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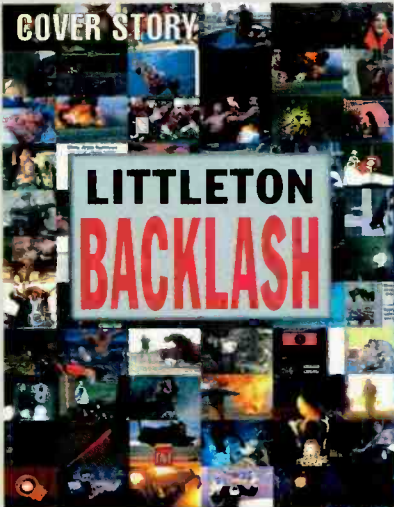
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 Cover by Todd Gast



Photo: Dennis Brack / Black Star

Powerplay: Capital Hill renews fight against what it calls gratuitous violence via the media. Pictured (l-r) Rep. Edward Markey, Sens. John McCain, Joseph Lieberman and Rep. Daniel Burton.

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MEDIA

Littleton's latest suspect



Calling for accountability (l-r): Rep. Edward Markey, Sens. John McCain and Joseph Lieberman and Rep. Dan Burton.

By Paige Albinak

As the nation anguished in its search for answers and healing in the aftermath of the Littleton, Colo., school massacre, Motion Picture Association of America President Jack Valenti summoned his broadcasting and cable counterparts to his Washington office last Thursday. The agenda: how to counter accusations that violence in the entertainment media, plain and simple, had contributed to the deadly horror at Columbine High School.

Valenti, National Association of

Broadcasters President Eddie Fritts and National Cable Television Association President Decker Anstrom began forging a unified response to the policy-makers, including President Clinton, who had demanded a reversal of what they called the media's irresponsible rampage toward gratuitous violence.

Clinton clearly was more restrained than many in Washington, including the powerful bipartisan coalition from Capitol Hill that flat-out called for protection from incessantly violent images on TV, movie and computer screens. But the President invited entertainment and Internet executives to join gun and explosives makers, government officials and religious leaders at a May 10

White House "strategy session" on "children, violence and responsibility."

"We must help parents to pass on their values to their children—in the face of a blizzard of popular communications that too often undermine those values," the President said in a Rose Garden address.

To be sure, when violence erupts, the nation has routinely pointed to television and its media cousins as the villains. But this time around, the deaths of 12 students and a teacher at the hands of two teen gunmen suggests that the media—and its defenders—are in for a particularly rough time.

This time around, Valenti, Anstrom and Fritts knew as much. By Thursday,

Photo: Dennis Brack / Black Star

LITTLETON BACKLASH

Media violence VOICES

"Every American has seen hundreds of films, hundreds of news stories, hundreds of depictions, thousands of cartoons. Millions don't go out and shoot people."

—Steve Brenner
USA Network co-president

"We can no longer shut our eyes to the impact that the media is having on all of our children and the potentially violent impact it's having on some."

—Hillary Rodham Clinton

"TV itself emphasizes immediate

gratification, a short-term attention span, pendulum-swings of emotion, superficiality, self-pity and alienation. The media problem for our kids isn't too much violence or too much sex or too much vulgarity. It's too much TV, period."

—Michael Medved,
movie critic and author,
Hollywood vs. America and
co-author, *Saving Childhood*

"We've got to clean the poison and filth and garbage out of our popular culture...It's even more important than cleaning up our environment."

—Pat Buchanan

"No one wanted to say sometimes bad things happen to good people without a neat explanation...that deep-seated

social ills might be the cause of such a senseless tragedy. The quick and easy answer was to bash the media...It's easier to point the finger at new technology than to take responsibility for age-old problems."

—Joanne Ostrow,
Denver Post

In the wake of the tragedy in Littleton, Colo., sooner or later a so-called expert will tell you how desensitized you've become to violence. Nonsense. Everything we have been seeing with our

each had heard the calls for summits, a Surgeon General's study, commissions—even, Heaven forbid, legislation—anything to help understand why kids are killing kids.

Anstrom, for his part, says the media has a duty to reexamine the impact of violent content. "Clearly the media and entertainment industries have some responsibility here," he said. "Parents certainly believe that."

"Violence is a predominate theme of television," said Rocky Mountain Media Watch Director Paul Klite, frequent critic of television in general and Denver television in particular. Echoing themes adopted by many pundits last week, he said: "When we see violent imagery over and over, it works the same way as a Toyota commercial. It sells that image. The explosion of copycat images across the country is evidence of the power of television to influence people."

Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), author of the bill that requires TV makers to include V-chips in all new TVs, added guns to the mix: "I don't think it's possible to separate the two issues. It's a deadly cocktail of guns and media violence," he said. The V-chip technology, mandated by federal law in 1996, will allow parents to block programs based on the now-ubiquitous TV content ratings.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), long an opponent of violent and sexual content, said: "We cannot hope to end this recurring nightmare without the help of the men and women who run the entertainment industry."

'A sad day'

Lieberman was joined at a Capitol Hill press conference last week by three other anti-violence crusaders: Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Markey and Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.). The quartet called

on the White House to hold a summit among entertainment industry executives, gun manufacturers, advocacy groups and policymakers to examine the effect violence in the media is having on American children. The bipartisan group of lawmakers last worked together on Markey's V-chip proposal.

At the same time, the President acknowledged a huge demand for entertainment that depicts violence. "There is a market for it. The American people buy it. They purchase it. They lap it up.

"In the end you've got to take it back to the fact that we all have responsibilities. And it starts with parents."

But it could end with censorship, warned Lieberman. "I'm telling you, the public is so fed up with the killing of innocent children and the violence generally in our society," said Lieberman, "and they're coming to a hard conclusion that the entertainment industry is contributing to those killings.... If they don't act to regulate themselves, there will be attempts, probably not by the four of us, but there will be attempts to impose censorship in this country, and that will be a sad day."

Lawmakers did not single out any individual TV program as particularly violent, but they think TV should share the blame. "I think TV is worse" than it used to be, said McCain. "I just think the Internet is an added layer. [And] video games are incredibly graphic and violent and there's a competition to see who can be the most graphic and violent."

Among other post-Littleton plans from Washington:

■ The four policymakers last week planned to introduce a joint resolution in the Senate and the House that would require the Surgeon General to complete in 18 months a report on how violence in the media affects children.

■ Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott

(R-Miss.) called for a National Conference on Youth and Culture to "seek an understanding of what happened in Littleton and discuss how we can best avoid such tragedies in the future."

■ Next week, Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kansas) plans to hold a hearing to examine media violence. Scheduled to testify at the hearing are Lieberman, Valenti and Recording Industry Association President Hilary Rosen.

■ At the FCC, Commissioner Gloria Tristani has been named to head a task force on implementing the V-chip. Last week, Vice President Al Gore called on the industry to speed up implementation of the content-blocking technology.

The Net effect

The Internet could face curbs as well. Lawmakers pummeled the evolving media for giving kids unprecedented access to violent and sexual content. The suspected lead killer, Eric Harris, was an Internet regular. He inscribed his violent thoughts on his America Online Web site.

But regulating the Internet is not as easy as regulating TV. The Internet exists on a vast network of wires, plugged in everywhere, starting and stopping nowhere.

"We are calling for an industry effort to coordinate with parents and experts to develop software, blocking software, that makes it easier for parents to be able to control the computer, to be able to control access of this violent graphic material into the minds of their children," Markey said, later adding that the Internet is "different. You can't regulate it the same way.

"We're hoping we can do [this] within the Constitution and also pass laws that ensure that guns are not available to children," he said. "We believe that both things can be done without violat-

LITTLETON BACKLASH

eyes and feeling in our hearts for the last week directly contradicts that glib assertion."

—Eric Mink,
New York Daily News

"You can't have millions of kids every day watching people get killed on TV, and then see the same people alive the next week without [desensitizing] kids to violence."

—Linda Ellerbee, former anchorwoman and host,
Nick News

"All we can say is that violence on the screen—movie, TV, computer—is probably an accelerant to violence in the mind. And that Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, had seen more than their share."

—Elise O'Shaughnessy,
New York Daily News

"[For 24-hour news channels], we are allowed to wallow in the details [of violent news stories]

ad infinitum. I'm not sure how good culturally this is to turn these events into 24-hour miniseries on television."

—Robert Thompson,
popular-culture professor,
Syracuse University

"After presenting 'Terror in Littleton' like a blockbuster ratings-sweeps production, TV has become one of its casualties.

That's because some myopic Americans see media as the root of all evil. The mantra: If it's bad, television—or the movies—caused it. This becomes their knee-jerk reaction to every violent tragedy...Of course, blame TV.

—Howard Rosenberg,
Los Angeles Times

"Media moguls tell advertisers that the more often a message is repeated, the more it affects behavior. They then piously

ing the First Amendment or the Second Amendment." (In related news, the Annenberg Foundation plans to release a survey May 4 on the Internet and parents concerns and hopes for the new technology.)

Viewers, influence down?

"It's quite ironic that the [broadcast] networks are in such a bad situation that the one silver lining is that with viewership down, the politicians can't point to broadcast television as the predominant influence in people's lives anymore," noted a network executive. "We aren't

dominating kids' lives, so we can't be blamed for violence in society."

"I can't help but think that television is an easy scapegoat," said Time Warner Chairman Gerald Levin, whose own son, a teacher, was shot in his apartment by a former student. "This entire exercise is a charade," said another network executive. "When they go after the guns, I'll take safe harbor a little more seriously."

The "safe harbor" refers to a bill introduced last week by Sen. Ernest "Fritz" Hollings (D-S.C.). That bill would require the FCC to provide a rule limiting all "violent" program-

ming to hours when children are unlikely to be watching.

Hollings pushed the bill in the summer of 1997, when the broadcast, cable and entertainment industries were negotiating with children's advocacy groups to come up with content-based markers to add to the age-based ratings already in use. At the time, two years ago, several lawmakers signed a letter giving the networks assurances that if they agreed to a new TV ratings system, they would be free of content-oriented legislation for the next three years. At press time, senators were unavailable to

Littleton levity sparks ire, firings

As of late last week, CBS Corp. and Chancellor Media Corp. were standing by Howard Stern, who riled Colorado when, on the morning after the Littleton shootings, he said on his radio show, "At least if you're going to kill yourself and kill all the kids, why wouldn't you have some sex...with any of the good-looking girls?"

Stern has been reported as saying he was searching for a motive in the slayings when he made the comment, but many local residents and the city's two daily newspapers were appalled. The state Legislature called for Chancellor's KXPk(FM) Evergreen/Denver to bounce Stern's morning-drive show. The papers also urged KCNC-TV to pull Stern's late-night TV show.

"The local media was misinterpreting it," said Chancellor spokesman Joseph N. Jaffoni, who was called in from New York to help deal with the flap. Stern was trying to figure out a motive and "not in any way making light of the situation."

KXPk General Manager Bob Visotcky taped an apology for Stern's remarks that ran several times last weekend. "Howard definitely has crossed the line in certain areas," Visotcky said, according to a transcript of the tape. "Howard Stern is very new to the Denver community and we sincerely hope that you don't judge Howard on one or two inappropriate comments."

"They haven't made any decision to pull the show," Jaffoni said. However, some advertisers reportedly yanked their spots.

"There are no plans to pull Howard's show off any of

its venues," said one source knowledgeable about the controversy. Stern's April 22 show opened with an advisory that will be broadcast from now on, Jaffoni said. In essence, it says that "listener discretion is advised."

Stern, whose show started on KXPk last November, has pulled the station's morning drive from sixth place to second among men ages 18-34, according to Jaffoni.

A telephone call to Stern at his flagship, WXRK(FM) New York, was referred to his agent, who did not return calls seeking comment. Both Stern's radio and TV shows are syndicated by CBS, where a spokesman also declined comment.

Meanwhile, lesser-known radio personalities got pink slips for their comments.

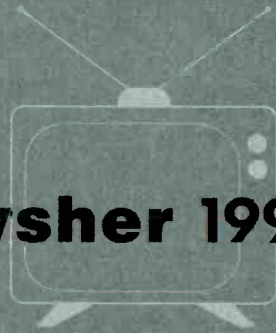
At KCMO(AM) Kansas City, Mo., Russ Johnson was fired last Wednesday after saying during morning drive that students of a local high school that had received a bomb threat should carry guns. "I'd say, 'Here's a .357. If you have any problems, use this,'" Johnson said. "In light of the gravity of the situation...we felt that Russ's comments were insensitive, irresponsible and unacceptable," General Manager Bob Zuroweste said.

Michael Graham of WBT-AM-FM Charlotte, N.C., was fired April 21 after saying as the story broke that if the gunmen were targeting athletes, "there would be some benefit to this otherwise horrible story." That's a paraphrase, according to Vice President/General Manager Rick Jackson, but it was the wrong thing to say at the wrong time.

—Elizabeth A. Rathbun

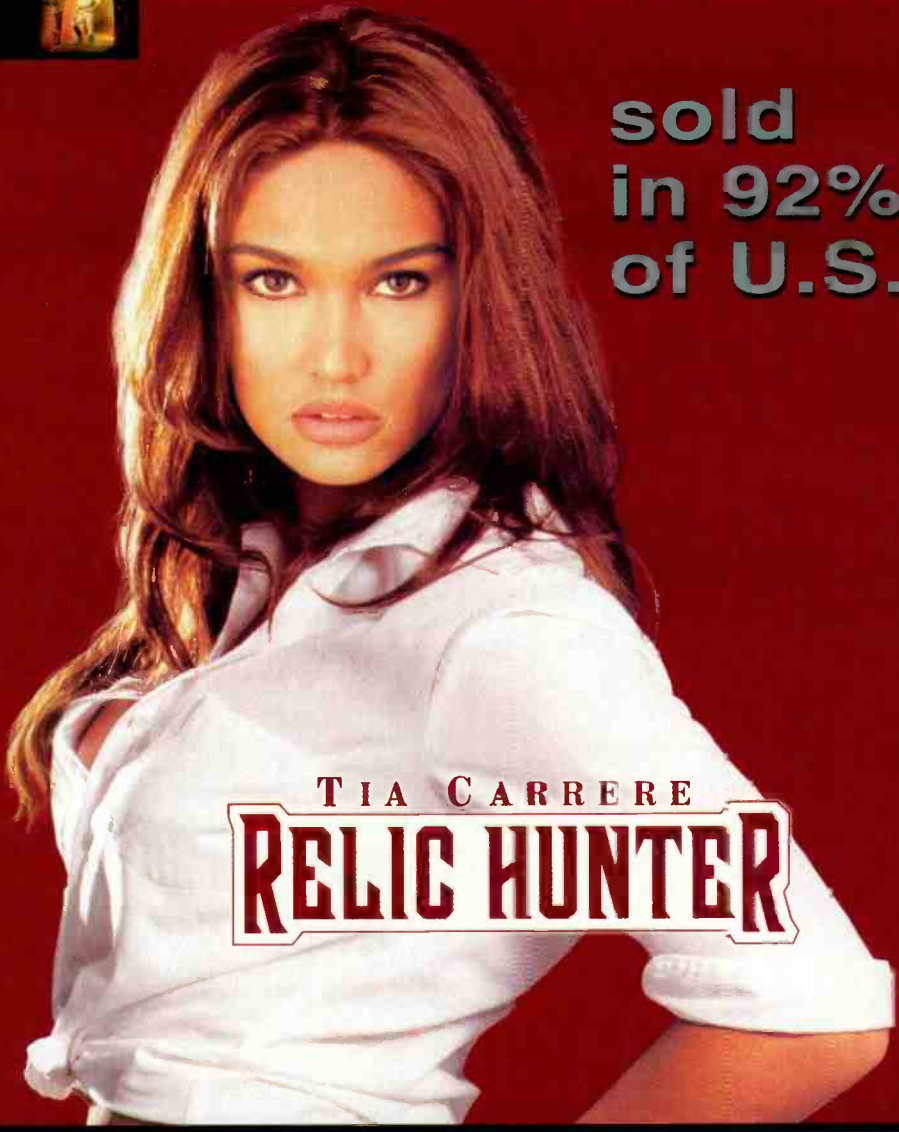
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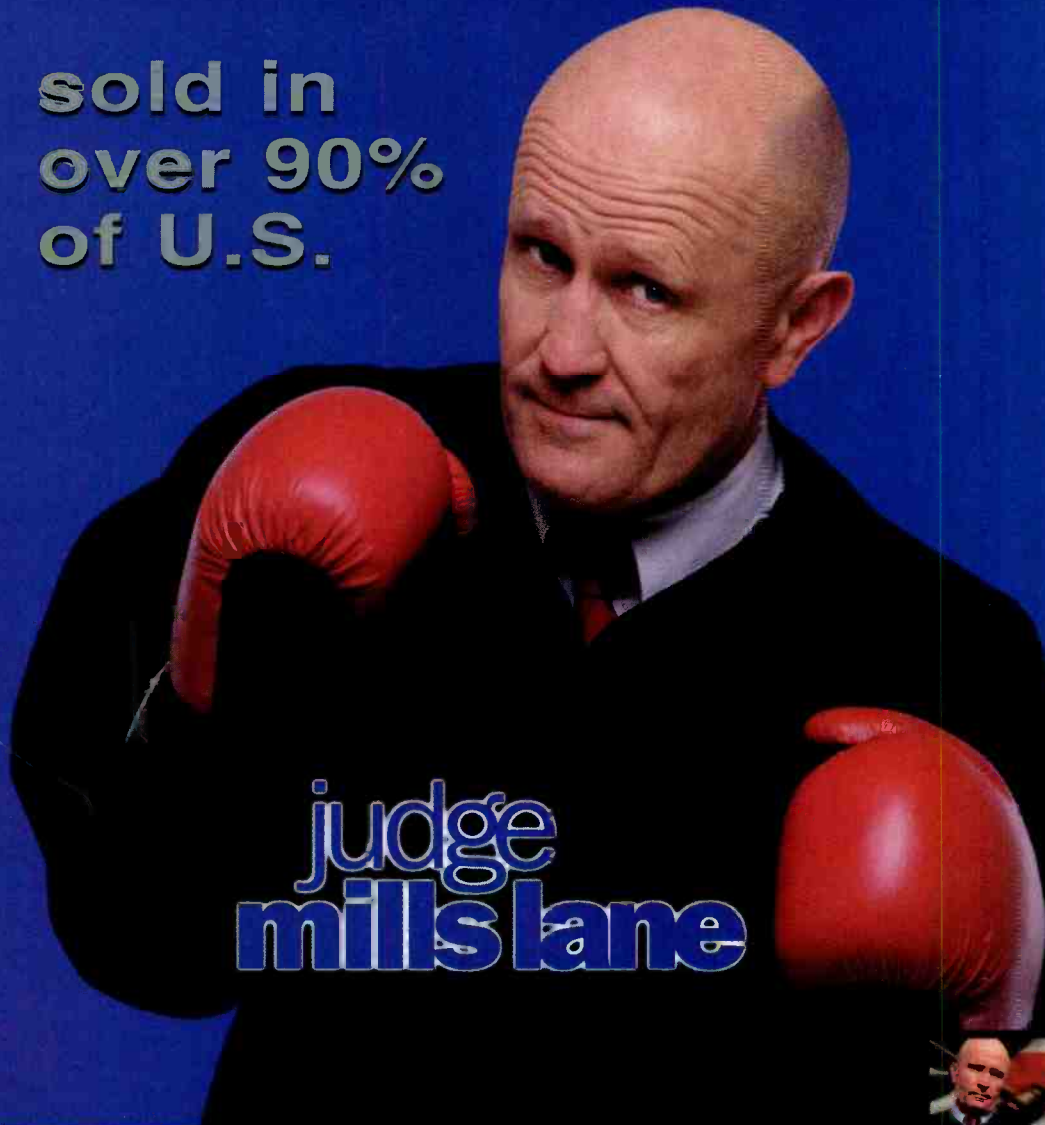
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mills lane





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available fall 2000

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Don Johnson is
***nash
bridges***

LITTLETON BACKLASH

assure the rest of us that repeated TV violence has little influence. Let's get real about the connections between our childish notions of freedom and our children's destruction."

—**Jim Sleeper, author, *Liberal Racism***

"We have to accept the responsibility [for] this world in which violence is just like Muzak... We can no longer sit back and say: 'Come on, it's freedom of speech. It's not our responsibility; it's the parent's responsibility.' It's got to stop."

—**Mark Johnson, executive producer, *L.A. Doctors***

"[The experts] haul in the usual suspects... the sinister influence of movies, television and the news media... I'm sickened that unspeakable acts are blamed on a kid watching a creepy scene in a movie or a school system that didn't act as a psychiatrist. And I'm heartsick that the buck gets passed, even in such a profoundly tragic and senseless situation."

—**Jane Hammerslaugh, *New York Post***

"The recent events in Littleton, Colo., serve to highlight the sad

and unfortunate fact that violence in our culture is begetting violence in our youths."

—**Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.)**

"The ghastly horror in Littleton, Colo., makes all of us repeat our favorite remedies for eliminating violence... No doubt violence on television and in the movies heightens aggression among some people some of the time, but we have virtually no evidence that it affects the serious crime rate."

—**James Q. Wilson, author,**

Moral Judgment and The Moral Sense

"TV and movies have been glorifying violent bloody crime and so forth... and now it's reached a critical mass... Things will get only worse until we have a spiritual awakening, until we get violence off the screen."

—**Rev. Jerry Falwell**

"By producing increasingly violent media, the entertainment industry has for decades engaged in a lucrative dance with the devil."

—**Denise Caruso, *The New York Times***

comment on whether they would adhere to the promised moratorium.

Clearly, however, Littleton puts the networks in a tough situation. They do not want new legislation and they do not think they deserve it. But if they actively fight against it, they look like the bad guys.

"Of course I'm worried about legislation," a network executive said. "It took me about two seconds after I heard about Littleton to start worrying about it." "In terms of violence on TV, I think the focus should be on cable. I don't think that this bill affects us," said another executive. Hollings' bill would apply to cable but would exempt premium and pay-per-view.

