223.32	26.20%
T&L Golf	600,000 <sup>Q</sup>	566,871	73.09	103.90	-29.65%	230.98	268.19	-13.87%
Veranda	335,000	393,270	112.02	145.09	-22.79%	291.16	377.3	-22.83%
Workbench Magazine	350,000	363,488	33.00	22.25	48.31%	94.33	67.35	40.06%
<b>CATEGORY TOTAL</b>			<b>3,132.23</b>	<b>3,425.27</b>	<b>-8.56%</b>	<b>9,783.23</b>	<b>11,194.22</b>	<b>-12.60%</b>

Rate base and circulation figures according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations for the second half of 2001, except: B=audited by BPA International, and C=non-audited title; A=April/May issue; J=June/July issue; L=launched in March 2001; M=May single issue; Q=raised rate base during period; X=did not file by press time; 2=separate Jan. and Feb. issues; 6=published six times per year; 7=published seven times; 8=published eight times; 9=published nine times; @=will publish one fewer issue in 2002 over 2001; @+=will publish two fewer issues in 2002; +=will publish one more issue in 2002; ++=will publish two more issues in 2002



Design is a new area for Teen People vet Ferrari.

stepped down. Brulé founded *Wallpaper\** in 1996 and sold the 132,000-circulation monthly a year later to Time Inc.

Having spent several years editing teen titles, including *G+J USA's YM*, Ferrari acknowledges that she lacks experience in the design

field. Even so, "it's something I'm personally interested in," she says by phone from Geneva. "My coffee table is stacked with design magazines, travel magazines and fashion magazines. Being in Europe, I have access to all these countries, and it's been fun discovering all these new editorial approaches."

Ferrari adds that her style is collaborative, and she intends on working with the staffs of *Wallpaper\** and the biannual *Spruce* to "create the magazine they want to create." Her first priority, however, may be staffing up.

Brulé was said to have clashed with IPC management, which began running *Wallpaper\** earlier this year. Over the past two months, about a dozen staffers have departed, including founding vp/general manager Paul De Zwart; creative director Ariel Childs is expected to leave in July.

Yet Brulé did not burn all his bridges. He will now shift his attention to Time Inc.'s Wink—the creative consultancy business he launched in 1998—and will report to Michael Pepe, president of Time Inc. International.

Elsewhere in the AOL Time Warner magazine empire, Mark Golin, creative director of America Online's Moviefone.com and best known as the former editor of Condé Nast's *Details* and Dennis Publishing's *Maxim*, in June will begin working part-time with John Huey, Time Inc. editorial director. Golin's new mag-development duties include determining whether any of IPC's U.K.-based titles, including the laddie title *Loaded* and music magazine *NME*, could be imported to the U.S., as well as looking at potential launches and acquisitions. "It's pretty vague," Huey says of Golin's role. "He's going to do some thinking, and we're going to talk to him in the fall about what he's thinking." —LG

# Media Person

BY LEWIS GROSSBERGER



## Back on Terror Firma

OK, ENOUGH ALREADY WITH THE TERRORISM. MEDIA PERSON

is bored with it and wants it off the front pages. Also, the terrorism—actually the terrorism talk more than the terrorism itself—is making everyone who is prone to nervousness more nervous than they already

are. Nervousness grew so rampant in Media Person's native habitat last week, that on Wednesday the hysteria-prone *New York Post* ran a page-one editorial bannered: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." This only made people fearful on top of nervous, as it was obviously a complete lie. We have plenty to fear, but there's no point in constantly reminding us of it, as there is nothing we can do about it. Maybe Spider-Man or Donald Rumsfeld can, but not you or MP. Best to practice denial, says Media Person, who is one of the best practitioners of this art since Gary Condit, and Media Person wants him off the front page again, too.