Wire on the hook?

Cable's looser standards on sex and violence make those networks large targets. Comedy Central each week plays for laughs the death of *South Park's* Kenny, a character who is regularly impaled, beheaded or crushed. Shootings and beatings are mixed with sexual titillation on USA Networks' action series *La Femme Nikita*. Pay networks HBO, Cinemax and The Movie Channel all routinely show violent action, as well as movies that are close to being pornographic.

Some cable network executives pointed to Hollywood, saying much of the violent content is in theatrical movies that the networks air—so the problem starts there. "We buy the slates we buy," said HBO and Cinemax Executive Vice President Richard Plepler.

But some of HBO's homegrown shows are fairly gritty, including Mafia shootings on *The Sopranos*, the hit of the year, and male prisoner rape scenes on *Oz*. "Hello, the subject matter is the mob" Plepler said of *The Sopranos*.

Elsewhere in Hollywood, most

major broadcast networks were subdued last week when it came to discussing or implementing any possible changes post-Littleton. Several network representatives said their respective outlets were busy with the current development season (May 17-21, when all six broadcast nets will present their fall lineups to Madison Avenue) and couldn't discuss the issue.

"Does all media have some role in anesthetizing us to some of this? Maybe," said USA Networks Co-President Steve Brenner. "Every American has seen hundred of films, hundreds of news stories, hundreds of depictions, thousands of cartoons. Millions don't go out and shoot people." Brenner thinks there are "hundreds of factors affecting the way we behave in society," including violence in TV, access to guns, breakups in families, lack of respect for institutions. "How two deeply disturbed kids in a small town in Colorado acted, who knows what went into that?"

Brenner contends that his network's standards aren't much different from the broadcasters' standards. "I think I'm comfortable where we are," said Brenner. "Our standards are appropriate, I think." If USA is putting material on the air that is extreme, viewers and advertisers will pull away. "Society will force us to change," he said.

Now, a word from our sponsor

In an action plan targeting youth violence, the U.S. Conference of Mayors recommended last year that viewers boycott products that sponsor violent TV. But although the conference has stepped up its criticism of television in the wake of Littleton, no action toward a boycott appears imminent.

Gretchen Briscoe, a spokeswoman for major advertiser Procter & Gamble, said

TV violence "continues to be a concern for Procter & Gamble." But she added, "We see TV violence as one element. But it's only one element. We know that that's just part of the problem." As a founding company of the Forum for Family Friendly Programming, she said the goal "is to encourage the creation" of such fare.

Other members of the forum, including General Motors and IBM, also said they've taken no direct action toward pulling away from advertising on violent programming. Jim Elder, IBM spokesman, said that IBM has been carefully avoiding ad placements in violent shows for "some time."

In a related development, J.C. Penney announced that it is pulling merchandise based on Comedy Central's *South Park* due to customer complaints.

TV on the defense

At NBC, an executive said the network plans to step up its "The More You Know" series of public service announcements to focus on anti-violence efforts. "We're proud of that effort and we're going to accelerate it," the executive said.

Meanwhile, cable executives said they will stick by the steps they have already taken—supporting TV ratings and the V-chip, as well as teaching critical TV viewing skills to families. Cable executives also point out that cable networks, notably Home Box Office, pioneered content notices, alerting viewers if a movie depicted graphic violence or sex or had offensive language.

"NCTA believes voluntary steps are the most appropriate approach, and we oppose government regulation of television content and scheduling," said Scott Broyles, spokesman for NCTA.

Court TV has just launched an anti-violence initiative aimed at children—

"Choices and Consequences"—that uses courtroom footage to show some of the consequences of violent acts. In trade ads last week, prepared before the Littleton tragedy, newspaper headlines like "Teacher Killed by 12-Year-Old Sniper," and "5 Killed at Arkansas School," asked: "Is TV teaching our kids to kill?"

The NAB last week said it plans to help local stations prepare for community crises by distributing taped educational forums to stations around the country.

"Collectively, nobody has a bigger voice to educate communities and disseminate information on early warning signs that can lead to mindless tragedies," said NAB President Eddie Fritts.

Stations also will soon get a new batch of antiviolence PSAs from The Ad Council. The spots, produced by the National Crime Prevention Council, will instruct viewers on safe storage of firearms, use of trigger locks to prevent accidental discharges and proper

gun training.

"We can't overlook the obscene availability of guns," said John Calhoun, executive director of the National Crime Prevention Council. "Kids go through pain and anger. The trouble comes when they have access to guns." ■

Bill McConnell, John M. Higgins, Richard Tedesco, Dan Trigoboff and Deborah McAdams contributed to this story.

Gathering to look for answers

Television hosts town meetings as nation expresses collective anger, grief—and fear

By Dan Trigoboff

After 45 minutes of discussing the horrific shootings in Littleton, Colo., said news anchor Allison Rosati, recalling WMAQ-TV's quickly assembled Chicago Town Meeting, no one wanted to leave.

The same thing happened after she finished anchoring the news with Warner Saunders the night of the shooting. Still shaken by the news, she remembers, "everyone just stood in a semicircle around the anchor desk and kept talking about it."

The New York Times last week called the televised town meeting "almost a reflexive response in coverage of troubling news stories." For Rosati and others, journalists and attendees, the town meeting format can serve multiple roles in trying times: comforting, cathartic and sometimes just conversational.

"We thought it was important to localize the Colorado tragedy," said WMAQ's President and General Manager Larry Wert, "and provide Chicagoans with a forum where they could openly discuss their fears, concerns and explore possible solutions." The large gathering took place in the studio that normally houses *The Jenny Jones Show*.

There were numerous such video get-togethers across the country. ABC's *Nightline* anchor Ted Koppel led one two days after the Littleton tragedy in Jonesboro, Ark., the site of a school shooting that left five people dead last year. Last week, Tom Brokaw and Jane Pauley went to Westfield, N.J. to talk



From Grand Prairie, Texas, WFAA-TV anchor Brad Watson moderates a live town meeting before an audience of 1,200.

about violence and youth for MSNBC. The meeting was attended by Vice President Al Gore and Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, while CNN sent Jeff Greenfield to Champaign-Urbana, Ill. for a discussion there. CNN planned a second meeting in Denver last Saturday to be moderated by Judy Woodruff.

L. Brent Bozell, chairman of the nonprofit Parents Television Council, said last week that his organization was taking the first steps toward putting together a national lineup of top-line Hollywood celebrities for city-by-city

town hall meetings. The Parents Television Council's national spokesman Steve Allen, along with other "really big stars" would likely be involved in the meetings, Bozell said.

In Atlanta, WSB-TV opened its large new studio for *School Safety: A Community Conversation*, hosted by John Pruitt and Monica Kaufman.

In Denver, where local TV stations reported to the nation a week earlier, KMGH-TV broadcast a two-hour discussion Thursday night live in prime time. A tape of the show, with local content added later, was broadcast at other McGraw-Hill Broadcasting-owned stations WRTV(TV) Indianapolis; KERO-TV Bakersfield, Calif.; and KGTV(TV) San Diego. The broadcast took place at TCI studios, based in Littleton. TCI also hosted an interactive discussion of school violence from Chicago on the World Wide Web.

WFAA-TV Dallas already hosts a town meeting nearly every month. "We had scheduled one to listen to teenagers talk about health issues—which include violence and suicide," said Nann Goplerud, executive producer for special projects, and the Littleton story was a natural fit. The show ran live on A.H. Belo's cable news channel TXCN. A smaller group discussion was carried over WFAA later that evening, delaying *Nightline*.

The station expected about 400 to come to the school cafeteria for the discussion, led by anchors Brad Watson and Carmen Ainsworth. But the large room was overflowing by the time of the taping, with an estimated 1,200 in attendance. ■



A panel of teens at WFAA-TV's outreach effort take on teen burnout, underage drinking, teen pregnancy and violence.

Comcast at the edge

With potential digital partners in sight, fight for MediaOne could damage everyone

By John M. Higgins

As Comcast Corp.'s next move in the bidding war for MediaOne Group Inc. begins to take shape, cable industry and Wall Street executives worry about possible financial and regulatory fallout.

To counter rival AT&T Corp.'s startling \$69 billion offer for MediaOne, Comcast has enlisted aid from Microsoft Corp. and America Online Inc. Those two companies entered letters of confidentiality with MediaOne that will allow them to inspect the company's books.

Executives involved in the talks said the structure of a joint Microsoft-AOL-Comcast bid has not been settled. Options include investing directly in Comcast and creating a joint venture among the three companies.

However, a victory could be double-edged. Wall Street worries that Comcast could end up overloaded with debt or handcuffed by tough terms from its potential partners. They remember vividly seven years of turmoil suffered by Time Warner Inc.

after Time Inc.'s victory in a similar contest for Warner Communications Inc. in 1989. That resulted in years of internal political strife and Time Warner surrendering control of its cable operations to MediaOne in exchange for a cash injection.

More broadly, cable executives and lobbyists fear that an AT&T victory will spur regulators to tighten up industry rules, in part prompted by the telco's potentially huge ownership within the industry. Buying MediaOne would give AT&T an interest in systems serving 65% of all U.S. cable subscribers. Comcast could exacerbate the situation if it seeks to hamstring AT&T by taking its fight to Washington.

One cable lobbyist said the fight threatens to resemble another Time Warner struggle, the multibillion antitrust suit that Viacom Inc.'s Showtime pay movie network suit filed against Time Warner's Home Box Office in 1991.

While eventually settled, Viacom's accusations about Home Box Office and Time Warner Cable's treatment of Showtime "became a road map for the

authors of all the programming provisions of the 1992 Cable Act," the lobbyist said.

MediaOne's board was expected to meet last weekend to formally consider AT&T's offer to acquire the MSO and its 5 million cable customers. If accepted, Comcast then has five days to respond, but it can seek a 21-day extension.

AT&T Chairman Mike Armstrong said he's not concerned about any counter bid. "I really think we can bring more value than any company or combination of companies in the world," he said.

The tough part of the deal for Comcast isn't so much that AT&T's offer is about \$8 billion more than Comcast's. The challenge is that AT&T is willing to buy MediaOne's equity with both common stock and about \$20 billion in cash.

Comcast had anticipated only paying its own common stock. That sent Comcast trying to hook up with partners. Microsoft has already tripled its money on a 1997 \$1 billion investment for 10% of Comcast's stock.

AOL executives are desperate for a play in high-speed access via cable, fearing that they will lose customers to cable-controlled services @Home and Road Runner.

The fight got nasty as soon as AT&T plunged in. Securities analysts report that in meetings pitching AT&T's deal, AT&T Broadband President Leo Hindery dismissed as "bullshit" Comcast's president Brian Roberts' projections of cost savings from merging Comcast and MediaOne's cable operations.

Also Hindery publicly blasted Comcast for disenfranchising MediaOne shareholders by offering them only nonvoting stock. That would leave control of the merged operation firmly in the hands of the Roberts family, which would have just a 2% economic interest but a majority of the shareholder votes.

That is a new crusade for Hindery. As president of Tele-Communications Inc. before the MSO was acquired by AT&T this year, he never complained about TCI chairman John Malone's financial gymnastics to maintain a lock on the company's shareholder votes. ■

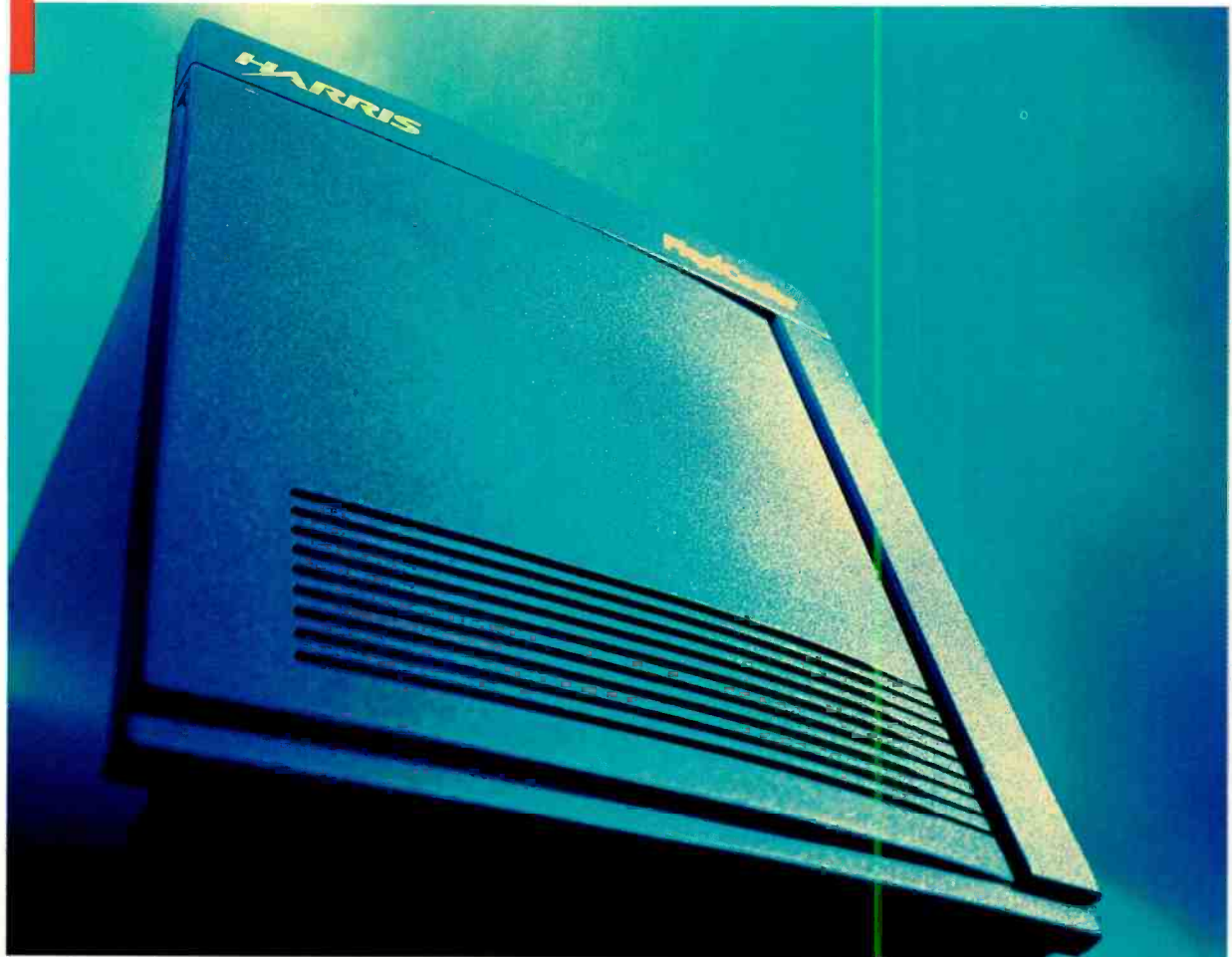
B&C's Conlon to head Ad Council

Broadcasting & Cable Group VP Peggy Conlon is leaving May 14 to head the Advertising Council as president/CEO. The New York-based Ad Council is a 56-year-old nonprofit organization that creates PSAs for TV, radio and print. In 1998, the Ad Council received more than \$1.2 billion in donated media inventory. Conlon assumes her post at the Ad Council June 1. "I am excited at the prospect of dedicating all my experience and energies to forward the mission of The Advertising Council," says Conlon. "The ability to make a difference in the quality of people's lives is an opportunity I couldn't pass up." The Broadcasting & Cable Group will now be under the direction of Bill McGorry, VP of the Communications Group, which includes *Multichannel News* and *Cablevision*. The Broadcasting & Cable Group comprises BROADCASTING & CABLE, *Broadcasting & Cable Online*, *TV Fax*, *Cableday*, *Digital Television*, *TWICE* and BROADCASTING & CABLE International publications.

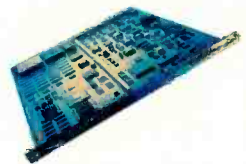


Conlon (l) will be succeeded by Bill McGorry.

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NBC downsizes affil relations team

Perhaps it's a sign of a shift to cable—or just a sign of deteriorating times

By Steve McClellan

Two more indications emerged last week that big changes in the traditional network-affiliate relationship are near. NBC last week offered all of the close to two-dozen people in its affiliate relations department (including Senior Vice President John Damiano, who heads the unit) voluntary buyout packages.

At Fox, affiliates were considering a possible antitrust case against their network as they try to come up with one or more alternative proposals to Fox's plan to take back 22% of prime time inventory.

An NBC spokeswoman confirmed the buyout offerings but said the network was not shutting down the department—merely cutting it back substantially. She said there is no expectation that that everyone in the department would accept the plan.

Meanwhile, executives at other networks took NBC's move to signify that it is serious about shifting its signal to cable—at least in some parts of the country. "You can't negotiate with 214 stations with just 10 people. It's hard enough with 20," says an executive at a competing network. Two weeks ago, NBC president Bob Wright told *BROADCASTING & CABLE* that he expects to distribute the network's signal directly to cable in 10% of the nation's households after the network and broadcast affiliates have restructured their business relationship.

As part of that restructuring, NBC wants to cut compensation, and even phase it out over time. NBC, ABC and CBS each spend roughly \$200 million annually in affiliate compensation.

NBC's affils were taken by surprise. "I guess it means either they don't want affiliates or they don't want relations," quipped Alan Frank, chairman of the

NBC affiliate board of advisers, and general manager of WDIV-TV Detroit.

This year's NBC affiliate meeting is also being cut back to one day—Sunday, May 16. They will meet among themselves in New York the day before; those who want to see the network's new prime time schedule will go to the network's up-front presentation for advertisers on Monday, May 17.

ABC and CBS sources said there were no immediate plans to reduce the size of the affiliate relations departments at those networks. ABC's affiliate department, which currently numbers about two dozen staffers, underwent a restructuring about three years ago, sources say.

Fox and its affiliates meanwhile, didn't seem to get far in their talks last week about Fox's decision to take back inventory. Sources say Fox affiliate attorneys are urging stations to sue on antitrust grounds, as well as charge Fox with violating FCC rules that bar networks from controlling programming of local stations and other rules that bar networks from serving as de facto advertising reps for non-owned stations.

"We're certainly examining all those options," said Murray Green, chairman of the Fox affiliate board and general manager of WFLX-TV West Palm Beach.

Green also said the board was working on several counter-proposals it hoped to give the network this week. "There's been no substantial progress so far," he said. "They are very difficult people to work with," he said of the Fox executives.

Also, Fox has set a deadline of Thursday (May 6) for stations to decide if they want the inventory cutback or buyback. Some stations say they will respond with a non-response—that they don't acknowledge Fox's right to do it. "I think more than a few stations are planning to do that," said Green. ■

Tribune to sell PolyGram programs

PolyGram Television's new owners, Universal Television & Networks Group, last week picked Tribune Entertainment to handle the ad sales in the majority of the studio's syndicated shows for the 1999-2000 season. With the market in up-front advertising in those shows launching unexpectedly last week, Universal had to act fast since it does not have a domestic sales team of its own.

Last Wednesday evening (April 28), already two days into the advertising community's annual buying frenzy, Universal finalized the deal that gives Tribune Entertainment the domestic barter sales rights to PolyGram's upcoming half-hour late-night series *Blind Date*, action hours *Total Recall 2070* and *The Crow: Stairway to Heaven* and a pair of syndicated movie packages. PolyGram's only other syndicated show, the new weekly musical series *Motown Live*, is being sold by Black Pearl Entertainment, which handled the show's initial ad sales a year ago.

"We were pretty aggressive about acquiring their inventory because we thought it was a pretty good match with what we already were doing," says Tribune CEO/President Dick Askin, whose studio will launch *The Beastmaster: The Legend Continues* and the talk show *Richard Simmons' Dream Maker* in the fall. "We thought PolyGram's product had great potential upside."

Askin concedes that his company missed two days of crucial up-front selling last week, but says his sales force had been preparing to make up for lost time. "We were optimistic that this was going to happen, so we talked to a lot of [advertising] clients that we at Tribune were already cutting deals with, letting them know that there was a high probability that we would be back in a day or two with some additional projects to pitch them," Askin says. "It is going to be a lot of work initially because we have to play catch-up, but the product is strong and I'm confident that the shows will sell well."

—Joe Schlosser

Broadcasting & Cable
ONLINE

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breaking industry news each business
day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

CBS buys Austin affil for \$160M

CBS Corp. has won the bidding for Granite Broadcasting Corp.'s KEYE-TV Austin, Texas, saying last Thursday that it will pay \$160 million cash for the station at Ch. 42.

The deal brings CBS close to the FCC's ownership limit of 35%. (BROADCASTING & CABLE, April 26). Austin, the nation's 60th-largest TV market, brings the media conglomerate to 33%.

And expect CBS to keep buying until it hits the current cap in order to bolster its contention that the ownership limit should be raised. Said CBS spokesman Gil Schwartz: "We certainly want to be at the maximum, as we're pushing to move the maximum."

While neither CBS nor Granite would disclose the cash-flow multiple being paid for the station, Schwartz said the deal is immediately accretive. An industry observer said that the probable cash flow multiple would be 15 to 20.

Granite Chairman W. Don Cornwell said he was pleased with the price "and we think it's a great deal for both companies."

CBS was intent on KEYE-TV not just because the sta-



Seller Don Cornwell says Granite will use proceeds to improve other stations.

tion is already a CBS affiliate, but because "this is a fantastic market," Schwartz said. "It makes a lot of sense for us to be strong in the parts of the country that are growing fastest." Also, CBS owns three FM stations and one AM outlet in Austin, giving it a TV-radio combo that's expected to add to growth. KEYE-TV currently is rated No. 3 of five stations in the market.

Granite intends to use the sale gains—expected to be more than \$100 million—to reduce debt and beef up its two stations, acquired a year ago, in San Francisco and Detroit. "We're in a building mode right now," Cornwell said.

Just weeks earlier, the auction field had been narrowed to five serious bidders from more than 30 that started the process, Cornwell said last week. He declined to name names, but among those said to be on the short list were Hearst-Argyle Television Inc. and Raycom Media Inc.

The deal first must win Justice Department and FCC approval, with closing expected by year's end.

—Elizabeth A. Rathbun

Robust 1Q in radio

Clear Channel, Cox and Infinity report substantial gains

By Elizabeth A. Rathbun

With FCC approval in hand, the closing of the merger of Jacor Communications Inc. into Clear Channel Communications is expected shortly. The FCC last Thursday OK'd the \$4.4 billion (including Jacor debt) deal, struck last October.

The Justice Department had granted early approval on April 22, more than nine weeks after the companies agreed to spin off 20 radio stations to ensure Justice's agreement (B&C, Feb. 15).

Last Wednesday, Clear Channel Chairman L. Lowry Mays declared "a really outstanding quarter" as the company released its first-quarter financial numbers. While incurring a net loss of \$12.7 million, compared with net income of \$5.6 million in the first quarter of 1998, after-tax cash flow grew 110%, to \$113.2 million. The company considers after-tax cash flow its most important measure of success, and the growth there made IQ 1999 its best first quarter ever. Net revenue was up 85%, to \$376.8 million. The

loss was attributed to the costs of acquisitions.

Meanwhile, Jacor released its last set of IQ numbers. The loss of \$6.9 million in IQ '98 turned into net income of \$41.8 million. Net revenue was up 37.1%, to \$194.7 million, while broadcast cash flow (BCF) jumped 58.3%, to \$54.9 million. The gain came with the sale of securities.

The new Clear Channel will own or operate 625 radio stations, 19 TV stations and about 302,000 outdoor-advertising displays worldwide.

In other IQ numbers released by radio companies last week:

■ Cox Radio Inc. crowed over a nearly 38% increase in net income, to \$3.8 million, on net revenue that rose almost 16%, to \$60.4 million, as BCF grew 18.9%, to \$19.7 million. On a same-station basis, net revenue rose

9.8%, to \$56.9 million, and BCF was up 20.7%, to \$20 million.

In the past, the first quarter generally represented Cox's lowest-earning quarter. But this time around it was strong for several reasons, Cox said: a strong quarter for radio advertising, the purchase of three FMs and one AM from Capstar Broadcasting Corp. last May and "substantial increases in new revenue" at its stations in Miami, Orlando, Fla., and Atlanta.

■ Infinity Broadcasting Corp., the radio and outdoor unit of CBS Corp., also reported a record IQ with net income up nearly 55%, to \$48 million, and net revenue of \$474 million, an increase

of 44%. Growth was attributed to strong ad revenue for radio and outdoor "faces." Infinity owns or operates 160 radio faces.

■ The net loss at Citadel Communications Corp. grew from \$5.12 million in IQ '98 to \$5.18 million, partly attributed to acquisitions. Net revenue rose almost 16%, to \$32.6 million, and broadcast cash flow flowed up 28.3%, to \$8 million. Citadel owns or operates 108 radio stations in mid-sized markets. ■



Clear Channel's Mays announces 'a really outstanding quarter.'

ESPN to hike license fees by 20%

By Deborah D. McAdams

Just a year after pushing through a big increase, ESPN is hitting cable operators with a new 20% license fee hike.

Operators say they were notified late last week that the increase would go into effect Aug. 1, pushing many operators' rates past the \$1 per subscriber mark. While some regional sports networks have higher rates, ESPN is the most expensive of the national basic networks.

Ed Durso, executive vice president of administration for ESPN, defended the network's move, pegging the increase to the cost of programming. In a high-profile maneuver last year, the network agreed to pay more than \$4.8 billion for eight years of National Football League games. Besides up-front costs, Durso said ESPN's heavy reliance on live programming translates into production costs nearly six times higher than the industry average.

"Sports is expensive," Durso said. He wouldn't confirm the size of the increase or the new rates provided by operators.

Despite that programming expense, ESPN is also the most profitable cable network group. Even with the heavy spending on newer networks, one analyst expects the group to generate \$2.1 billion in revenue and about \$800 million in cash flow.

Operators express little sympathy. One cable executive countered that ESPN's parent company is foisting a disproportionate amount of the sports bill onto cable operators. "Disney books 60% of the cost of football to ESPN and only 40% to ABC, even though *Monday Night* is the much more lucrative part of the package," the executive said.

Durso, however, added that sports is uniformly the most popular programming on cable and helps operators get higher rates for local avails. "ESPN alone generates 20% of all local ad sales that are generated in the cable television industry," Durso said. That's about \$400 million out of a total of \$2 billion, or about 50 cents a subscriber a month on average. ■

CLOSED CIRCUIT

BEHIND THE SCENES, BEFORE THE FACT

WASHINGTON

In like Ness

It is now considered a sure bet that the White House will renominate Susan Ness to a second five-year term as an FCC commissioner. There was no confirmation from her office late Friday, where staffers referred callers back to the administration.

DALLAS

AOL in Chancellor's future?

America Online Inc., Yahoo! Inc. and Alta Vista Technology are among the possible Internet partners with which Chancellor Media Corp. is negotiating, according to R. Steven Hicks, Chancellor's co-vice chairman and leader of its "Internet initiative." Look for specifics of the company's Internet plans on May 18, after a Chancellor board meeting. Last Thursday, *Business Week* reported that AOL will pay Chancellor \$250 million for exclusive rights to feature Chancellor's radio stations on the Internet. "It may happen but there's not even a framework of a deal," Hicks said last Wednesday. A deal with AOL is "as possible as with all the other ones." An AOL spokesman declined comment.

NEW YORK

A good omen for Comcast?

Cable Positive's annual fundraiser in New York last Monday was intriguing in part because many of the combatants in the takeover fight for MediaOne Group were in the room. No interesting exchanges between dinner chairman and AT&T Broadband President Leo Hindery and the Comcast folks were witnessed. However, Comcast Vice Chairman Julian Brodsky was handed a fortune cookie during dessert: "Negotiations move along smoothly, the outcome is favorable."

WASHINGTON

FCC set on set-top boxes

The FCC at its May 13 meeting is scheduled to decide whether cable firms must separate the channel surfing and security functions of analog set-top boxes. Staffers for the five commissioners last week received the Cable Services Bureau's advice about a deal worked out between the cable industry and consumer-electronics makers that would exempt analog-only boxes from separation rules applied to all set-top boxes last summer. FCC staffers wouldn't comment, but sources predicted the agency would accept the deal. The cable industry, however, probably won't win its effort to gain an exemption for hybrid boxes that handle both analog and digital signals.

DENVER

Decisions, decisions

Charlie Ergen has to be feeling pretty good about his Primestar bonds investment. But now he faces the question of whether there's more upside to holding or cashing out. Ergen's EchoStar Communications Corp. bought about 10% of the bonds for 60 cents on the dollar a while back, spending roughly \$60 million total. Paving the way for its sale to DirecTV parent Hughes Electronics, Primestar last week agreed to pay bondholders 85.6 cents on the dollar plus certain stock appreciation rights (SARs) on Hughes (NYSE: GMH) shares. The flip side: Primestar's obligated to pay \$1.01 on the dollar to the 16% of bondholders that haven't agreed to the buyout—a group that includes EchoStar, sources say. No matter how you slice it, Ergen's a winner. Door One: Ergen takes the \$1.01 offer, reaping a profit of about \$41 million, or roughly 85%, on his investment. Door Two: Ergen accepts the repurchase offer and makes a \$25.6 million profit, or roughly 43%, with the opportunity to gain even more from the SARs. Quite a quandary.

Sat TV bill passes House 422-1

Unresolved issues remain on the horizon as Senate prepares to vote on its measure

By Paige Albiniaik

The U.S. House of Representatives last week overwhelmingly approved (422-1), legislation that would allow satellite TV companies to offer customers local TV signals. The bill also requires those companies to carry all local TV signals in markets they serve by Jan. 1, 2002. Congress is eager to pass a bill to create competition to cable and force cable prices down.

The Senate is expected to vote on its bill in mid-May. After that, the bills will be reconciled in a conference of key House and Senate lawmakers.

"The time has come to address the issue and pass legislation that makes the satellite industry more competitive with cable," said Rep. Howard Coble (R-N.C.), chairman of the House Courts and Intellectual Property Subcommittee.

"This bill is designed to put satellite TV providers on that equal footing [with cable,]" said Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-La.), chairman of the House Telecommunications Subcommittee. "As we prepare to enter the 21st century, it will give consumers across the nation more choices when it comes to the programming they want, and the prices they pay for it. This legislation will have a revolutionizing impact on the marketplace."

The bill also passed the full House easily because of the uproar created after a federal court ordered satellite TV companies to cut off the distant network signals of nearly 2 million sub-



Landslide passage of legislation brings satellite operators closer to delivering local broadcast signals.

scribers. Those subscribers have been contacting their congressional representatives since last October, pleading with them to alleviate the problem.

According to agreements between some satellite carriers and broadcasters, about 80% of those subscribers will not lose their distant signals until June 30. The remainder—who live in the Grade B or outer portion of the local broadcast signal—likely will keep their signals until the end of the year. Congress hopes that allowing satellite carriers to offer local network signals will provide a solution.

After a tough jurisdictional fight, the House Commerce and Judiciary Committees merged their two comprehensive bills and offered "The Satellite Copyright, Competition and Consumer Protection Act" (H.R. 1554) on the House floor. The only vote against the bill came from Rep. Robert Brady (D-Pa.), a pro-labor legislator who reportedly had received a letter from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers expressing concern over retransmission language.

The broadcast and satellite industries say they support the intent of the bill, but have many concerns about specific provisions.

Dennis Wharton, spokesman for the National Association of Broadcasters, called the bill a "framework for moving forward. We have reservations about several provisions that we hope can be discussed in the conference."

"The SBCA and its member companies will continue to pursue vigorously certain provisions of the bill that, unless revised, could hamper the bill's potential to achieve its stated benefits to consumers. Our efforts will be directed to ensuring that all consumers have access to the widest range of high-quality programming and increased competitive choices in the video marketplace," said Chuck Hewitt, president of the Satellite Broadcasting and Communications Association.

DirecTV President Eddy Hartenstein called the bill a "step in the right direction," and said that "while we remain concerned about some of the provisions in the bill, we look forward to working with members [of Congress] to make changes to these provisions."

The following provisions are still in dispute:

- Local broadcasters would be required to give their signals to all multichannel video providers fairly and non-exclusively until Jan. 1, 2006. Without this measure, satellite TV company EchoStar said it would not support the bill.

- "It is essential that any final legislation require broadcasters to negotiate in a nondiscriminatory manner with DBS providers," said EchoStar CEO Charlie Ergen. "We appreciate that lawmakers have recognized how important this provision is to fledgling alternative video programming distributors who are seeking to compete in the



'The time has come to...pass legislation that makes the satellite industry more competitive with cable.'



Markey was a co-sponsor of the satellite legislation.

marketplace against the behemoth cable monopoly.”

Broadcasters and cable operators strongly oppose this provision and are fighting to have it removed. They say the market should determine the price local broadcasters could charge for their signals. The Clinton administration supports this provision, according to a statement issued by the Office of Management and Budget.

■ Satellite carriers could import distant signals to subscribers who live in the Grade B contour, which is approximately 35 miles beyond local broadcasters' main signal, without applying programming exclusivity rules. That would allow households in the Grade B contour to receive both local and imported signals. Broadcasters say this provision will shrink their local market.

■ Satellite carriers would have to provide free antennas to all subscribers in the local broadcaster's main broadcast signal area (the Grade A contour) who receive out-of-market network



'This legislation will have a revolutionizing effect on the marketplace.'

feeds. Satellite carriers call this provision a tax. The Clinton administration also opposes this provision, saying it is “concerned about the unfunded mandate on the private sector to provide equipment during the pendency of these proceedings.”

■ Satellite TV subscribers who live in the outer portion of the local broadcaster's signal (the Grade B contour), would be able to continue importing out-of-market signals even if they could receive the local broadcast signals over the air with a rooftop antenna. The bill would

require the FCC to devise, within six months of the bill's enactment, a model that would take terrain and obstacles into account to predict whether individual households can receive local TV signals over the air. Those households proven to receive over-the-air signals would lose their distant signals. The administration is concerned that this provision will cause subscribers who truly cannot receive local signals to lose their distant signals as well.

■ Local broadcasters and satellite carriers would share equally the cost of signal-strength tests, used at the home to determine whether a household can receive a clear off-air signal. Broadcasters say that they usually win these challenges, and so they do not want to have to pay equally for tests.

■ The legislation would allow satellite carriers to avoid all regulations by negotiating terms of carriage directly with local broadcasters. Small and independent broadcasters and cable operators oppose this because the law does not give them the same option. ■

Broadcasters gamble on top court

Justices hear arguments challenging casino ad ban and commercial speech limits

By Paige Albinak

Broadcasters last week challenged a government ban on broadcast gambling ads in oral arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing that allowing extensive exceptions to the ban makes the law ineffective.

The plaintiffs in the case hope the Supreme Court not only will overturn the ban, but also will grant commercial speech fuller constitutional protection.

“We are hopeful the court will use the case as a vehicle to find that any speech designed to keep the public ignorant is unconstitutional,” said Bruce Ennis, an attorney with the Washington law firm of Jenner and Block, who is representing broadcasters in the case.

The federal government does not allow radio and TV to advertise gambling activities in private casinos, but it permits ads to use the word “casino” and it lets Indian-owned casinos, government-sponsored lotteries and sports-based gambling to advertise freely. The government is seeking to uphold the ban, it says, because broadcast advertising is the most successful way to lure people to the gaming tables. The government argues that it



Plaintiffs challenge the notion that banning casino advertising discourages gambling.

is protecting the public interest by keeping gaming ads to a minimum.

“Broadcast advertising is very intrusive and reaches very widely,” said Barbara Underwood, deputy solicitor general with the Justice Department. “It induces a person to do what he wants to do.”

But the Supreme Court justices did not seem persuaded by this argument, repeatedly asking Underwood to provide some proof of the link between limiting private casinos' right to advertise and protecting the public interest. “The true drunk is going to find the bottle if the

bottle is there,” said Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg. “I don't see the connection between this kind of advertising and the addict.”

Broadcasters pointed out that because of the ban's loopholes, anyone seeking to gamble will not be prevented from doing so.

“The government has not asserted a general interest in reducing gambling,” Ennis said. “The government's concern is reducing the social costs of gambling—

particularly compulsive gambling. There is no reason to believe and no evidence that compulsive gambling takes place more often in private casinos.”

Justice Stephen Breyer said the real issue is not whether citizens are protected from gaming but whether the government wants to limit private casinos' activities in order to divert money to Indian reservations.

“Is it a justification to stop a legal activity because you'd like the money to go to a different group?” Breyer asked.

Broadcasters also are working from

a legal precedent. The case of *Central Hudson Gas & Electric vs. Public Service Commission* in 1980 set out a four-part test to protect commercial speech that does nothing more than lawfully advertise a legal product. Lawyers for the Greater New Orleans Broadcasters Association (GNOBA) argue that banning private casinos, but not others, from advertising gaming on broadcast media fails parts of the *Central Hudson* test because the loopholes make it impossible for the government to advance any social benefit. The Supreme Court has generally ruled that commercial speech that harms the public interest, such as advertisements pro-

moting illegal activities, is not protected by the Constitution.

The ban also should be struck down because “[broadcasters] are threatened with criminal prosecution for airing truthful, accurate speech about legal activities in the state of Louisiana,” said Don Cooper, executive director of GNOBA. GNOBA has been working to rid itself of the ban in New Orleans, where riverboat gaming is legal, as well as battling to apply a favorable ruling to broadcasters nationwide.

The National Association of Broadcasters support GNOBA in the case, and “friend of the court” briefs have been filed by the American Advertising

Federation, the Association of National Advertisers, the American Gaming Association, Valley Broadcasting Co. and Sierra Broadcasting Co. Both broadcasters won their own case in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

The high court is taking the case because the lower courts split on the issue. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans last year upheld the ban for the second time. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco struck down the ban in 1997. The high court generally takes such cases to resolve the splits.

A decision is expected in late June. ■



WASHINGTON WATCH

By Paige Albiniak and Bill McConnell

Senators want to free phones to spur Internet competition

Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kansas) last week introduced legislation that would allow telephone companies to offer broadband Internet services free of the regulation that circumscribes their phone activities. The “Broadband Internet Regulatory Relief Act (S. 877)” — co-sponsored by Sens. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) and Larry Craig (R-Idaho) — is intended to give companies incentives to expand their broadband networks in rural areas.

“The ubiquity of our nation’s telephone network presents us with a tremendous opportunity to deliver high-speed Internet access to our rural constituents at a pace comparable with the rate at which urban and suburban consumers will be offered such service,” Brownback said in his floor statement. “But to realize this goal, we must remove unneces-

sary regulation that has impeded the rapid deployment of broadband networks. Advanced services should not be regulated in the same manner as basic telephone service.”

Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) plans to introduce three bills regarding broadband Internet services, McCain aide Pete Belvin said last week.

The first bill, known as the “regulatory freedom bill,” would forbid the FCC from charging consumers extra for Internet access. The second would require the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the FCC to do a study on whether and when rural customers will be able to receive broadband Internet services. The third bill, like Brownback’s, would allow regional telephone companies to offer data services nationally. The 1996 Telecommunications Act forbids phone companies from offering any services across state borders.

High Court upholds phone rules

The Supreme Court last week denied appeals by regional phone companies to let them integrate their electronic publishing businesses with the rest of their services. BellSouth and US West had challenged provisions in the 1996 Telecommunications Act that required phone companies to keep electronic publishing activities, such as providing sports scores and stock quotes, in separate subsidiaries. The Supreme Court also ruled against regional phone companies last January, when it let stand provisions in the 1996 Telecommunications Act that require regional phone companies to open their networks to competition before they can enter the long-distance business. Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kansas) plan to introduce bills that would change the law to allow

regional phone companies to offer data services across state lines.

NAB to FCC: Slow down on microradio

The FCC is moving too fast on its low-power radio proposal, says the National Association of Broadcasters. Again the NAB has asked the FCC to delay the deadline for comments on the low-power plan, this time from June 1 to, at the earliest, Aug. 1 (the FCC already had extended the deadline from the original April 12 deadline). Late fall would be even better, according to the NAB, because a series of studies is now under way to determine the impact a new low-power FM service would have on existing stations and digital signals they intend to transmit in the future. Some reports won’t be finished until Dec. 15. “Studies of this size and complexity inevitably take time,” wrote NAB President Eddie Fritts in an April 26 letter to FCC Chairman William Kennard. “It will not be possible to replace rhetoric with facts by the current comment deadline since the facts cannot be fully developed” by early June.

UPFRONT

Broadcast take could hit \$6.6B

Rising demand, rates expected to boost early-bird sale of prime time spots by 6%-10%

By Steve McClellan

Driven by the red-hot economy, the broadcast networks' annual upfront sale of advertising time next month could exceed last year's take of \$6 billion by 6%-10%, market players and watchers say.

The sale accounts for about 75% of the six networks' inventory of prime time spots for the 1999-2000 season. The networks sell the rest of their time during the season in the so-called scatter market.

BT Alex Brown says the Big Four networks' combined upfront revenue will grow 7%-9% to between \$6.4 and \$6.6 billion—despite a combined audience drop of 5%. The firm predicts a 7%-10% gain for ABC, CBS and Fox, but just 3%-6% for NBC. The projected total dollars: NBC, \$2.15 billion; ABC, \$1.50 billion; CBS, \$1.21 billion; Fox, \$1.13 billion.

Merrill Lynch told clients to look for a 6%-10% gain. Rates (on a cost-per-

thousand basis) will rise 7%-10% along with demand, it said. Demand is fueled by the excitement surrounding the millennium and the influx of new advertisers, notably prescription drug and Internet-related companies. The latter will inject between \$150 million and \$200 million into the market for the upcoming season, it said.

The six broadcast-network total is also being boosted by The WB's strong performance. However, some advertisers think WB chief Jamie Kellner will fall short of his \$450 million goal (compared to \$300 million last year). Buyers are rooting for the ratings-starved UPN, because every additional seller adds to their negotiating leverage. How UPN fares will depend in large part on the new schedule they announce later this month, buyers say.

The most bullish upfront prediction comes from David Poltrack, executive vice president, research and planning, CBS. Poltrack says the Big Four may rake in 15% more upfront dollars than they did a year ago—helping to make the coming season the most prosperous since 1976—the networks' best year ever. "I think you'll see a lot of companies trying to position themselves at the millennium as the company of the 21st century in their field and that will result in extraordinary marketing programs with extraordinary ad support."

But buyers are doubtful the market will go that high. "That's what he's supposed to say," says John Lazarus, head of national broadcast buying for

TN Media. "And I'm supposed to say, 'Yeah, but there are too many gross rating points out there and we can be selective and we have more alternatives than we've ever had so we can shut anybody out at any given point without hurting our clients.'" In other words, says Lazarus, what we have here is the usual "upfront foreplay" that goes on among buyers and sellers before the bets are made.

But Lazarus agrees this year's market will be robust. "Overall everyone sees that there is probably a lot of money in the marketplace. The economy is strong and it is certainly going to be a healthy upfront. My guess is we'll see high-single-digit increases on the networks and cable. The bottom line is [advertising] budgets are pretty healthy and it's based on the economy. There are just a lot of companies out there competing very aggressively."

Other agency executives point to the continuing erosion of network audi-

The economy is strong and it is certainly going to be a healthy upfront. We'll see high-single-digit increases.