Now one day before the "fear itself" headline (which, the *Post* candidly explained to its readers, was cribbed from one of our famous dead presidents, a Mr. F. D. Roosevelt, who faced some kind of momentous crisis or other during the Civil War), it was the selfsame *Post* and its fellow newspaperers that were stampeding the populace into a fright with headlines such as, let's see, Media Person doesn't have the paper right in front of him, but it was along the lines of "Omigawd! Fire-Engine-Red-Triple-Alarm Terror Alert! They're gonna blow up the Statue of Liberty and then your head! Duck! Lookout! Panic! Terror! Madness! Whoop! Whoop! Evacuate the planet! Evacuate the planet!" Something very close to that.

It was your classic whipsaw effect. First scare 'em up. Then chide 'em down. What fun, eh, kids?

Hard to remember now, so many hours later, but the whole surreal episode started with "The President Knew." The president knew about 9/11. The president didn't know about 9/11. The president heard a rumor about 9/11, but the FBI said the CIA

was working on it, and the CIA said it was busy investigating the FBI. "What did the president know, and when did he know it?" the Democrats demanded, as well as *Time*, *Newsweek* and *Sports Illustrated*. Was this a Giant Failure of Intelligence (of the usual kind) or merely Impeachable Executive Mis, Mal, Non or Dysfeasance?

(Media Person doubts that the President knew jack squat, but what does Media Person know?)

Anyway, once this challenge was in the air, the Executive Branch and the frothing media teamed up for the next verse of the roundelay, which went something like this: "Did not! Did not! Mr. President did not never know nothing nowhen, and we would like the obligatory investigation into his lack of knowing handled by an independent body, such as Dick Cheney." Then, to show you exactly how sharp the White House is at all times on

to chill. *The New York Times* Minister of Foreign Affairs Thomas Friedman admonished the administration, "Ah, excuse me, but could we all calm down here?" He then reported that he intended to spend his weekend in mundane activities such as golfing and barbecuing unless the FBI had a more specific warning to give him than its typical "Somewhere Someone is Planning Something Sometime" bulletins. But it was too late. Hundreds had already died of fright, and Friedman neglected to mention the role of the information sector in amplifying the madness.

Editors, news directors, producers: Just because the government says it, you've gotta scream it? Isn't this why small type was invented? You have no critical faculties? No skepticism? No pencil? OK, here's how you handle this in the future. Jot this down.

Handsome Anchorguy: "And in Washington today, the government issued another of those useless nonspecific warnings. Now here's Tiffany with the sports."

Chatty Newsbabe: "Gosh, Chad, aren't they silly? Well, in baseball, another infielder announced he was heterosexual."

Following the panic, it was revealed that

### Editors, news directors, producers: Just because the government says it, you've gotta scream it?

the terror beat, came all the aforementioned orange alerts, sinister warnings, vague threats and sinister designs on the Statue of Liberty, which the media leapt at like a nauseous man for porcelain. The stock market hiccupped, and the anxiety-prone upped the dosage. The promos on TV for the latest Watch-the-Towers-Fall-Again show sent them diving under the beds of America.

It was then that the media realized they'd gone too far in playing all this big, instead of burying it on page D-36 and the Weather Channel, and they began ordering the public

the warning of attacks on New York landmarks came from captured al-Qaeda guy Abu Zubaydah during his latest "debriefing." And that he has raised several alarms, none of which amounted to beans. Why are we listening to Abu? He's out of the loop!

If government officials again trot before microphones to inform us that terrorists are capable of planting a plutonium suitcase under Disney World, Forest Lawn Cemetery, your local Starbucks or Mom's pillow, reflect, please, editors, that we already knew that. News is what we didn't know already. ■

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1. Court TV and ASI study of unaided brand recall of 123 viewers of commercials shown in an episode of Forensic Files, a network sitcom, a network made-for movie, and a nature documentary, Dec 2001. 2. Court TV Attribute Tracking study, Dec 2000, Apr 2001, Dec 2001, n = 2,100. 3. Court TV viewer involvement research, Mar 2000 - Dec 2001, n=240. 4. IPSOS-ASI, "Is Anyone Paying Attention to Your GRP's?", Jun 2000. 5. Court TV analysis of Nielsen Media Research NPower data. Length of Tune, Dec, 2001. Tied for 3rd in Prime Time (8-11PM) among ad supported cable networks with universe estimates greater than 50 million. Subject to qualifications upon request.