—John Lazarus, TN Media

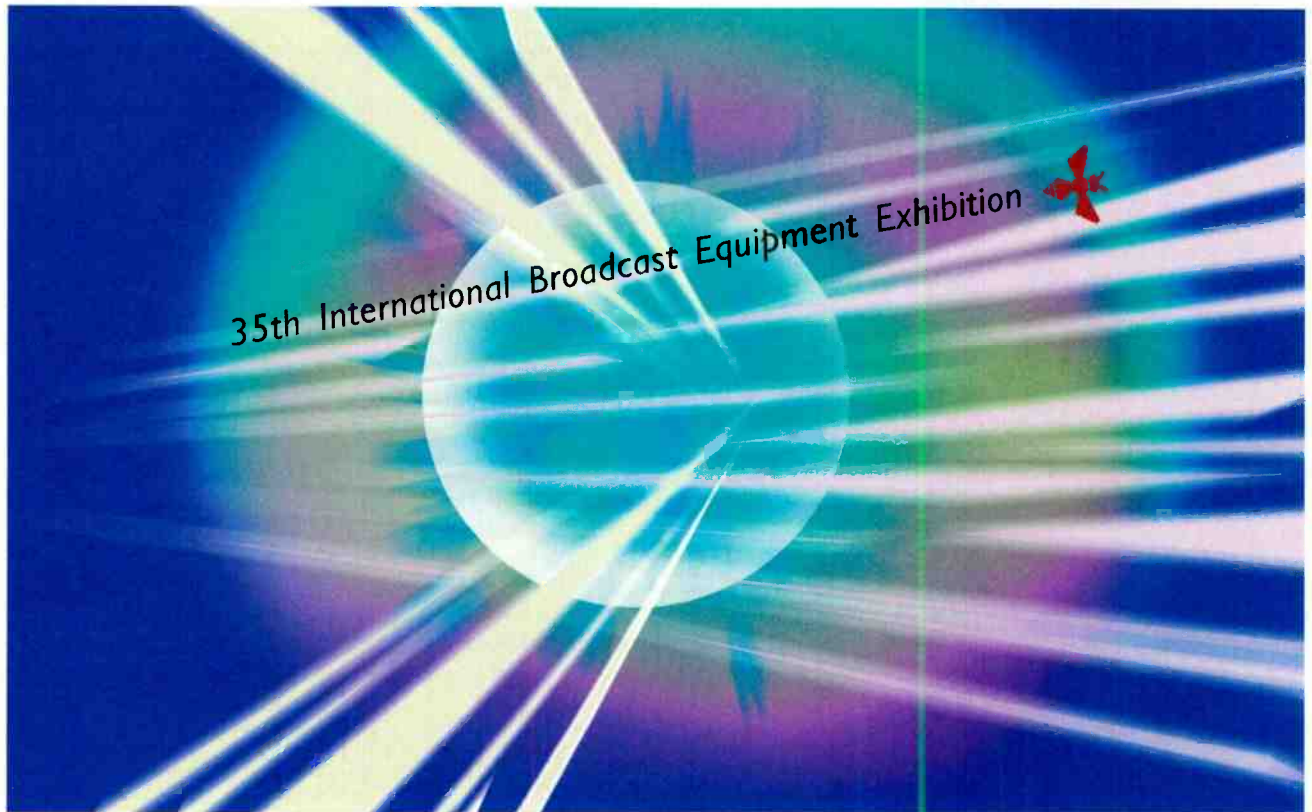
There's a certain amount of pressure from the fact that there's a decline in supply [of available ratings points]."

—Chris Geraci, BBDO

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- Electric Power Units ● HDTV Systems
- Satellite Broadcasting Systems
- Virtual Systems ● CG Production Systems
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ences. But they admit that while it would make sense for prices to go down for a smaller audience, demand for the mass audience will keep prices headed up. "Why do we want to pay more for less?" asks Donna Speciali, director of national broadcast for Mediacom, the buying arm at Grey Advertising. "In spite of themselves, since the demand is there, everybody's going to do better than they should."

Chris Geraci, senior vice president and director of national TV buying at BBDO, agrees. "It's shaping up to be a fairly strong market. There's a certain amount of pressure from the fact that there's a decline in supply [of available ratings points] and at least some steady growth in demand." Thus, other buyers say, the networks will succeed in playing on fears that advertisers who balk will get shut out of the market.

The dynamics of this year's market will be different than in years past. The reason is the dramatic fall-off in NBC's ratings. The Peacock Network is still number one among adults 18-49 and 25-54, but the lead is no longer overwhelming. "Must-see TV is not must-see TV anymore," says Speciali. "It levels the playing field. For three or four years, with *Seinfeld* and Thursdays, there were certain NBC places you had to be. I don't think that's the case anymore. They don't have the 18-49 strength they used to, so [buyers] are sitting there with four or five networks that all fit into the mix."

Some buyers [not to mention most of NBC's competitors] say that while NBC may get rate increases, they don't believe those increases will be enough to offset the network's ratings falloff this year. Thus, they say, it is unlikely NBC will be able to retain all of the \$2.15 billion this year that it captured in the upfront in 1998. Speaking of NBC, "My guess is they might be off a little bit," says TN Media's Lazarus. But he also expects the network to price its rate card aggressively. "I have to look at a new sales team and they have to show [NBC honchos] Bob Wright and Randy Falco that their choices were right, so they're going to come out very strongly. But we won't jump over any price that's thrown out there."

But Keith Turner, head of network sales for NBC, says he's "very confident" the network will hit last year's upfront mark again this year. "Panic is probably too strong a word, but there seems to be strong concern about how

UPFRONT

"In spite of themselves, since the demand is there, [networks'] going to do better than they should."

—Donna Speciali, Mediacom

strong this market is going to be," he says. As a result, Turner says that "most or all of the advertisers want to talk to us now about early deals."

Turner points to the strong scatter market, where prices, for NBC at least, have been "historic" in the first and second quarters. A strong scatter is usually an indicator of a strong upfront, he notes. Buyers counter that the scatter market has, at least in part, been buoyed by high make-good levels (especially at NBC), which has created an artificially tight scatter market and resulting high prices.

But Turner says the network set

aside enough inventory ahead of time so that make-goods were not a factor in scatter. "We're still No. 1 in prime time, late night and news," he says. "There is no reason why we can't maintain our share, if not grow it."

Meanwhile, the broadcast networks have been talking up Nielsen's new Quad study, which attempts to indicate which shows attract the most loyal viewers, in terms of both minutes watched per episode and episodes watched per series. Network briefings on the study circulating among agencies suggest that the networks have the most loyal viewers while cable has the most grazers and zappers—viewers trying to avoid commercials.

But cable executives point out that the study is flawed. For one thing, says Barry Fischer, Turner executive vice president, research and marketing, it relies too heavily on broadcast-only households. He also notes that in many of the broadcast shows highlighted in the study, a majority of the "loyal audience" is over 50. Third, he cites a letter from the Nielsen executive who designed the study, Paul Lindstrom, who says the study is really a program-research tool and not a sales tool.

What do the buyers think? "Everyone is spinning the research to fit their needs," says Lazarus. "The media mix works and every client is different." ■

—with reporting by Richard Tedesco

TV's big spenders

Gross Advertising Expenditures

Company (dollars, in millions)	Network	Cable	Synd.	Spot	Total
General Motors	455	115	55	175	800
Procter & Gamble	324	147	84	72	627
Daimler-Chrysler AG	186	41	8	302	537
MCI WorldCom	139	126	108	9	382
Ford Motor Co.	173	41	12	114	340
Philip Morris	179	60	20	68	327
Walt Disney	168	43	31	83	325
Political Advertising	—	74	—	306	380
Diageo PLC	165	54	33	52	304
Johnson & Johnson	198	45	38	13	294
McDonalds Corp.	126	29	17	100	272

Source: Competitive Media Reporting, New York, for the period from September 1998 through February, 1999.

UPFRONT

Cable expects big spring

Networks are talking upfront gain of at least 20%; that would push total to more than \$3.4B

By Deborah D. McAdams

Leading cable networks are primping for an advertising spending spree this spring that could be the biggest in cable history.

Upfront spending on cable is expected to rise at least 20% over last year's \$2.8 billion, with at least one network ad executive, Discovery's Bill McGowan, predicting a 36% jump in the market. That translates to a whopping \$1 billion increase and a total of \$3.8 billion.

"That number is aggressive, but in the realm of possibility," says Dave Cassaro, senior vice president of ad sales at E! Entertainment Television. The fact that a similar pronouncement he made last year came true—that the market would increase by at least a half-billion dollars—also lends some weight to McGowan's statement.

Arlene Manos, senior vice president of ad sales for A&E Networks, said 36% is possible, but "we're usually pretty conservative. We're expecting it to go up 25%."

Overall sales last year at A&E increased by nearly 19%, from \$266.9 million in 1997 to \$317.4 million in 1998, according to Competitive Media Reporting. CMR does not break out upfront numbers, but most executives said they sell about 65% of their ad inventory upfront.

Optimism about this year's cable upfront is reflected in the networks' asking CPM—the price for each 1,000 viewers reached. In an unspectacular year, networks will get a 3%-4% increase in CPM; in a good year, perhaps 10%.

This year, the major cable networks are shooting for a 10%-15% increase, according to several executives. Not that they'll get it, but 15% "is where we hope to

close," said Joe Uva, executive vice president of ad sales for the Turner networks. Cable executives play it close to the vest when it comes to attaching a dollar amount to their CPMs, but the range is somewhere around \$12 for prime time, 25-54 delivery, to as high as \$30 or more for premium programs.

Turner's TBS and TNT are using premium programs, ostensibly to regain ground lost in 1998, when revenues fell 1.5% and 2.8%, respectively, in total ad sales compared to 1997. The rebound plan includes 34 world broadcast premieres of blockbuster movies in 1999-2000, including *Saving Private Ryan*, *Prince of Egypt*, *Antz*, *Analyze This*, *You've Got Mail*, *As Good as It Gets* and *Payback*.

Depending on the movie and when it's run, premieres can bring in a 50%-60% premium on CPM, Uva said.

Comedy Central pulled a CPM coup

last year after the initial success of *South Park*, introduced in 1997. Larry Divney, Comedy Central's president and CEO, said the network enjoyed a 19% increase in overall CPM—upfront and scatter included—last year. Overall sales at the network increased nearly 67% during that period, from \$78 million to \$130 million, he said. "It's going to be an extremely strong upfront across broadcast, syndication and cable," he said.

Aaron Cohen's customers are shopping for an aggregate number of ratings points as opposed to one big hit, he said. Cohen is executive vice president, director of broadcast for Horizon Media, which buys time for advertisers like Geico, Tire Kingdom and Mobil Oil. Cohen said he expects his customers to spend more money this year in cable advertising, but he wouldn't venture a guess about how big that increase would be. "I'm not sure how deep the total pockets are," he said.

Most of the networks are in the midst of their upfront presentations now, dragging out some of their biggest stars to woo advertisers with intimate performances. Every network tries to define itself during upfront presentations. Lifetime plays on its domination among female viewers. Fox Family wants to be squeaky clean but cool. MTV rules the great uncombed, and Turner is shooting for box office of the millennium. The result of all preening will shake out in June and July, when the billions will actually change hands.

"We haven't really begun negotiating," said Turner's Uva. "We've had discussions with a few major agencies, but the timing will be aligned when the broadcast networks complete their presentations in mid-May. The expectation is it will start almost immediately after the broadcast networks." ■

'98 advertising report card

Conventional wisdom says cable is grabbing dollars from broadcast networks. However, some of those dollars appear to be shifting among the cable networks themselves. According to figures from Competitive Media Reporting, three of the top 10 cable networks lost ground in overall ad sales in 1998 compared to the previous year.

Network	1997 (in millions)	1998	% change
ESPN	\$695.9	\$837.6	20.3
Nickelodeon	493.6	610.0	23.6
USA Network	454.2	472.6	4.0
TBS	469.6	462.4	-1.5
Lifetime	372.8	447.9	20.1
MTV	371.4	421.3	13.4
TNT	409.3	397.9	-2.8
A&E	266.9	317.4	18.9
Discovery	278.3	303.9	9.2
TNN	344.0	279.7	-18.6

UPFRONT

Syndication breaks early, strong

With average prices up 7%-15%, upfront advertising sales may jump to \$2.5 billion

By Joe Schlosser

The syndication upfront ad market broke wide open last week to the surprise of many on the studio side.

A number of the major syndication companies said they had been preparing to "write business" with the Madison Avenue community this week, but were forced into the frenzied selling last week when several larger ad agencies, including Grey Advertising, moved early and others followed.

Despite being caught off guard, the TV distributors were claiming that it was one of the "healthiest" markets the syndication side has seen in quite some time. The combination of a strong national economy, weaker network ratings and a handful of high-performing syndicated shows was said to have driven the average ad prices up 7%-15% for next season.

"I didn't think the marketplace would break for another week, but the advertisers seemed to be ready to get into it," says Gary Montanus, senior vice president of worldwide marketing at Worldvision Enterprises. "We were proponents of doing it a week later, but they all sort of jumped in early."

Timing aside, Montanus said Worldvision was seeing some big increases on the strength of two of its shows: *Judge Judy* and new companion courtroom



Photo: Tom Sobolik / Black Star

SNTA's Bodenmann says pharmaceutical and Internet companies are helping to drive syndication's growth.

series *Judge Joe Brown*, which have fared well in the ratings this season.

Montanus said he was seeing average ad price increases in the 30%-40% range for *Judge Judy*. Montanus also estimated that 60% of the early business came from "out-of-town" agencies.

Allison Bodenmann, president of the Syndicated Network Television Association, says there are a number of advertisers new to the syndication community this year, including some automotive, pharmaceutical and Internet companies that had previously been absent from syndication balance sheets.

"I've had conversations with a number of people who say the budgets seemed very healthy or the inventory is

healthy," Bodenmann says. "There were a lot of people who came into the marketplace after the upfronts last year and are making an effort to not miss out on the action this time around."

Bodenmann says syndication's take of the total advertising will likely hit the \$2.5 billion mark, up from last year's \$2 billion. Sources say General Motors, which spent an estimated \$26 million last year on syndication advertising, will likely top that by a "decent" margin and that Mitsubishi Motors is one of the newcomers.

"We are seeing some new players and some old players spending more money, which is the greatest of all combinations to make for a healthy sellers' market," says Dan Cosgrove, president of Eyemark Media Sales.

Cosgrove adds that he will be over 50% sold on nearly all of Eyemark's syndicated shows for next season, including the off-net sitcom *Caroline in the City* and the new talker *Dr. Joy Browne*.

Columbia TriStar TV Distribution's Chris Kager says business for his five off-network shows for next season was "bullish" last week. He says reruns of *Seinfeld* and *Married...with Children*, which Columbia TriStar will now sell, have been strong players in the first few days of action. ■

Where advertisers place their bets



'Jenny Jones'

Talk is not cheap...

(dollars, in millions)

Program	Gross Advertising
Jenny Jones	55
Oprah Winfrey	40
Rosie O'Donnell	29
Ricki Lake	27
Jerry Springer	16



'Oprah Winfrey'



'Friends'

...And funny is money

(dollars, in millions)

Program	Gross Advertising
Friends	71
Home Improvement	47
Seinfeld	40
Newsradio	31
Living Single	27



'Home Improvement'

Source: Competitive Media Reporting, New York; Chart shows the top 5 talk shows and top 10 off-network sitcoms for national syndication advertising revenue for the period between September 1998 and February 1999.

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Strike looms in Chicago

AFTRA gets OK from anchors, reporters for walkout over per diem free-lancers

By Dan Trigoboff

Two network-owned stations in the nation's number-three market face labor problems that could take their best-known faces off the air.

Chicago news anchors and reporters from CBS-owned WBBM-TV and NBC-owned WMAQ-TV have voted to authorize local union leadership to call a strike. Chicago officials of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists say the next step would be a vote to cancel the current contract. A strike could come 10 days later.

The union says its supporters include high-profile on-air newspeople Carol Marin (WBBM-TV) and local AFTRA President and WMAQ-TV political reporter Dick Kay.

Reporters and anchors are currently working on an extension of an expired contract. Negotiations are scheduled to resume May 24, but the union is calling for talks this week.

The central issue in the dispute is use

of on-air per diem employees. Per diem hires are essentially free-lancers who do not receive full benefits. The stations want to expand the use of per diem reporters, and, for the first time in the Chicago market, use per diem anchors. Currently, stations use per diem reporters on a ratio of one shift per week for every eight full-time staff people; an average of about three per week at each station. Station management would not comment on the negotiations, but the stated goal in seeking increases in per diem allowance has been flexibility when short-handed.

"The members feel there's nothing to keep the stations from not renewing their contracts and making them per diem, with only partial benefits," said Eileen Willenborg, executive director for AFTRA Chicago.

The union believes stations have already done this. "If there is a strike, it's not an offensive. We're not trying to gain anything." AFTRA opposes expanding per diem use to anchors

because it could cut off advancement opportunities for reporters. "A good reporter who has some anchoring skills ... that's their ladder up," Willenborg said. "That's their way to advance. Per diem cuts that off."

AFTRA said the stations also want employees to agree to give up the right to sue in exchange for severance benefits. "A long time ago, the networks came to AFTRA to get rid of 'just cause' as a requirement for firing someone," said Willenborg. "We recognized that this a market-driven business, and we agreed. But this is different," she said, adding that "there has never been a reporter or anchor in Chicago who sued after not getting a contract renewed."

Solidarity could be the key to the outcome of the dispute. The union will obviously carry more clout if its highest profile—and highest-paid—members are willing to walk the picket line. A strike could be especially damaging to WMAQ-TV, which is battling WLS-TV for the lead in Chicago news. ■

Not to be confused with HDT&A

NBC's Leno welcomes HDTV's new lines of resolution and more lines of comedy

By Dan Trigoboff

Last Monday (April 26) *The Tonight Show* became the first nightly television series to be broadcast in high definition. "I remember the old days of television, when shows would be made sharper because of the writing," quipped host Jay Leno.

Leno welcomed the new format with characteristic one-liners, and a show of his pre-high-definition look (played by Mel Gibson) to illustrate the difference between Leno in the old and new formats.

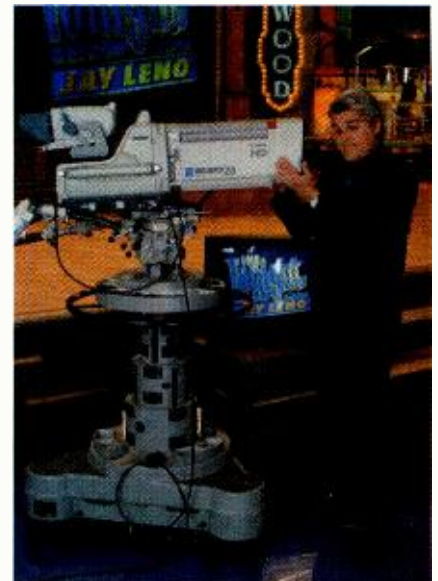
Some viewers may have thought there were technical glitches when the picture began to break up, but it was merely a setup for a visit with special HDTV engineer James "I canna hold on much longer, captain" Doohan in his Star Trek "Scotty" character. The

faux problems were soon resolved.

Leno said viewers should be careful not to confuse the HDTV format with "Fox's HDT&A format." The comedian also noted that the high-definition improvements would be available to only a few thousand viewers "or about the same number of people watching the UPN network."

Also added to the show is a pop-up 34-inch high-definition Sony monitor behind Leno's desk for watching guest's clips and other features. NBC, which was the first network to broadcast in color, and later the first with stereo sound, hosted special screenings of the event at WRC-TV Washington, and at KNBC-TV Los Angeles. ■

'Tonight' is now broadcasting's only regularly scheduled HDTV program. It uses the 1080i format.





GET WITH THE PROGRAM

By Joe Schlosser

NBC tops 18-49

NBC won the last full week before the start of the May sweeps period in the important adults 18-49 demographic, according to Nielsen Media Research. NBC averaged a 4.6 rating/14 share in the key demo and a 5.0/13 in adults 25-34. NBC had 10 of the top 20 shows among 18-49s.

O'Dell gets permanent 'Access'

Nancy O'Dell has been named permanent co-host of

the syndicated news-magazine *Access Hollywood*. O'Dell, who has been a weekend anchor and correspondent on the show since it debuted in 1996, has been serving as the de facto co-host since Giselle Fernandez left in January. *Access Hollywood* is produced by NBC Studios and distributed by Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution.

Rappoport joins 'Montel Williams'

Diane Rappoport has been named the new executive

producer on Paramount Domestic Television's syndicated talker *The Montel Williams Show*. The show's former executive producer, Mary Duffy, has signed a development deal with the studio to create reality programming. Duffy had been the show's executive producer since 1994. As for Rappoport, she was formerly the executive producer on Paramount's just-canceled talker *The Howie Mandel Show* and will join Williams as the show's executive producer. Prior to running Mandel's show,

Rappoport was the executive producer of *The Maury Povich Show* for six seasons, and she also served as the executive in charge of production at *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

'Wall Street' clearances in review

The syndicated weekly series *The Wall Street Journal Report* has been renewed in over 80% of the country for next season. The show, which is produced and distributed by CNBC's syndication and marketing division, will return for its 18th season in the fall. This year *The Wall Street Journal Report* reached an all-time high of 95% household penetration and was cleared in all of the top 60 markets.

'Dog bites man' is a story that still needs to be told

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B



STATION BREAK

By Dan Trigoboff

Cleveland stations rise to occasion

Sometimes competition takes second place to a sense of community. WEWS-TV's Cleveland competitors told the station they would provide its news department with video of any major news event so that everyone at WEWS who wished could attend the funeral of executive producer Joanne Robinson. Robinson, 34, died last month from an as-yet undetermined cause. Compounding the tragedy is the fact that the very popular journalist was only weeks away from delivering her second child.

"She was wonderful, hard-working, bright—a genuinely nice person," said news director Milt Weiss. Weiss said that although there were no major events on the day of Robinson's funeral, the station did use

some news pool footage provided by other stations, and thanked the stations on air.

Boston media partner with police

Boston's "Partnership Agreement for Responsible Broadcasting" was actually developed weeks before it became public in the wake of the Littleton, Colo. tragedy, participants say. And it may be stronger because it anticipates rather than responds to a tragic or dangerous incident.

The voluntary canons keep the seven Boston TV signatories from running live footage of tactical police maneuvers, hostage rescues and other potentially threatening situations in exchange for greater access in information-gathering.

Mark Berryhill, news director at the NBC affiliate, WHDH-TV, called the agree-

ment "the next step" in an already good relationship among media and police agencies. "This is not about restrictions as much as it is about working together to prevent something we all would rather not report on. It's a good dialogue. The police have a better understanding about what it takes to put on live TV, and we have heard some compelling stories about what it takes to do their job."

'Chicago Daytime' goes dark

WMAQ-TV Chicago last week replaced the struggling news and lifestyle hour *Chicago Daytime* with a more standard half-hour of news. "Given that we had a hard time developing an audience for our daytime show and its format at that time period," said vice president for news and creative services, Phyllis Schwartz, "we felt we should try a shorter, newsier show." The station is also gearing up for an additional half-hour of morning news at 5 a.m. using many of the same *Chicago Daytime* people, Schwartz said.

Denver station gets an eagle

KCNC-TV Denver got the jump on the story of John Elway's retirement, thanks to a search of California coastal golf courses by sports reporter Gary Miller.

Miller was in San Jose, Calif., to cover a hockey game between the Denver Avalanche and the San Jose Sharks. When sports producers Steve Cox and Tim Perkins heard Elway would be playing golf at Pebble Beach, they arranged to borrow a photographer from co-owned KPIX-TV San Francisco and sent Miller on a hunt for the Super Bowl MVP. "It was like looking for a needle in a haystack," said Miller, noting the numerous golf facilities.

Miller caught up with the quarterback at Pebble Beach Golf Links' 16th green. Miller said Elway smiled when he saw him, and for the first time spoke publicly about retiring. *All news is local. Contact Dan Trigoboff at (301) 260-0923, e-mail dtrig@erols.com, or fax (202) 463-3742.*

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What's up? TV docs

By Joe Schlosser

Ten years ago, Jonathan Towers was a 29-year-old on-air reporter for CNN out of the cable network's Chicago bureau.

Towers had been a writer for Charles Osgood's CBS radio programs and was looking to do more than just the one-to-two-minute news packages at CNN. While he was on an assignment for the cable channel in 1989, Towers ran into former *CBS Morning News* anchor Bill Curtis, an old friend.

Curtis invited Towers to breakfast for what turned out to be a career-changing discussion. Curtis had just started his own documentary production company in Chicago and told Towers about the potential opportunities for such a company.

Towers decided to try his hand as a documentary producer—a decision that has led to a 10-year success story in the documentary business. Towers Productions now counts more than 85 full-time staff members, has in excess of 20,000 square feet of production facilities in the Chicago area and will have nearly 100 hours of original documentary programming this year alone, primarily on A&E and The History Channel.

Towers' production story didn't start out so glamorously. He began what is now Towers Productions out of his two-bedroom apartment and for the first two years he worked weekends at WLS-TV Chicago as a news producer. Towers says Curtis gave him a couple of projects in 1990, including an episode of Curtis' series, *The New Explorers*, which was then on PBS and currently airs on A&E. He also produced a special for A&E about sexual child abuse in the Roman Catholic Church entitled *Sins of the Fathers* and another documentary on the cable channel with Curtis on John Kennedy's assassination. Curtis and Towers in 1992 jointly produced the series *American Justice* for A&E. The series is still running.

Towers Productions is currently producing a number of episodes for A&E's signature series, *Biography*, four different projects for The History Channel and is close to announcing a number of new documentary projects with various outlets, Towers says. ■

'Hard Copy' last hurrah

One show was renewed, the other has been canceled, but it would have been hard to tell which was which from the national syndication ratings for the week ending April 18. *The Roseanne Show*, which King World executives announced last week was a firm go for a second season, fell 7% to a 1.4 rating for the week—matching its lowest national rating of the season. By contrast, Paramount Domestic Television's news magazine *Hard Copy*, which has been canceled after 10 years on the air, saw its ratings jump 18% to 2.0. *Hard Copy* got a boost from the Pamela Anderson breast-implant story, notching a 2.4 national rating on April 16. *Entertainment Tonight* was flat at 5.6, *Extra* was steady at 3.7 and *Access Hollywood* was even at 2.2. *Inside Edition*, was up 3% to 3.1. In the talk show race, *Jerry Springer* was on top again despite a 1% drop to 6.7. *Oprah Winfrey* was second at 6.1 (up 2%), *Montel Williams* followed with a steady 3.6 and *Sally Jessy Raphael* was up 6% to 3.6. *The Rosie O'Donnell Show* was flat at 3.5, *Live with Regis and Kathy Lee* was off 3% to 3.4 and *Ricki Lake* dropped 11% to 3.1. *Mauzy* was down 6% to 2.9 and *Jenny Jones* dropped 15% to 2.8. *Forgive or Forget* was the top-rated new talker in syndication, scoring 1.8 (down 5%) and *Donny & Marie* was down 6% to 1.5. In the courtroom, *Judge Judy* was tops at 6.7 (off 3%), followed by *Judge Joe Brown* at 3.3 (up 3%) and *Judge Mills Lane* (down 7%) at 2.6. *The People's Court* fell 4%, to 2.5. Among the game shows, *Wheel of Fortune* improved 2% to 10.7, *Jeopardy* was up 1% to 8.8, and *Hollywood Squares* grew 3%, to 4.0. *Friends* was the top off-network sitcom for the week, beating out rival *Seinfeld* with a 6.4 rating to *Seinfeld's* 6.1. *The X-Files* was top dog among the weekly series with a 5.2 rating and *StarGateSG-1* led the new action hours with a 17% rise to 2.8.

—By Joe Schlosser

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APRIL 19-25

Broadcast network prime time ratings according to Nielsen Media Research



Photo: Reuters

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Littleton coverage fueled interest in the news magazines—including '48 Hours' and midweek editions of '20/20' and 'Dateline NBC.'

Week 31	abc	CBS	NBC	FOX	UPN	WB	
	6.3/10	7.6/12	8.1/13	8.4/13	1.5/2	3.2/5	
MONDAY	8:00	35. 20/20 7.4/12	58. Cosby 6.2/11	34. NBC Movie of the Week—Grumpier Old Men 7.5/12	60. Melrose Place 6.1/10	111. Dilbert 1.8/3	86. 7th Heaven 4.1/7
	8:30		47. King of Queens 6.7/11			113. Dilbert 1.6/3	
	9:00	70. ABC Monday Night Movie—Swing Vote 5.7/9	21. Ev Lvs Raymd 9.3/14		13. Ally McBeal 10.8/17	119. The Sentinel 1.2/2	106. Rescue 77 2.3/4
	9:30		24. Becker 8.8/13				
	10:00		38. L.A. Doctors 7.2/12	22. Dateline NBC 9.2/15			
TUESDAY	8:00	7.3/12	9.5/15	7.9/13	5.6/9	1.8/3	2.6/4
	8:30	27. Home Imprvmt 8.0/14	27. JAG 8.0/13	35. Just Shoot Me 6.4/11	78. King of the Hill 5.1/9	106. Moesha 2.3/4	104. Buffy the Vampire Slayer 2.4/4
	9:00	50. The Hughleys 6.5/10		60. NewsRadio 6.1/10	54. Futurama 6.3/10	111. Clueless 1.8/3	
	9:30	48. Spin City 6.6/10	15. CBS Tuesday Movie—The Rockford Files 10.3/16	53. Just Shoot Me 6.8/11	71. The PJs 5.5/9	113. Malcolm & Eddie 1.6/3	97. Felicity 2.9/5
	10:00	67. Sports Night 5.8/9		60. Evrythng's Relatv 6.1/9	71. The Simpsons 5.5/9	113. Clueless 1.6/3	
WEDNESDAY	8:00	9.0/15	6.9/11	11.7/19	6.3/10	2.4/4	3.1/5
	8:30	36. Dharma & Greg 7.3/13	50. Ev Lvs Raymd 6.5/11		58. Beverly Hills, 90210 6.2/10	109. 7 Days 2.2/4	97. Dawson's Creek 2.9/5
	9:00	48. It's Like, YKnow 6.6/11	64. Payne 5.9/10	9. Dateline NBC 11.6/19			
	9:30	31. Drew Carey 7.7/12	31. 60 Minutes II 7.7/12		54. Party of Five 6.3/10	99. Star Trek: Voyager 2.6/4	93. Charmed 3.2/5
	10:00	33. Norm Show 7.6/12					
THURSDAY	8:00	4.6/8	8.4/14	11.3/19	5.7/9	1.5/3	2.9/5
	8:30	85. America's Funniest Home Videos 4.2/7	40. Promised Land 7.0/12	1. Friends 14.4/25	71. World's Wildest Police Videos 5.5/9	116. UPN Thursday Night Movie—Dying to Live 1.5/3	99. Wayans Bros 2.6/4
	9:00	82. Drew Carey 4.7/8		6. Will & Grace 12.0/20			96. Jamie Foxx 3.0/5
	9:30	80. Spin City 5.0/8	39. Turks 7.1/11	3. Frasier 12.2/20	64. Fox Files 5.9/9		93. Steve Harvey 3.2/5
	10:00	82. ABC News: Nightline Town Meeting 4.7/8	10. 48 Hours 11.0/19	14. Veronica's Clst 10.5/17			95. For Your Love 3.1/5
FRIDAY	8:00	6.8/12	6.9/12	9.7/18	3.7/7	1.2/2	
	8:30	74. Sabrina/Witch 5.4/10	50. Kids/Darndest 6.5/13	19. Providence 9.5/18	90. Guinness World Records 3.7/7	116. Am Greatest Pets 1.5/3	
	9:00	74. Boy Meets Wrld 5.4/10	43. Candid Camera 6.8/12			118. Am Greatest Pets 1.4/3	
	9:30	76. Two Guys, a Girl 5.2/9	60. Turks 6.1/11	26. Dateline NBC 11.7/21	87. Millennium 3.8/7	122. Billie Wants You! 0.9/2	
	10:00	78. Brother's Keeper 5.1/9					
SATURDAY	8:00	4.7/9	7.4/14	3.3/7	5.5/11	KEY: RANKING/SHOW TITLE/PROGRAM RATING/SHARE • TOP TEN SHOWS OF THE WEEK ARE NUMBERED IN RED • TELEVISION UNIVERSE ESTIMATED AT 99.4 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS; ONE RATINGS POINT IS EQUAL TO 994,000 TV HOMES • YELLOW TINT IS WINNER OF TIME SLOT • (NR)=NOT RANKED; RATING/SHARE ESTIMATED FOR PERIOD SHOWN • *PREMIERE • SOURCES: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH, CBS RESEARCH • GRAPHIC BY KENNETH RAY	
	8:30	87. Am Fun Hm Vid 3.8/8	54. 48 Hours 6.3/13	102. NBA Showtime 2.5/6	81. Cops 4.8/10		
	9:00	87. The Big Moment 3.8/7			67. Cops 5.8/11		
	9:30	76. ABC Saturday Night Movie—Chain Reaction 5.2/10	43. Martial Law 6.8/13	92. NBA Basketball—L.A. Lakers vs. San Antonio Spurs 3.4/7	67. AMW: America Fights Back 5.8/11		
	10:00		23. Walker, Texas Ranger 9.1/17				
SUNDAY	7:00	8.4/14	11.2/19	5.4/9	6.9/12		2.4/4
	7:30		5. 60 Minutes 12.1/23	84. NBA Basketball Game 2 4.4/9	91. World's Funniest! 3.6/7		106. 7th Heaven Beginnings 2.3/4
	8:00	41. Wonderful World of Disney—Eddie 6.9/12	3. Touched by an Angel 12.2/20	8. Dateline NBC 6.3/10	41. The Simpsons 6.9/11		109. Sister, Sister 2.2/4
	8:30				36. Family Guy 7.3/12		102. Smart Guy 2.5/4
	9:00	24. 20/20 8.6/13	15. CBS Sunday Movie—Durango 10.3/16	64. NBC Sunday Night Movie—Devil in a Blue Dress 5.9/10	17. The X-Files 10.1/19		104. Zoe Dunc Jck Jn 2.4/4
10:00						99. Unhap Ever After 2.6/4	
10:30	11. The Practice 10.9/18						
WEEK AVG	6.8/12	8.4/14	8.1/14	6.1/10	1.7/3	2.8/5	
STD AVG	8.2/14	9.0/15	8.8/15	7.1/12	2.0/3	3.2/5	

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Omigod, they killed our ratings

'South Park' slides, but advertisers still want some of Kenny's coveted inventory

By Deborah D. McAdams

South Park continues to sell out its advertising time—despite ratings hovering at half of what they were a year ago.

The once-wildly popular cartoon series featuring the erstwhile Kenny, a character who gets killed in each episode, no longer seems to be a pop culture phenomenon. Nevertheless, as a fading relic of sophomoric humor, *South Park* carries a demographic attractive enough to the likes of Kia, Castrol, Zippo, 7-Up, Apple, Nike, TwinLab, Miramax, Universal and Columbia Pictures.

"Certain advertisers still want that show," said Peggy Green of Zenith Media, Saatchi & Saatchi's media buying agency. "The unit price might be changing, but I don't know about the CPM."

When *South Park* debuted in August 1997, it was embraced so completely by the 18-49s that it catapulted the series, and Comedy Central, into national headlines.

Since then, however, ratings have fallen from the high-7s and low-8s in 1997 to the mid-3s and low-4s for the first quarter of 1999. This year's season debut came in with 38% fewer viewers (3.4 million in all) and 64% fewer teens than last season's debut, according to Nielsen Media Research.

"Everything is relative," said Larry Divney, Comedy Central's president and CEO. "The moon is not always full in some people's minds....*South Park* still remains the No. 1 series in cable. It's not delivering the numbers that it was in its heyday, but we think it's got many years left in it. We just ordered 40 more episodes."

Allen Banks, executive media director of North America at Saatchi & Saatchi,

said he wasn't aware of any advertiser pulling out due to the ratings slide.

"The more appropriate question is whether the content was appropriate" for certain advertisers, he said.

Banks wouldn't name specific advertisers who have stayed away due to *South Park's* content, but he said that such action wasn't extraordinary in the industry. Shows like *NYPD Blue* and *The Hughleys*, for example, are in the same boat, he said.

Without being specific, Divney said the show's ad time doesn't command the premium it once did. It does, how-



Comedy Central's Larry Divney: 'It's not delivering the numbers that it was in its heyday, but we think it's got many years left in it. We just ordered 40 more episodes.'

ever, continue to sell out every week.

"The rate's coming down because the ratings [are] coming down. We understand that," he said. ■

Hungry for wireless

Sprint and MCIWorldcom vie to build market share

By Price Colman

The acquisition duel between wireless spectrum giants Sprint and MCI WorldCom is tied at 2-2. But don't blink, because the game moves quickly.

Here's what the current box score shows:

■ MCI WorldCom, through its pending acquisition of CAI Wireless, (including its 94% interest in CS Wireless) is able to reach about 22 million TV households.

■ Sprint, via its pending PCTV and American Telecasting buys, can reach about 17 million TV households.

But it's high-speed data and local telephony, not pay TV, that's turned the long-distance companies into ardent wireless suitors. The wireless spectrum feeding frenzy underscores just how much importance MCI WorldCom and Sprint ascribe to wireless as a way to remain competitive with AT&T.

It also highlights the resurrection of

the wireless sector, a sector that was recently sacrificed by analysts as other telecommunications industries offered more lucrative payoffs.

"It's an opportunity to put a couple of us back in position to move aggressively and build market share in data and telephony, instead of being on the defensive, hunkering down, conserving capital," says David Sentman, vice president of American Telecasting. Sprint last week announced plans to buy American Telecasting in a deal worth about \$450 million, including debt.

While recent deals have divided up major pieces of the wireless pie, two publicly held companies and two key markets remain targets, say sources familiar with the wireless industry.

Los Angeles and San Francisco are two of the more attractive markets. PrimeOne owns the MMDS spectrum for Los Angeles and adjoining Riverside, Calif. Several people familiar with the PrimeOne properties, which it acquired from SBC Communications at a fire-sale

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price—less than \$50 million—say they're the plums. "You know [Prime-One] has been entertaining offers like crazy," says a source in the financial community.

Wireless Holdings Inc., the subsidiary of Canadian cable operator Group Videotron, owns the San Francisco spectrum and also has seen interest escalate, sources say.

Two remaining publicly held wireless cable companies—Nucentrix (formerly Heartland Wireless) and Wireless One—remain up for grabs. But even though their wireless holdings are generally in secondary markets, their stocks were up on news of the recent wireless deals.

"American Telecasting has some big cities—Seattle, Cincinnati and Denver, for example—but for the most part their cities are of medium size," says Bruce Dickinson of Denver-based

investment bank Daniels & Associates. "That says there will be bidding for Nucentrix and Wireless One."

Predictably, neither MCI WorldCom nor Sprint will comment on their next moves, though they acknowledge wireless spectrum is a key piece of their respective strategies for sidestepping the Baby Bells while gaining last-mile access to homes and businesses.

The deals that have occurred thus far demonstrate that strategic fit, as much as market size, is dictating price. The value of the Sprint-American Telecasting deal equals those of wireless cable's heyday—about \$40 per home, Dickinson says. He also notes that PCTV, CAI and CS encompass larger markets.

At the same time that Sprint was putting together the American Telecasting transaction, MCI WorldCom was scrambling to make sure another deal

didn't slip through its grasp as People's Choice TV did.

Matching an unsolicited bid by an unnamed competitor, MCI WorldCom increased its per-share offer for CAI from \$24 to \$28, boosting the deal's value by \$76 million and pushing it to just under the \$1 billion mark.

The mystery bidder was Sprint. MCI WorldCom and Sprint are trying to avoid being ambushed by a competitor sneaking in with a higher bid. What are now definitive agreements contain language prohibiting the wireless companies from soliciting bids. But while CAI has agreed to forgo other offers, American Telecasting has the option to consider offers that are \$1 or more above Sprint's \$6.50 per share bid. Sprint is empowered to match a competing bid, but if American Telecasting goes with someone else, it has to pay Sprint an \$11 million walk-away fee. ■

Prime(star) time for DirecTV

Leading DBS company closes on Primestar, seeks to absorb its 2.3 million subscribers

By Price Colman

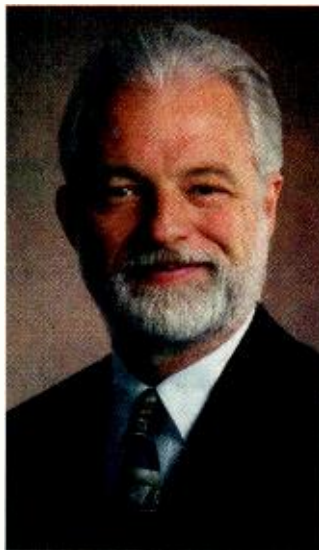
DirecTV closed on its \$1.36 billion purchase of rival satellite TV operator Primestar last week, but left open key questions. Among them.:

■ How quickly will DirecTV move to consolidate, perhaps even buy out, some components of its distributor network? (Distributors include the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative, privately held Golden Sky Systems and publicly held Pegasus Communications.)

■ Who ends up with TV Guide's Superstar/Netlink C-band business with about 1.3 million customers—DirecTV or EchoStar? EchoStar is DirecTV's sole remaining DBS competitor.

■ How will John Malone put the potentially valuable tax write-offs in TCI Satellite Entertainment—the company that contained Primestar and still holds certain key high-power assets—to use?

But the immediate issue, DirecTV officials say, is digesting the acquisition—



Hartenstein expects to pick up just 70% of the Primestar subs.

what with Primestar's 2.3 million medium-power customers now pushing DirecTV's count to 7.1 million subs, in theory at least. In fact, DirecTV must persuade those former Primestar customers to convert to the high-power service.

DirecTV President Eddy Hartenstein concedes that the conversion rate will be less than 100%.

"We're expecting in the neighborhood of 70% over 18-24

months," Hartenstein says. "Clearly, we're shooting to do better than that, but there's some natural attrition in any subscriber base."

Primestar has experienced annualized churn rates higher than 40% in the past, but in recent months the Carl Vogel-led management team at Primestar has reduced churn to slightly under 30%. Still, during the three months from when the Hughes-Primestar deal

was announced to when it closed, EchoStar was spiriting away as many as 1,000 Primestar customers a day, sources say.

Primestar's creditors, who narrowly escaped a severe beating in the company's sale, are now set to receive a pay-off.

Under the original deal announced in January, bondholders would have received 47 cents to 67 cents on the dollar. But Canyon and several other institutions—including P. Schoenfeld Asset Management, Magten Asset Management, Taras Financial Corp., and Triton Partners—threatened to block Primestar's sale unless proceeds were reallocated.

Under the compromise negotiated between Primestar and its creditors, bondholders will receive about 85 cents on the dollar in cash for their bonds, plus stock appreciation rights (SARs) for Hughes stock (NYSE: GMH). Those SARs could add another 10-12 cents on the dollar, bringing bondholders back close to par.

"We think [DirecTV parent] GM Hughes has a lot of appreciation potential," says Mitchell Julis of Canyon Capital Advisors. "The [stock] valuation of the DirecTV business has not marched in step with Dish, so we think there's a lot of upside there." ■

Cable-digital marriage a blessing

Study: Subscriptions, not advertising, could become more important to the bottom line

By John M. Higgins

Partly disputing boasts from cable and broadcast executives about high revenues from interactive TV commercials, a new study contends that melding the Internet and television will not propel substantial increases in ad revenue.

For the most part, interactive ads will only allow the industry keep up its existing pace, the study says.

That's a key conclusion from a study of digital television that forecasts its impact on all aspects of the TV industry. The detailed, 200-page report, "Multichannel Metamorphosis," was authored by Morgan Stanley Dean Witter media analyst Richard Billotti.

It projects that cable will derive vir-

tually all the financial benefits of digital TV. Moreover, as digital cable creates channel capacity, subscriptions

will become an increasingly important revenue source for the television industry, potentially more important than ad sales.

Broadcasters, by contrast, can expect to see ad revenue stall as cable networks increasingly steal audience and derive most of the benefits from interactive commercials.

Right now, about 45% of TV industry revenue comes from cable and DBS subscriptions, and 55% from advertising. "There's a point at which subscriptions become larger, about eight years out," Bilotti predicted.

Billotti, who is *Institutional Investor* magazine's top-ranked media analyst, is a bull on digital television. He contends that two-thirds of all TV households will own some sort of digital video device within 10 years, be it a DBS receiver or a non-interactive digital videodisc player.

Most of those homes will have sophisticated, two-way cable converters, allowing all sorts of interlacing of TV programming and Internet communications.

One Holy Grail for TV executives is advertising. Advanced converters plus digital TV sets and DBS receivers hooked up to phone lines are expected to allow all sorts of new advertising possibilities. A Honda ad, for example, would coax viewers into clicking a button that will trigger a Web site loaded with information about several car models.

MSO, broadcast and cable networks executives boast that they'll be able to charge premium prices for

Other findings

- Digital will revive growth in television usage. By creating greater program variety and new uses, digital should send per-person TV usage up about 1% annually over the next decade, to 10.2 hours by 2008 from about 9.3 hours.
- Internet usage will not cannibalize TV viewing. While online usage will more than triple from 38 hours per person annually in 2000 to 112 hours in 2008, the study estimates that many people will surf through their TV sets.
- Due to audience fragmentation, the top 10-12 networks will eventually jockey for position with average total-day ratings of just 2-3. Broadcast networks currently average 16 in broadcast-only homes and 11-12 in cable homes. While some cable networks will grow, many will stagnate with just 1-2 rating points.
- Interactive ads will shift advertisers away from image advertising toward more direct-response tactics.

CABLE'S TOP 25

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

CNN's coverage of the April 20 shootings in Littleton, Colo., yielded high ratings. President Clinton's press conference led with an 11.4 share.

Following are the top 25 basic cable programs for the week of April 19-25, ranked by rating. Cable rating is coverage area rating within each basic cable network's universe; U.S. rating is of 98 million TV households. Sources: Nielsen Media Research, Turner Entertainment.

Rank	Program	Network	Day	Time	Duration	Rating	HHs	Cable	
						Cable U.S.	(000)	Share	
1	Clinton PC/Colorado....	CNN	Tue	7:47P	13	6.4	4.9	4877	11.4
1	WWF Wrestling	USA	Mon	10:00P	65	6.4	4.9	4856	10.3
3	WWF Wrestling	USA	Mon	9:00P	60	5.7	4.4	4328	8.4
4	Larry King Live	CNN	Tue	9:00P	60	5.1	3.9	3889	7.8
4	The World Today	CNN	Tue	8:00P	60	5.1	3.9	3882	8.4
6	Littleton School Shooting	CNN	Tue	1:54P	353	4.5	3.4	3399	11.5
7	WCW Monday Nitro Live!	TNT	Mon	8:00P	60	4.2	3.2	3165	6.6
8	WCW Monday Nitro Live!	TNT	Mon	10:00P	66	4.1	3.1	3061	6.5
9	WCW Monday Nitro Live!	TNT	Mon	9:00P	60	4.0	3.0	3014	5.8
9	WWF Wrestling	USA	Sun	7:00P	60	4.0	3.0	3005	7.1
11	WCW Thunder	TBS	Thu	9:03P	64	3.6	2.7	2727	5.6
12	Col. Shootings: Students...	CNN	Tue	10:00P	90	3.5	2.7	2647	5.6
12	Titanic Answers...	DISC	Sun	8:00P	120	3.5	2.6	2625	5.2
12	Rugrats	NICK	Tue	7:30P	30	3.5	2.6	2595	6.0
15	South Park	CMDY	Wed	10:00P	30	3.3	1.9	1890	4.9
16	Movie: 'Big Jake'	TBS	Sun	9:37P	124	3.2	2.4	2427	5.2
16	Wild Thornberrys	NICK	Tue	8:00P	30	3.2	2.4	2393	5.2
18	Rugrats	NICK	Sat	9:30A	30	3.1	2.3	2312	10.1
18	Rugrats	NICK	Fri	7:30P	30	3.1	2.3	2300	6.0
18	Sp. Rpt/Tragedy in Colo.	MSNBC	Tue	8:00P	60	3.1	1.5	1518	5.1
18	The News w/Brian Williams	MSNBC	Tue	9:00P	60	3.1	1.5	1471	4.7
22	WCW Thunder	TBS	Thu	8:05P	58	3.0	2.3	2281	5.0
22	Rugrats	NICK	Sat	8:00P	30	3.0	2.3	2255	6.0
22	Movie: 'The Babysitter's...	LIF	Sat	6:00P	120	3.0	2.2	2210	6.7
22	Wild Thornberrys	NICK	Thu	8:00P	30	3.0	2.2	2206	4.9

delivering carefully targeted viewers, much as precisely aimed Web sites ads fetch 5-10 times the cost per thousand of TV ads.

Billotti, however, while not down on interactive commercials, contends that it will "change the face of advertising" beginning in 2003.

The problem is that the gains from interactivity will be offset by acceleration of audience fragmentation. Viewers with substantially more choices means the "mass" media—both broadcast and mature cable networks—will reach relatively less of the TV audience. That will put pressure on pricing,

particularly because of magnified competition for ad dollars.

Also, he expects pay networks to be the biggest beneficiaries from digital—capturing 9% of TV viewing hours versus 5% today. That's because movie networks like Home Box Office and Starz! are commercial-free. ■



Discovery buys piece of Fanfare

Discovery Communications will take an ownership stake in Fanfare, the 24-hour classical music basic cable network being created by noncommercial WETA-TV and investor and Fanfare Chairman Jack Clifford.

SCBA pushes for protection

The Small Cable Business Association (SCBA) wants Congress to include provisions in satellite TV reform that would protect small cable operators for the three years after satellite companies are required to carry all local broadcast signals.

"The standards aren't working right now," said SCBA President Matt Polka. "There have to be mechanisms that [protect] small cable." Satellite TV reform bills moving to the floor in the House and Senate include measures that would not require satellite companies to carry all local broadcast signals until Jan. 1, 2002.

SCBA wants lawmakers to include a provision that would allow community broadcasters in top-20 markets to apply to the FCC for satellite carriage before that time, if not being carried is harming

their business. The association also wants full and immediate satellite must carry for all markets smaller than the top-20.

A name change to avoid confusion

The Small Cable Business Association (SCBA) is changing its name to the American Cable Association, citing a need to reach out to cable distributors of all sizes, as well as frequent confusion with fellow trade organization, the Satellite Broadcasting and Communications Association (SBCA).

"We've run into barriers when we talk to cable operators because they don't perceive themselves as small," said SCBA President Matt Polka. With the demise of the Cable Telecommunications Association (CATA), the cable industry needs an organization to represent the needs of cable distributors separately from cable programmers, said David Kinley, president of SunTel Communications and an SCBA board member.

MTV exec joins BET

Stephen Hill is leaving his post as MTV's director of music programming to head up music programming at Black Entertain-

ment Television. Hill's new post will have him overseeing BET's music shows such as *Rap City* and *Planet Groove*, videos, creative services, art and on-air promos. He will join BET in June.

Track league jumps to pro circuit

Track and field launched its first outdoor professional league last week. The league, called the Track & Field Association, will debut June 6 with the TFA ProChampionships at the Mitchell Athletic Complex in Uniondale, N.Y., the site of last year's Goodwill Games. The June 6 meet, the only one scheduled for this year, will have 15 events, and will be televised on ESPN from 1-3 p.m. ET.

HBO courts Gen X with laughs

Home Box Office will launch 24 hours of comedy and alternative entertainment next week. HBO Comedy and HBO Zone—two new channels—will debut May 6, rounding out HBO's six-channel digital package, HBO The Works.

HBO Comedy will recycle movies, series and live comic productions from the original HBO network, sprinkled with

four half-hour specials spotlighting new comics in HBO Workspace Presents. HBO Zone is for the *Clerks* and *Wayne's World* crowd.

Those titles, plus music videos, *The Chris Rock Show* and original documentaries such as *Autopsy* and *Real Sex*, which are set to air at midnight, round out the schedule. Carriage discussions are under way for the channels, which will be available on digital feeds on both the East and West Coasts.

Weather Channel takes a long hike

The Weather Channel is sponsoring a research team attempting to climb Mt. Everest in order to place weather probes on the peak. If the team is successful, the four battery-powered, satellite-uplinked probes will relay information about the weather on Everest to a ground station for first-time continuous monitoring of conditions on the mountain. Climbers will be able to access the information through e-mail before attempting a climb. On average, one out of every five people who attempt to reach the summit dies. The team of Massachusetts Institute of Technology students and researchers will be led by Peter Athans, whose five successful round trips to the summit are a record for any Western climber.

WETA-TV's DTV quartet

Washington public station is demonstrating multicasting with four SDTV services

By Glen Dickson

After pursuing an aggressive program of HDTV production, WETA-TV Washington is now experimenting with multicasting an array of standard-definition (SDTV) program services.

The noncommercial station's private demonstrations have met with favorable response. "The thing that clinches it for people is when you hand them the remote control and say, 'You switch between services,'" says Terry Bryant, WETA-TV's senior vice president of broadcasting.

At press time, WETA-TV was scheduled to multicast four distinct services Saturday, May 1. Consumers could watch on DTV receivers at Myer-Emco retail stores throughout the Washington market.

The four services: WETA Prime, a sampling of prime time fare; WETA Kids, a lineup of children's programming; WETA +, a mix of educational programming; and Forum Network, a preview of the upcoming news and public affairs cable channel being launched by WETA and The Freedom Forum this summer.

WETA-TV has also created a mock electronic program guide (EPG) for the multicasting demonstration that simulates the service it may offer in the future using DTV's Program and System Information Protocol (PSIP).

"This is what we envision the multicasting day looking like," says Bryant. The four-hour multicasting demonstration will be followed by a two-hour broadcast of the HDTV programs *The American Experience: Lost in the Grand Canyon* and *Wide Blue Yonder*, which will also be simulcast on WETA-TV's analog ch. 26 in NTSC form.

Bryant says that WETA-TV isn't committed to multicasting. For now, he said, the station will continue to show around-the-clock HDTV programming by running loops of a different program each week.

But Bryant is intrigued by the possibilities of multicasting. "If we had had this capability before, we wouldn't have



WETA-TV created a mock electronic program guide for its DTV multicasting demo.

had to make the hard choice between broadcasting our standard children's fare and running the impeachment hearings," she says. "We could have done both."

Bryant said she saw several encoder suppliers at NAB '99 compress both an HDTV stream and an SDTV stream simultaneously into the 19.4 Mb/s ATSC bitstream, and that may be an initial solution for WETA-TV. "We may start there and build," she says.

For WETA-TV's multicasting demonstration, the four SDTV (480-line interlace, 4:3 aspect ratio) programs were

encoded into the 19.4 Mb/s ATSC bitstream at PBS headquarters and loaded onto WETA-TV's Sencore bitstream server.

WETA-TV has used the Sencore server to handle all its DTV origination so far, since the station doesn't yet have a DTV encoder. That will change soon, however, as WETA-TV placed an order at NAB '99 with Harris for a Harris/Lucent Flexicoder that will be able to encode both high-definition and standard definition pictures. The station expects delivery of the encoder in June, says WETA-TV Vice President of Technology Lew Zager.

WETA-TV's new all-digital facility should be completed by early fall, Zager said. The station has just signed a deal with Tektronix to provide Grass Valley routers and switchers and Profile video servers.

In addition to building a new plant, WETA-TV has been busy producing original HDTV programming. The station has completed seven HD programs, including the just-finished *Van Gogh's Van Goghs* and is currently producing an HD program on the John Singer Sargent exhibit at the National Gallery of Art in Washington. ■

Raycom taps Comark

Group will install DTV transmitters in 31 stations

By Karen Anderson

Raycom Media, the nation's 22nd largest TV group, will offer DTV with Comark transmitters, it was announced last week.

Comark, a division of THOMCAST Communications, will provide Raycom's 31 stations with Advantage and DCX IOT tube-type transmitters as well as Ultimate and Optimum solid-state units.

The first of the transmitters will go to WOIO-TV Cleveland, among the stations in the top 30 markets that the FCC says must launch DTV by Nov. 1, 1999.

WXIX-TV Cincinnati also is scheduled to begin broadcasting in Novem-

ber, but will be using a Harris transmitter that was purchased by the station's former owner, Malrite Communications. Raycom will roll out Comark transmitters to its other stations through 2002.

"We looked at everybody in fairness, and it came down to a short list," says Raycom Technology Vice President David Folsom. "Comark showed that it had the flexibility and the technology; they were very cost-competitive, and were the most willing to work with us in both in the business part of the deal and the technology part of the deal.

"Their transmitters have a very sophisticated remote control that is built in. They were also one of the first



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to be able to meet the FCC mask [that prevents adjacent channel interference] that was announced right before NAB last year. In addition, they have a very sophisticated digital correction circuitry, which is critical."

Although Folsom would not say precisely how much the group is spending. "It's a tens-of-millions-of-dollars kind of deal."

Folsom has been investigating several DTV encoders' including Divi-Com's, which are being sold through Comark. The DiviCom encoders "have a unique matrixing structure which allows you to put the encoder together in building blocks," he said. "But each encoder manufacturer has something



Comark will supply Advantage and DCX IOT tube-type transmitters and Ultimate and Optimum solid-state units.

unique to bring to the table."

Folsom says the encoder decision

ultimately is going to be based not on the technology itself, but on how the encoder will facilitate an individual station's business plan.

"Here's the dilemma," he said. "The jury is still out on whether there is a business model for multichannel. Do you pay far more for an encoder that is capable of multichannel or do you, at least on this first pass while you are just trying to do pass-through, go for something that is less expensive and is only capable of [HDTV]?"

Folsom adds that he was surprised at the abundance of encoder manufacturers at NAB this year. "It's good because that makes the pricing far more competitive." ■



CUTTING EDGE

By Karen Anderson and Glen Dickson

Avid takes a tumble

Avid shares fell 27% after the company recorded a first quarter loss that the company attributed to slow sales growth. On April 22 Avid reported a net loss of \$11.5 million, which includes a previously announced pretax charge of \$20.5 million associated with the third-quarter 1998 Softimage acquisition. Excluding acquisition-related charges, Avid recorded a tax-effected income of \$2.7 million compared with net income of \$7.7 million a year earlier. Despite its troubles, Avid Chief Financial Officer William Flaherty says a strong NAB '99 exhibition should help Avid regain its financial footing. "We are up 15% [over last year] in terms of lead generation that we will distribute back to our resellers," he says.

Among products Avid introduced this year are its Unity shared-storage product and 24 frame progressive format editing systems, which Avid will

release later this year. Avid also is working with Sony to develop native MPEG-2 editing systems. Avid shares tumbled 30% in late March after the company reported that its revenue would only be 6%-10% higher than the \$108.7 million in the first quarter of 1998. Analysts were expecting about a 19% increase. "As things evolved on March 30 and 31, we were inundated with orders and were not able to process all of them," Flaherty says. At press time, Avid shares were selling at 16.

EchoStar taps Tek for mega-router

Tektronix has won a contract from EchoStar Communications to supply the DBS operator with a massive 1024x1024 Grass Valley router. EchoStar is buying the router to support the launch of two new satellites this year, which will increase its broadcast capacity by an additional 200 channels. The new

Grass Valley Series 7000 router will give EchoStar more than 1 million cross-points, boosting its routing capacity by more than two-and-a-half times. The Tektronix contract also includes Grass Valley's routing control system and Fibre Channel connectivity.

Sony to 'futureproof' LA's Staples Arena

Sony will help build a high-definition production facility at the new Staples Arena in Los Angeles, which will host the Lakers (NBA), Kings (NHL) and Clippers (NBA), when it opens this October. Under a \$7 million contract with systems integrator Speer Worldwide Digital Consulting, Sony will help create a facility to support both HDTV and SDTV production and post production. "It's a hybrid concept," says Speer Project Manager Brian Redmond. "We want to futureproof [Staples

Arena] into the coming years."

Sony equipment for the project includes an HDS-7100 HDTV production switcher, HDME-7000 digital multi-effects generator, HDM series HDTV monitors, HDC-700A and HDC-750A HDTV studio cameras, and HKPF series conversion and distribution equipment.

CBS picks Faroudja

CBS Television Stations have purchased Faroudja Digital Format Translator (DFT) upconverters for its second wave of DTV stations. WBBM-TV Chicago, WBZ-TV Boston, and WWJ-TV Detroit, which were scheduled to roll out their digital services May 1, will use the units to convert archived programs to 1080i HDTV. HBO and Fox Television Stations are already using DFT upconverters.



Three CBS stations are equipped with Faroudja upconverters.

Start-ups gathering streams

New video services compete to establish their own niches on the Internet

By Richard Tedesco

Following in the footsteps of Broadcast.com, a fresh lineup of start-up video services is trying to nail a niche on the Net, built on an eclectic collage of content and business models.

The newest players are Digital Entertainment Network, crashing the streaming party with original Web serials for teens and 20somethings, and Simply TV, launching this summer with content from independent programmers. Already up and running are TV on the Web, streaming special interest videos paid for by the content providers and FastTV, Webcasting searchable clips from various news sources.

Whether the curiosity of streamed video on PC evolves into a mainstream pastime soon is still a moot point. "I think these ventures are handicapped by the fact that people see their PC as a utilitarian device. The Internet is a utility," says Patrick Keane, online analyst with New York-based Jupiter Communications, adding, "The TV delivering video is still a lot better than your PC is going to be."

When Digital Entertainment Network launches next week, it figures to reach a young audience tuning in to PCs in large numbers. DEN's initial schedule includes story lines about young Latinos in east Los Angeles, aspiring punk musicians, fanatic skateboarders and frolicking fraternity boys.

It's a narrow range that seems to have something for everyone in the 14-24 demographic it's targeting. "We can slice and dice this demographic," says DEN CEO Jim Ritz, who says the aim is to appeal to every generation-Y niche.

DEN plans to have 30 shows up by year-end in biweekly six-minute episodes. Interactive elements expand each episode by as much as 15 minutes with background about characters, which is intended to involve viewers more deeply. Production costs are modest: \$50,000 per 30 minutes of video.

Ford and four other Fortune 100 companies are committing \$12 million-\$15 million in advertising this year, according to Ritz, who says e-commerce will also be built around its shows. Primary funding comes from



FastTV (l) features content from cable news networks; SimplyTV aims for the 18-32 demo.



co-founders Marc Collins-Rector and Chad Shakely.

The concept conjures Web soaps produced by short-lived American Cybercast before it went bankrupt in 1997. But those soaps were still images and text; DEN will produce Webisodes streamed in RealVideo, QuickTime or Microsoft Windows Media.

"That is a potential sweet spot," says Keane of DEN's generation-Y target. "The Internet is at this stage about niche programming, more akin to the magazine model than the broadcast model."

Simply TV aims for an 18-32 demographic with a mix of news, music, sports, comedy, and kids shows from more than 70 independent producers. It will launch with 100,000 hours of content on 12 channels in mid-July, according to CEO Krystal Cameron.

It will stream in 30-minute segments optimized for high-speed Net links using Microsoft Windows Media and, by year-end, its own proprietary streaming technology, according to Cameron. Responding to observers who doubt PC users will watch 30-minutes of video on a PC, Cameron says, "It depends upon the level of interest and the type of programming." He claims Simply TV drew average viewing times of 23 minutes among a test base of 1.2 million users last year.

TV on the Web draws its content from sources that underwrite its production for Web streaming. This is narrowcasting at its narrowest, including an odd

mix from The Construction Channel (supported by Construction Consultants International) to the Air and Space Channel (American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics), and the conservative Right Channel, whose source is unclear. Length of video varies just as widely.

The Reston, Va.-based venture is reinventing itself with more entertainment content, which it may produce itself, according to Tim Swift, who recently left Merv Griffin Productions to become co-CEO of TV on the Web. The new content will include more live events with an e-commerce hook.

But its basic programming philosophy remains the same. "Narrowcasting is what the Web is all about," says Swift.

Analysts agree that what PC users generally seek in streaming video is a quick fix: easily accessible content in short clips. That's the formula FastTV is following in recasting content from information sources—so far CNN, CNNfn and The Weather Channel—in 90-second bites. PC users can search featured clips or search archives for specific subjects, which are segregated by category. Ads and e-commerce connections will support the content.

"This is a place people will go to see these intense video summaries they never had the chance to see on-air originally," says Bill Swegles, FastTV president. "We are not Broadcast.com."

All of these players aspire to that stature. But they probably need to find real audiences before they float those IPOs. ■

RealJukebox targets digital music on Net

Latest entry vying to become standard technology

By Richard Tedesco

With its release of RealJukebox this week, RealNetworks trumps Microsoft and other would-be software competitors in the digital music space.

The free beta release of RealNetworks, the first product enabling access to digital music on the Internet, is intended to be the Seattle-based software company's prime contribution in the current effort to standardize the technology. PC users can download music from the Web in RealAudio or the popular MP3 format. They can also use it to record their own CDs in those formats.

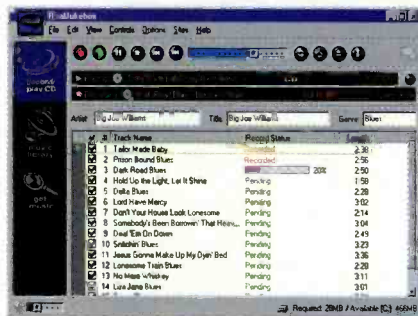
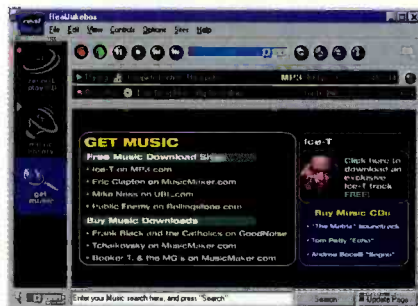
"RealJukebox is the biggest breakthrough in music listening since the Walkman," says Rob Glaser, RealNetworks chairman and CEO.

If its underlying RealSystem MP platform is adopted as one of the first platforms by the secure digital music initiative (SDMI) spearheaded by the major record labels, Glaser's assessment could be more than hyperbole.

The product introduction certainly delivers a rabbit punch to Microsoft Corp., RealNetworks' video streaming archrival, which recently unveiled its own digital music solution, MS Audio, to a nonplussed recording industry.

RealJukebox will almost certainly be used in the first digital music downloading trial to be conducted by the major record labels with IBM over the high-speed Road Runner Web service in San Diego this summer. IBM's electronic music management system (EMMS), the backbone for that test, is to be configured as a plug-in for RealJukebox, according to Dave Richards, RealNetworks vice president of consumer products. RealNetworks announced a digital music technology development pact with IBM last month.

A roster of partnerships around the new music player involving 50 partners will be announced this week, including portable-device makers who will create players compatible with the RealJukebox, according to Richards. Sony Electronics, which recently struck a strate-



RealNetworks is also trying to rehabilitate the reputation of the MP3, the pirates' favorite downloading device.

gic accord to work with IBM on developing digital music technologies, including a portable Walkman-like player, will doubtless lead that list. Sony Music is one of the major labels supporting the SDMI effort.

"We're working with partners committed to legitimate [music] downloads," says Richards, who conceded that RealNetworks' new free player will also initially enable the same illicit downloads powered by the MP3 format.

That's beyond anyone's control in the current Internet environment. But long term, the idea is to put the kibosh on pirate downloads in any format.

"We're going to support multiple secure formats," says Richards. "Different market segments are going to wind up with different solutions."

RealNetworks is intent on refurbishing the image of MP3, which has incurred the wrath of record executives as PC pirates' favorite format for illegally accessing music online. It recently acquired Xing Technology, the foremost MP3 developer, in a \$75 million stock deal.

SITE OF THE WEEK
www.kntv.com



KNTV-TV
San Jose, Calif.
ABC, ch. 11

Site features: Live streaming of daily newscasts at 5:30 a.m., and 4, 5, 6 and 11 p.m.; local news, sports and weather summaries; link to CNN Interactive; links to local services through community guide; local entertainment information on San Jose music scene and guide to local movies through MovieLink

Site launched: 1997; relaunched in February

Site director: Matte Edens, WNTV Web producer

Number of employees: 2

Design: In-house

Streaming technology: RealVideo

Traffic generated: Averaging 80,000 visits daily

Advertising: Local banner ads

Revenues: N/A

Highlights: Started streaming newscasts in October 1998; streaming is a consistent draw, as well as LiveCam weather shot from downtown San Jose, the most heavily trafficked site feature
Coming soon: Streaming 30-second automotive ads in marketplace section later this month, with plans to extend to other product categories

—Richard Tedesco

RADIO

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News Director...WROC, the CBS affiliate in Rochester, New York, is looking for a News Director to lead our shop to the next level. The ideal candidate has a minimum of 5 years management experience in small and medium size markets and is an "out of the box" thinker, leader and motivator. We've got a talented team here who is ready to grow. Interested candidates should send their resume, references and news room philosophy to Susana Schuler, Corporate News Director, WTWO, P.O. Box 299, Terre Haute, IN 47808. EOE.

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WGNX-TV the new Meredith CBS affiliate in Atlanta is looking for the following hot shots:

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Paramount Stations Group is looking for an Account Executive for WLWC/UPN28 in Providence, RI. WLWC is an UPN/WB combo that has doubled its audience share from a year ago. Be part of Providence's growth station Now. Knowledge of Scarborough, TV Scan, and the local advertising community is a plus. Contact: Corey Lewis, GSM, WLWC/UPN28, 10 Dorrance St., Suite #805, Providence, RI 02903. EOE.

Local/Reg'l Sales Manager at KECI, KCFW, KTVM-TV Missoula, MT, a strong NBC affiliate group in beautiful western Montana. Seeking dynamic, enthusiastic person with excellent communication skills, strong interpersonal skills, proven skills in new business development. Responsible for supervision, training, motivation of 11 account executives at multiple locations. Media sales experience a must, working knowledge of TVWorks and Bias preferred. Travel required. Contact Keith Sommer, KECI-TV, Box 5268, Missoula, MT 59806. EOE.

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Assistant Sales Service Manager- WTVD-TV, an ABC owned and operated station in Raleigh-Durham, NC has an immediate opening in the traffic/sales department. Applicants should have 2-5 years experience in radio or television traffic/sales service. Applicants must be proficient in daily log procedures with specific responsibility of generating a daily operating log. Applicants must be detail oriented and possess organizational skills with the ability to coordinate sales and program information with specific deadlines. Please forward all resumes and inquiries to Marie Brown, Sales Service Manager, WTVD-TV, 411 Liberty Street, Durham, NC 27702. We are an EOE employer.

Account Executive - WAVY-TV (NBC) Portsmouth/Norfolk/Virginia Beach/Newport News. Two-four years broadcast sales experience required. Successful candidate should be proficient in Nielsen ratings, TVScan, negotiating and service of key accounts. Proven track record of new business development a must. College degree and experience with local market research a plus. Please send resume to Doug Davis, Local Sales Manager, WAVY-TV, 300 Wavy Street, Portsmouth, VA 23704. No phone calls please. EOE.

Regional/Local Sales - Account Executive, KWBP-TV in Beaverton, Oregon is seeking qualified candidates with extensive knowledge and a proven track record in local and/or national sales. Candidates will be responsible for agencies/accounts in Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon as well as developing new direct business. Applicants should be able to handle large agencies, have strong negotiation skills and possess the ability to control pricing and inventory. KWBP is an equal opportunity employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. This position will remain open until May 28, 1999. Mail or fax resume to, General Sales Manager. KWBP-TV, Acme Television of Oregon, 10255 SW Arctic Drive, Beaverton, OR 97005 (Fax# 503-626-3576).

HELP WANTED SALES

Account Executive: Belo-owned NBC station is looking for a proven AE. The highly motivated individual possesses strong negotiation and computer skills, agency experience, a history of new business development and selling special projects. The ideal candidate will have 3+ years of media sales experience, knowledge of TVscan and Stowell Research. Send resumes to: (No Phone Calls) NBC 6, Human Resources Department, Re: 99-14, 1001 Wood Ridge Center Drive, Charlotte, NC 28217. EOE / M / F / V / H.

HELP WANTED TECHNICAL

Broadcast Maintenance Technician

HBO is seeking an experienced Maintenance Technician for our **Communication Center in Hauppauge, Long Island**. Minimum of 5 years experience in system maintenance plus extensive experience with computer systems including an understanding of Video Servers, operating systems, networking, hardware/ software installations and configurations. Must also be knowledgeable in troubleshooting the before mentioned equipment as applied to a professional broadcast video environment. Must be able to understand schematics, diagrams and use them in diagnosing on-air problems. Highly motivated individual with the proven ability to successfully manage independent projects. Shift work and weekends required.

We offer a competitive salary commensurate with experience and an excellent benefit package. Please mail resume with salary requirements to: **Home Box Office, 1100 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036, Attn: HR Room 3-10**. No phone calls please. HBO, a Time Warner Entertainment Company is an EOE, M/F/D/V.



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HELP WANTED TECHNICAL

Master Control/Videotape Operator: Seeking station operators to handle on-air switching, video recording, program playback, camera control and other duties necessary in the daily operation of the station. Qualified applicants should have prior operations experience in commercial television broadcasting or a closely related field. Formal electronics training or SBE certification would also be an asset. Address resume to Don Dobbs, Director of Engineering, KOTV, 302 S. Frankfort, Tulsa, OK 74120. KOTV, a CBS affiliate and the market-leading TV station in Tulsa, is a subsidiary of A.H. Belo Corporation. EOE.

Chief Engineer: Trinity Broadcasting station - Upstate New York. Experienced in maintenance of UHF transmitter, studio systems as well as personnel supervision and training. SBE certification a plus. Send resumes to Ben Miller, Mail: P.O. Box C-11949, Santa Ana, CA 92711; E-mail: Bmiller@TBN.ORG; Fax: 714/665-2101. M/F EOE.

Job Opening for Web Producer. Requirements: Degree in Journalism and the ability to make sound editorial judgements; Operational knowledge of computers and internet applications; Knowledge of HTML, and image and audio/video editing software; Prefer experience with RealMedia encoding. Duties: (this is *not* an on-air position) update web site regularly; train staffers to update web site so we're covered 24/7; work with reporters in CAR techniques; enterprise and develop stories for high-tech franchise reporter; work with reporters on providing additional, in-depth information related to their stories on web. Send news philosophy, resume and salary requirements to: email address jean@kxan.com. We will also accept applications to: Box 01542 EOE.

Maintenance Engineer. WFLA-TV (Media General Broadcast Group), the #1 station in the 14th market, is looking for an experienced maintenance engineer. Come assist in the building and implementation of our new DTV broadcast center. Applicant must be self-motivated and have a minimum of five years maintenance experience in a broadcast or production facility. FCC, SBE certification and VHF transmitter experience a plus. Send resume to: WFLA-TV attn: HR, 905 E. Jackson St., Tampa, FL 33602, No Phone Calls! EOE, m/f, pre-employment drug screen.

Television Maintenance Engineer: Seeking qualified engineer to be responsible for the installation, calibration and maintenance of broadcast equipment. Experience with either VHF or UHF transmitters a big plus! Requires two years college or technical training in electronics or a related field, and two years experience in commercial broadcast television. SBE certification also required. Address resume to Don Dobbs, Director of Engineering, KOTV, 302 S. Frankfort, Tulsa, OK 74120. KOTV, a CBS affiliate and the market-leading TV station in Tulsa, is a subsidiary of A.H. Belo Corporation. EOE.

Post Production Editor. Senior editor for Quantel Edit Box Magnum. Minimum 5 years editing experience. Experience in editing hard-hitting news and image marketing spots is a plus. Non-linear experience is preferred. Send resumes to: Roxann Nelson, WSOC-TV, Dept. 95, 1901 North Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28206. Experienced candidates are encouraged to call (704) 335-4823. EOE M/F

HELP WANTED TECHNICAL

Telemundo Network Group LLC is looking for a Chief Engineer. Duties include: daily oversight of Engineering Operations and Broadcast Equipment Maintenance, budget responsibilities and assistance to Director of Engineering. Skills required: excellent people skills to handle culturally diverse staff, good technical skills as well as good admin. abilities. Exp. with C-band and Uplinks is important. A General Class FCC license and/or SBE certification a plus. EOE. Send resumes to: Telemundo Network Group LLC, Human Resources, 2290 W. 8th Ave., Hialeah, FL 33010, Fax: 305-889-7079.

HELP WANTED NEWS

ANCHOR/PRODUCER



WDAY-TV, the number one news station in Fargo, North Dakota,

currently has the Anchor/Producer position open for the number one rated newscasts, Monday through Friday, at 6 & 10pm for the past 40+ years. News is WDAY-TV'S business and top priority.

If you are experienced, possess superior news judgement, exceptional organizational, writing, and presentation skills and would like to work for a news station that is locally owned and operated with ENG and SNG, send a non-returnable tape to:

Al Amodt, News Director
WDAY-TV, 301 South Eight Street
Fargo, North Dakota 58103

*Seeing and hearing is believing
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Visit our website: www.inforum.com.

EOE

Weather Anchor needed for weekend/weekday newscasts in small market ABC affiliate. Meteorologist preferred, but experience is necessary with a personable on-air manner. Community involvement in this market and help in promoting the growth of the station is a must. Send resume and tape to Box 01541 EOE.

TV Producer - Newport News, VA Tribune Company subsidiary seeking seasoned journalist to lead day-to-day television production content for 100+ circulation newspaper. Successful candidate will work with editorial staff to recommend stories, develop daily news budgets, write scripts, and coordinate gathering, forwarding, and video editing. Prefer degree and experience in television production and/or journalism or equivalent related experience. Requires minimum of two years' experience in TV news production and knowledge of computers and on-line services. Self-starting ability critical to our team environment. We offer a competitive salary and excellent benefits, including ESOP, 401 (k) and stock purchase plans. Please send resume to Human Resources, The Daily Press, Inc., 7505 Warwick Boulevard, Newport News, VA 23607; Fax 757/247-7884; Email: resumes@dailypress.com; EOE.

HELP WANTED NEWS

Weather Director -- WVVA, Bluefield/Beckley, WV is looking for someone to head our weather department. On-Air experience required, degree in meteorology preferred. Knowledge of Kavouras weather systems helpful. Must be able to prepare, forecast and present it in clear, credible, personable manner. Come forecast in Wild Wonderful southern WV. EEO. M/F. Send resume and non-returnable VHS tape to: Weather Director, WVVA-TV, PO Box 1930, Bluefield, WV 24701.

We need energetic, enthusiastic storytellers for our brand new 6pm newscast at KMOL-TV in San Antonio, Texas. We're hitting the air in September and need (2) anchor/reporters, 1 Producer, and Associate Producer, Photojournalist and Tape editor. Send resumes and tapes to Nell Sanchez, Asst. News Director, PO Box 2641, San Antonio, Texas 78299. An Equal Opportunity Employer.

Photojournalist - Richmond's No. 1 News Operation is looking for a photojournalist. Successful candidate will have 2 years experience and proven initiative in news gathering. Send non-returnable VHS tape with cover letter and resume to Woody Coates, Assistant News Director, NBC12, P.O. Box 12, Richmond, VA 23218. EOE MFD.

Photojournalist. NEWSCHANNEL 8 is looking for a *photojournalist* able to thrive in a dynamic heavy news environment. Visit the job link on our web site at www.newschannel8.net for more! To apply, please send a cover letter, resume, and a non-returnable tape to HR, NEWSCHANNEL 8, 7600 D Boston Blvd., Springfield, VA 22153. No telephone calls, please. EOE.

NewsChannel 5/WTVF, Nashville needs an Assignment Manager. This leader oversees newsgathering operations and assignment editors. NewsChannel 5, a top CBS affiliate, needs a hands-on, experienced journalist who is a great organizer, planner, and communicator. Send resume to Doug Johnson, Managing Editor, NewsChannel 5 Network, 474 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37219. EOE.

Photojournalist. WCNC-TV, the A.H. Belo station in Charlotte, NC has an immediate opening on its award-winning photo staff. We are looking for a self-motivated, creative storyteller with strong editing skills and a full understanding of live truck operations. Individual would be supplied with own take home gear. We are a BetaSX shop with Avid editing and all the "toys." Applicants must have at least two years experience and a college degree is preferred as well. Must have a clean driving record/drug test. Send tape and resumes to: (No Phone Calls) NBC 6, Human Resources Department, Re: 99-17, 1001 Wood Ridge Center Drive, Charlotte, NC 28217. EOE/M/F/V/H.

Free job link...PeopleLink!
www.talentedynamics.com

News Photographer (Job# 97-200): WBNS-10TV Eyewitness News is seeking a photojournalist that loves to shoot video and tell stories. If you have at least 3 years experience, can work a flexible schedule, shoot and edit your own material and handle the daily pressures of news we want to hear from you. Send us your resume best stuff on beta or 3/4" to WBNS-10TV, Human Resources, Job# 97-200, 770 Twin Rivers Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43215. Equal Opportunity Employer. We Are A Smoke And Drug Free Workplace.

HELP WANTED NEWS

Award Winning Newscast Producer: Can you make the newscast voted best in the state the last 2 years in a row even better? Can you handle an 11:00 PM newscast that regularly outperforms its prime time lead in? WFLA-TV, (Media General Broadcast Group), NBC/Tampa, is looking for the perfect 11:00 PM producer. We want a producer who is aggressive, creative and has a clear vision on what makes a newscast relevant. You must be a great writer with a flair for high production values. College degree, five years on-line producing experience and good computer skills required. Send last night's newscast, a resume and references to: Human Resources, WFLA-TV, 905 E. Jackson St., Tampa, FL 33602. *No phone calls!* EOE, M/F, pre-employment drug screening.

KMOL-TV 4 wants two full-time Assignment Editors who can think like Producers and act like Reporters. Send resumes to Diane De Los Santos, Assignments Manager, PO Box 2641, San Antonio, Texas 78299. An Equal Opportunity Employer.

News Director: Dominant small market news operation is looking for a strong news room leader who is a creative outside-the-box thinking motivator of people. Great opportunity for a proven producer to take this market leader to new levels of accomplishment. Excellent location in growing market with established company. Send resumes to: Ray J. Chumley, VP/GM, WTOK-TV, P.O. Box 2988, Meridian, MS 39302. Equal Opportunity Employer.

Reporter - Maryland Public Television is seeking experienced reporters for their daily news and public affairs program *Newsnight Maryland*. Requires BA degree in broadcast journalism or related field and minimum of three (3) years television reporting experience. Salary: Commensurate with experience. Send resume, cover letter and non-returnable resume tape by May 14, 1999 to: Maryland Public Television, Human Resources Office, 11767 Owings Mills Blvd., Owings Mills, MD 21117. MPT is an EEO Employer.

Traffic Coordinator - WWOR-TV Traffic Department is seeking a Traffic Coordinator in our Secaucus, New Jersey location. Responsibilities include maintaining program formats; timing program rundowns and entering segment times into traffic system. Assist with spot placement and various other traffic tasks. Candidate should have one to two years' experience in any of these or related areas. Must be detailed oriented and have strong organizational and computer skills. Previous BIAS experience a plus. Please submit resume to: WWOR-TV, Human Resources, 9 Broadcast Plaza, Secaucus, NJ 07096. EOE.

HELP WANTED PROMOTION

Promotion Writer/Producer. WB Affiliate seeks creative Promotion Writer/Producer. Responsibilities include writing promos for programming, kids club, station events and PSA's. A minimum of 1-2 years producing and editing experience preferred (Avid experience a plus). Excellent writing and people skills, computer literate, and a sense of graphics and audio production required. No phone calls please. Deadline is May 7, 1999. EOE. Reply to Box 01540.

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HELP WANTED MARKETING

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Using the most advanced family of digital media creation tools on the planet, today's storytellers — independent producers, film and television editors, effects artists, news broadcasters and corporate communicators — are telling stories like never before and reaching new heights in creativity with each technological advancement.

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Avid Technology offers competitive salaries and outstanding benefits. Please forward resume, indicating Job Code, to: Avid Technology c/o Austin Knight, Inc., Job Code: DPM, 10 Tremont Street, 2nd Floor, Boston, MA 02108. Fax: (617) 371-4125. An Equal Opportunity Employer.

HELP WANTED CREATIVE SERVICES

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Broadcasting & Cable
at (212)206-8327.

HELP WANTED ADMINISTRATION

Desk Assistant - Entry level position for an energetic, self-starting, highly organized individual. Responsibilities include script organization, file tape distribution and other general newsroom functions. Previous newsroom experience a plus. Please send resume to: Ken Jobe, Assistant News Director, WABC-TV, 7 Lincoln Square, New York, NY 10023. No telephone calls or faxes please. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.

HELP WANTED LEGAL

ASSISTANT GENERAL COUNSEL

Raycom Media, headquartered in Montgomery and one of the nation's leading broadcasters with over 30 TV stations, is seeking an attorney with a minimum of 3+ years general corporate law experience. Qualified candidate must also be a state bar member. Mail or fax resume and salary requirements to:

RAYCOM

Media

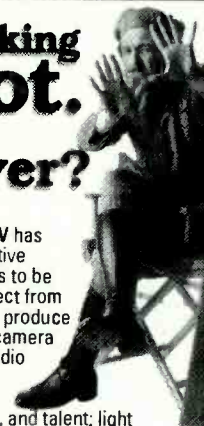
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HELP WANTED PRODUCTION

Television

Program Producer/Director

We're asking
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Can you
deliver?



Garden State Cable TV has an opening for a creative self-starter who wants to be in command of a project from start to finish. You will produce and direct live, multi-camera sports, events and studio shows; hire and coordinate freelance shooters, editors, TDs, and talent; light studios and remote sets; and develop new programs for our local station.

You must have previous producing and directing skills and demonstrate an ability to work well with tight budgets and varied topics. And, you must show solid planning, organizational and supervisory skills and be able to work a flexible schedule.

If you can deliver all this and more, send your resume, cover letter with salary

history and a video-tape demo (if available) to: Garden State Cable TV, Attn: HR. Ref. Job #99-29, 1250 Haddonfield-Berlin Road, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034; Fax: (609) 795-4916. EOE

Garden State
CABLE TV



HELP WANTED PRODUCTION**Experienced Talk Show Producers Needed**

Chicago-based syndicated talk show seeking segment producer. Must have at least 2 years national talk show experience. Booking skills and creativity. Must be highly motivated and a self-starter. Reply to Box 01522.

BROADCASTING DIRECTOR

The PGA TOUR, Inc., headquartered in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, has an outstanding career opportunity for a Director of Broadcasting. This new position will manage the SENIOR PGA TOUR broadcasting relationships with our television partners and event management teams and oversee the day-to-day program scheduling and administration for the SENIOR PGA TOUR. 8-10 years sports television programming experience; strong business, computer and research skills; and familiarity with all aspects of PGA TOUR, SENIOR PGA TOUR and NIKE TOUR business required. Live broadcast and/or production experience desirable. Bachelor's degree in Communication, Business Management or a related field required.

This challenging position offers professional growth opportunities, a competitive salary, performance bonus, excellent health benefits, pension, 401(k), and family membership to the TPC at Sawgrass. For consideration, please mail or fax your resume to: **PGA TOUR, Attn: HR-DB, 100 PGA TOUR Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, 32082; Fax (904) 273-3588.** No phone calls please.

EOE, M/F/D/V



Production Manager - Responsible for the overall supervision and administration of advertising production operations. Works with Account Executives to ensure compliance with customer's creative needs. Coordinates the use of all production equipment. Preferred qualifications are a BS in Marketing or related area or equivalent and 2-3 years experience. Ability to communicate effectively with clients, sales and management personnel. Must have a valid driver's license and satisfactory driving record. EOE. Please send or fax resume to TCI Media Service, Inc., PO Box 849, Vero Beach FL 32961. (561) 567-5556.

Free job link...PeopleLink!
www.talentedynamics.com

CABLE**HELP WANTED RESEARCH****JOIN THE MOST DYNAMIC RESEARCH TEAM IN THE INDUSTRY!**

TBS Superstation, the leader in innovative media and consumer research, welcomes qualified, creative professionals to apply for the position of:

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As manager of series and sports research you will be an active network team member, providing TBS Management, Programming, Marketing, Public Relations and Strategic Planning with information and expertise, and participating in decision making practices. Responsibilities include the analysis and interpretation of data obtained from a variety of sources, including Nielsen Media Research and syndicated studies, as well as development of primary research studies.

Qualified applicants will have 5+ years experience in cable, broadcast or syndicated television research, a solid understanding of television programming and marketing strategy, as well as advertising and affiliate sales principles. The ideal candidate will possess strong communication skills and the ability to interact comfortably and confidently with network clients.

For consideration, please send resume and salary requirements to:

Nancy Lucas, Vice President
TBS Superstation Research
1050 Techwood Dr., N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30318



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HELP WANTED PRODUCTION

VIDEO PRODUCTION DIRECTOR/EDITOR

Time Warner Cable in Bakersfield, CA is seeking an enthusiastic and self-motivated producer director who can "do-it-all"- write a creative script, light a remote location, shoot, and edit (linear and nonlinear). Must be experienced in commercial production, multicamera directing, graphic design and layout, 3D animation and be a seasoned "videographer-editor". Must be experienced in all areas of video production and post-production. Requires excellent communication and customer service skills and the ability to troubleshoot is a must. A B.A. degree in television/film is preferred and system engineering/technical experience is helpful. Bilingual skills are a plus.

TWC has a Statesphere G3 nonlinear editor with after FX photoshop and logomotion. Digital Betacam on-line suite, 30x35 ft. studio, 5-camera full remote production van. Lightwave 3D graphics workstation.

If interested, please send resume, salary history and your production reel to: Human Resources Dept., Time Warner Cable, 3600 N. Sillect Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93308. FAX: 661-859-1703.

HELP WANTED TECHNICAL

Broadcast Engineers

QVC, Inc., the world leader in televised shopping, seeks talented television broadcast engineers to maintain our state-of-the-art digital broadcast facility at Studio Park (our corporate headquarters), the QVC Local (our remote vehicle) and Pioneer Studios (our Post Production facility).

Uplink (EIC) Engineers

QVC currently has excellent opportunities available for Maintenance and Uplink (EIC) Engineers with 5 to 7 years experience. Reporting to the Manager, Systems Support, the successful candidates will supervise technical operations for remote broadcasts (equipment set-up, maintenance and repair, uplink/downlink set-up and operation) as well as provide technical support to QVC's live broadcast and post production facilities. Other responsibilities include: assisting with set-up and breakdown of equipment; technical performance logging and systems maintenance; resolving complex technical problems including those related to graphics computers, transmitters, switchers, receivers, cameras, VTRs; and monitoring video and audio transmission quality. Travel required for 25% of the year. The professionals we seek will possess: AS in Electronics or equivalent combination of training and experience; demonstrated knowledge of video and audio equipment and systems, component level troubleshooting, TV systems design and installation; and competence in dealing quickly with critical problems that occur during live broadcast situations. SBE Broadcast Engineer certification or FCC general class license preferred. Must have experience with set up and maintenance of Sony triax cameras, switchers, Betacam VTRs, audio equipment, PCs and modems and cellular communication.

Maintenance Engineers

Reporting to the Manager, Systems Support, the successful candidate will be responsible for repairs of broadcast equipment including digital/analog beta decks, cameras, routers and switchers. Ability to troubleshoot to the component level, detailed knowledge of non-linear editing systems, and strong computer skills (PC, Mac, Windows NT, UNIX and LAN hardware and software) required. Camera robotics experience is a plus.

QVC offers a state-of-the-art environment, room for personal and professional growth, competitive salaries, and comprehensive benefits. Join the nation's #1 electronic retailer as we continue to change the way the world shops! Interested individuals may forward a resume to: QVC, Inc., Human Resources - JE/BC/ENG, 1200 Wilson Drive at Studio Park, West Chester, PA 19380. Fax: (610) 701-1150. Visit us online at www.qvc.com. Equal Opportunity Employer. Drug Free/Smoke Free Work Environment. Pre-employment drug screening required.



HELP WANTED TECHNICAL



TURNER STUDIOS

DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL OPERATIONS

Reports to VP of Engineering for Turner Studios. Responsible for technical readiness of Turner Studios. Must have proven engineering management skills and ability to consolidate varied Turner Studios Engineering departments and activities. Ability to manage an overview of Turner Studios Engineering global needs, and present strategic and unified solutions. Must have the ability to create engineering project budgets and timelines, and track related accounting details. Experience in the television systems design/installation, and television systems engineering/maintenance a must.

Minimum of five years experience at network level television engineering or post-production engineering, with a minimum of a two-year associate degree in electronic technology or equivalent. Must be a resourceful self-starter with ability to make decisions. Must have ability to find creative solutions to television problems. Must possess good organizational skills and be capable of reviewing and supervising management-level engineers.

Please send all contact information to:

Kevin B. Shorter
Vice President of Engineering
Turner Studios
1050 Techwood Drive NW
Atlanta, GA 30318

CREATIVE SERVICES

graphic DESIGN

can you fill this space?

Court TV's On-Air Promotion Dept. is seeking an inspired, very inspired Graphic Designer to create campaign logos, show opens, title pages, lower thirds, bugs, and art direct live-action film shoots.

Knowledge of After Effects, Photoshop, and Illustrator a must. We are looking for a minimum of 2 years experience in television and design. Design or art school required.

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Advertising Sales Coordinator

We seek an energetic, organized self-starter who will provide sales and administrative support to advertising sales team. Ideal candidate should have excellent communication skills, thrive in a fast-paced deadline driven environment and be detail oriented. Previous experience in sales or publishing a plus. Excellent growth opportunity.

We offer a competitive salary and comprehensive benefits package. For consideration, please send fax/e-mail your resume to:

Broadcasting & Cable

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Fax (212) 463-6628 or e-mail: bpflaumer@cahners.com. Visit our Web site at www.cahners.com. As an equal opportunity employer, Cahners provides a work environment free from all forms of discrimination. This commitment to a diverse workforce is the source of our strength.

HELP WANTED FACULTY

The School of Communication at the University of Miami is seeking a full-time, non-tenure track faculty member to fill a position in broadcast journalism. Duties include teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in broadcast news writing and production. The successful applicant will also be expected to supervise student newscasts and to develop and maintain contacts with broadcast professionals in the community. Minimum qualifications: master's degree and substantial professional experience related to the writing and production of broadcast news. Salary is competitive. Applications will be reviewed until the position is filled. The successful candidate will begin in August, 1999. Applicants must provide (1) letter of application providing specifics regarding their professional and teaching experience; (2) a resume; and (3) names, addresses and current telephone numbers of at least three references. All materials should be sent to: Paul Driscoll, Broadcast Journalism Search Committee, School of Communication, University of Miami, P.O. Box 248127, Coral Gables, Florida 33124-2030. The University of Miami is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

HELP WANTED INSTRUCTION

Full-time lecturer, Journalism Department for AY 1999-2000. Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Teach reporting, editing and other courses in applicant's areas of expertise. Ability to teach broadcast and visual communication courses highly desirable. Possibility of advising award-winning student daily or student radio station. Recent mass media experience required. Bachelor's required with substantial recent experience with a major daily or broadcast entity. Graduate degree a plus. Refer to Recruitment Code #93117 and send letter of application, resume, three current letters of reference, and official transcripts to Dr. Nishan Havandjian, Head, Journalism Department, Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407. Applicants must be postmarked by June 7, 1999. Cal Poly is strongly committed to achieving excellence through cultural diversity. The university actively encourages applications and nominations of women, persons of color, applicants with disabilities, and members of other under-represented groups. AA/EEO.

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For Sale: C,2FM West Texas rated market \$895,000. Contact John Saunders at (713)-789-4222.

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On May 24, *Broadcasting & Cable* assembles the Top 25 MSOs in a must-read special report. Our annual ranking profiles the leading MSOs dominating the industry. We'll provide crucial information as well as figures on their subscribers, homes passed, penetration rates, top executives and ownership.

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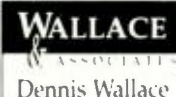
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CHANGING HANDS

The week's tabulation of station sales

TVS

WLEX-TV Lexington, Ky.

Price: \$99.1 million

Buyer: Cordillera Communications Inc., Charleston, S.C. (Paul Cassidy, president; subsidiary of Evening Post Publishing Co., Charleston [Ivan Anderson, president]); owns 10 TVs
Seller: WLEX-TV Inc., Lexington (John Duvall, president); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: Ch. 18, 1,104 kw visual, 221 kw aural, ant. 640 ft.

Affiliation: NBC

Broker: Patrick Communications

Remaining 51% of KYPX(TV) (formerly KVUT) Little Rock, Ark.

Price: \$1.25 million (for stock)

Buyer: Paxson Communications Corp., West Palm Beach, Fla. (Lowell W. "Bud" Paxson, chairman/owner); owns/is buying 48 other TVs; owns two radios and Pax TV Network
Seller: Leininger-Geddes Partnership, Daphne, Ala. (Dale Leininger, principal); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: Ch. 42, 5,000 kw visual, ant. 512 ft.

PROPOSED STATION TRADES

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

THIS WEEK

TVs ■ \$100,350,000 ■ 2
 Combos ■ \$2,130,000 ■ 3
 FMs ■ \$25,236,000 ■ 4
 AMs ■ \$453,000 ■ 2
 Total ■ \$128,169,000 ■ 11

SO FAR IN 1999

TVs ■ \$1,327,619,005 ■ 32
 Combos ■ \$618,066,697 ■ 50
 FMs ■ \$455,562,213 ■ 83
 AMs ■ \$80,884,500 ■ 72
 Total ■ \$2,482,132,415 ■ 237

ant. 512 ft.

Affiliation: Pax TV

Broker: Montcalm (buyer)

COMBOS

WSME(AM)-WCDQ(FM) Sanford/Portland, Maine

Price: \$1.025 million

Buyer: Stephen M. Mindich, Boston; owns WFNX(FM) Lynn, Mass.

Seller: WSME Inc., Sanford (Julieann Brown, president, and spouse Donald E. Crown, principals); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: AM: 1,220 khz, 1 kw day, 234 w night; FM: 92.1 mhz, 1.2 kw, ant. 525 ft.

Format: AM: news/talk; FM: classic rock
Broker: Sales Group Inc. (seller)

WDOW(AM) Dowagiac-WVHQ(FM) Dowagiac, Mich./South Bend, Ind.

Price: \$680,000

Buyer: Jason Communications Inc., South Haven, Mich. (Joseph Urbanski, president/74% owner); no other broadcast interests

Seller: VanHawke Communications Inc., Dowagiac (R. Douglas Hawkes, principal); no other broadcast interests. Hawkes and spouse Mary A. each are 25% members of Van Hawke-Johnson Communications LLC, which owns WKAM(AM)-wzow(FM) Goshen, Ind.

Facilities: AM: 1,440 khz, 1 kw day, 89 w night; FM: 92.1 mhz, 3.3 kw, ant. 299 ft.

Format: AM: country; FM: '70s-based AC

Brokers: Remax Advantage (buyer); Buysell Radio (seller)

WBNL-AM-FM Boonville, Ind.

Price: \$425,000 (for stock)

Buyer: CCM Ministries Inc. (nonprofit), Newburgh, Ind. (Todd A. LaVine, president/16.7% owner);

Seller: Norman Hall, Evansville, Inc.; no other broadcast interests

Facilities: AM: 1,540 khz, 250 w day; FM: 107.1 mhz, 3 kw, ant. 185 ft.

Format: AM: automated country; FM: easy listening

Broker: American Communications Partners Inc. (seller)

FMS

Swap of KRTX-FM (formerly KOVE-FM) Winnie/Houston, Texas, for KLNZ(FM) (formerly KWCV) Tempe/Phoenix, Ariz.

Value: \$22 million ("In Brief," April 19)

Swapper, KRTX-FM: Heftel (to be Hispanic) Broadcasting Corp., Dallas (McHenry T. "Mac" Tichenor Jr., president); owns/operates 41 radios, including KHOT-FM Globe/Phoenix, Ariz., and three FMs and two AMs in Houston; owns HBC Radio Network
Swapper, KLNZ: Z-Spanish Media Corp., Sacramento, Calif. (Amandor Bustos, president); owns/operates 34

WAITT BROADCASTING

has acquired

WFXL-TV

Albany, Georgia

from

WICKS BROADCAST GROUP

for

\$15,500,000

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



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radios, including KGOL(AM) Houston and KVVA-FM Apache Junction/Phoenix, Ariz.; is buying construction permit for KCDX(FM) (to be KLNZ) Florence/Phoenix, Ariz.
Facilities: KRTX-FM: 100.7 mhz, 5.1 kw, ant. 299 ft.; KLNZ: 103.5 mhz, 62 kw, ant. 2,428 ft.
Formats: KRTX-FM: international; KLNZ: MOR

KVMA-FM Magnolia, Ark./potentially Shreveport, La.
Price: \$2 million (for stock)
Buyer: Mag Mile Media LLC, Chicago (Chris Divine, principal); owns/is buying 36 AMs and 71 FMs
Seller: Columbia Broadcasting Co., Magnolia (Ken Sibley, president); has interest in KVMA(AM) Magnolia and KXAR-FM Hope, Ark.
Facilities: 107.9 mhz, 100 kw, ant. 351 ft.
Format: AC
Broker: MGMT Services Inc.

WACQ-FM Tallassee, Ala.
Price: \$686,000 + \$200 per game for remainder of Auburn University Women's Basketball season
Buyer: Tiger Communications Inc., Auburn, Ala. (Thomas Matthew Hayley, president/94.5% owner); owns WAUD(AM) Auburn and WTGZ-FM Tuskegee, Ala.
Seller: Hughey Communications Inc., Tallassee (Fred Randall Hughey, chief executive/owner); owns WACQ(AM) Tallassee

Facilities: 99.9 mhz, 295 kw, ant. 466 ft.
Format: Oldies
WKOT(FM) Marseilles, Ill.
Price: \$550,000
Buyer: LaSalle County Broadcasting Corp., Oglesby, Ill. (Peter Miller, president/95% owner); owns WLPO(AM)-WAJK(FM) LaSalle, Ill., and LaSalle News-Tribune
Seller: Pride Communications LLC, Crystal Lake, Ill. (Jim Hooker, CEO/managing member); owns three AMs and six FMs in Illinois and Wisconsin
Facilities: 96.5 mhz, 3 kw (to be 2.5), ant. 328 ft.
Format: Oldies

AMS

WMBL(AM) Morehead City, N.C.
Price: \$228,000
Buyer: Jacor Communications Inc., Cincinnati (Randy Michaels, CEO); owns one TV; owns/is buying 87 other AMs and 158 FMs. Jacor is being bought by Clear Channel Communications Inc., San Antonio, Texas (L. Lowry Mays, chief executive); owns/operates/is buying 18 TVs; 454 radios (including Jacor stations). Clear Channel also owns 29%

of Heffel Broadcasting Corp.
Seller: Ashley L. Moseley, Morehead City; no other broadcast interests. Note: Moseley bought WMBL for \$40,000 in April 1999
Facilities: 740 khz, 1 kw day, 14 w night
Format: Nostalgia/Sinatra
Broker: Jorgenson Broadcast Brokerage (buyer)
WGAP(AM) Maryville/Farragut, Tenn.
Price: \$225,000
Buyer: MetroWest Radio LLC, Knoxville, Tenn. (Susan K. Horne, chief manager/39% interest; Horne Radio LLC, 61% interest [Douglas A. Horne, chief manager/61% interest]); owns three AMs and one FM in Tennessee. Horne Radio owns WTNN(AM) Farragut, Tenn.
Seller: South Central Communications Corp., Evansville, Ind. (John D. Engelbrecht, president); owns WGAP(FM) Maryville and WWAZ-TV Madisonville, Ky./Evansville; owns/operates two AMs, eight other FMs
Facilities: 1,400 khz, 1 kw
Format: Country

—Compiled by Elizabeth A. Rathbun

Corrections

The buyer and seller of WICD(TV) Champaign/Springfield/Decatur and WICS(TV) Springfield/Decatur, Ill., and KGAN(TV) Cedar Rapids/Dubuque, Iowa, were transposed in the April 12 "Changing Hands." The correct buyer of the three stations is Sunrise Television Corp., which is owned by Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst Inc.; the seller is Sinclair Broadcast Group Inc.

Other broadcast holdings of the seller of WHHQ(AM) Elizabethton, Tenn., were incorrectly stated in the April 19 "Changing Hands." CB Radio, 51% owner of the seller, owns only WBEJ(AM) Elizabethton. WHHQ does not operate at night and it is limited to 500 w during the first two hours after sunrise and the last two hours before sunset.

Big City Radio, Inc.

Michael Kakoyiannis – President

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to

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Wanderlust leads to Travel Channel

The moment branded him as surely as white-hot metal pressed to hide. John Barry's score from the movie *Out of Africa* was playing as Jay Feldman's plane descended toward the runway in Kenya. Feldman had dreamed of this trip, dreamed of hiking to the heart of the jungle to sit among gorillas. Tears came to his eyes as the airliner came down. He would finally live his dream.

"Travel," he says, "is a universal desire."

Feldman's passion for travel has taken him from the backroads of the United States in a red convertible to the mist-filled jungles of Rwanda before finally crossing paths with his career in television. As president of cable's Travel Channel, Feldman says his mission is to incite in viewers that desire to go—or at least watch other people go.

Once dismissed as the "travelogue" channel, Travel had about 18.5 million subscribers after 11 years and was floundering badly in January 1998 when Feldman left his private consulting business to run the channel at the behest of Johnathan Rodgers, president of Discovery Networks U.S.

Travel had lived for a while alongside the Weather Channel before being bought by Paxson Communications Corp. last June. Three months later, Paxson sold a 70% interest to Discovery, which acquired the remainder in February.

While consulting was lucrative, after eight years "I was ready to step back into a high-energy, team-based situation where I was the captain. I was ready to take the risk of being in charge," Feldman says.

Risky it was, but Feldman had taken on sinking ships before, most notably for CBS stations in Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

"In each case, I found a somewhat demoralized group that had fallen on hard times," he notes. "We immediately found a position in the market we could claim. In L.A., it was doing journalism. When you go into a newsroom and say you're going to improve newsgathering, everybody cheers."

Between whipping up support among staff members and convincing executives to pay for the strategy, Feldman gained a reputation as a turnaround specialist. Rodgers needed such an executive at Travel.

"When we acquired the Travel Channel, it was on its way out," Rodgers says. There was never a question about whom he wanted to run the network—his old boss from WBBM-TV Chicago. "It was 1976," Rodgers remembers. "I was making the transition from print to television



"Travel is a universal desire."

Robert Jay Feldman

Senior vice president/general manager, Travel Channel (subsidiary of Discovery Communications Inc.), Bethesda, Md.; b. May 28, 1947, Philadelphia; B.A., European and colonial history, Yale University, New Haven, Conn., 1968; producer, director, writer and reporter, WGBH-TV Boston, 1968-73; news director, WBBM-TV Chicago, 1973-78; news director, KNXT-TV (now KCBS-TV) Los Angeles, 1978-80; vice president/general manager, WCAU-TV Philadelphia, 1980-83; Los Angeles: executive producer/senior vice president, Telepictures Corp. (later Lorimar-Telepictures), 1984-87; executive vice president, Ralph Edwards/Stu Billett Productions, 1987-90; president, Jay Feldman Co., 1990-98; current position since January 1998; m. Pamela Dawson, July 13, 1991; son, Jonathan, 5

and Jay helped me do that."

Rodgers became Feldman's assistant news director in Chicago and later in Los Angeles before leaving to become a general manager on the East Coast and eventually to head Discovery Networks three years ago.

"I always knew I wanted to bring Jay on at Discovery," Rodgers says, "but I had a great staff here when I started so I didn't want to change anything." Then, when Discovery bought Travel, Rodgers went after Feldman.

"He is truly one of the smartest people and one of the most competitive people in television," Rodgers says. "Jay is so creative and having been a self-employed businessperson, he brought some financial efficiencies to this company, which it needed." Feldman also "came in with a 'brainful' of ideas." For example, Feldman hired Peter Greenberg, travel editor for NBC's *Today Show*. Greenberg now provides insider leisure and business travel tips on Travel Channel's *Travel Daily*.

"It's hard to put a face on nonfiction, but Jay was able to put a face on Travel with Peter Greenberg," Rodgers says.

Putting a face on travel created a connection with viewers and cable operators alike, Rodgers adds. "We've improved distribution by 100% and ratings by 120%," he continues.

Feldman, however, accepts credit only for the role of catalyst. It was "people in the trenches" who sold the MSOs on Travel and helped add 10 million subscribers in the past year, he says.

"The 10 million subscribers come from a very well-respected and a very aggressive sales force," he says. "We provided the dream they could sell to these cable operators," which involved bringing in compelling personalities, raising production values, and making programs that literally move people.

"We put the meat on the bones," Feldman says. "What happens then...is if we actually do create this programming people are moved by, we have a brand attached to it. Then, among the things [subscribers] get for their \$30 or \$40 or \$50 [is] something that's meaningful to them."

Feldman's perception of what is meaningful seems to be working so far. The Travel Channel now boasts 29.3 million households, a partnership with Condé Nast and more than 400 hours of new programming for 1999-2000.

—Deborah D. McAdams

FATES & FORTUNES

BROADCAST TV

Gracelyn Brown, creative services director, KTLA-TV Los Angeles, named director, programming.

Appointments, Katz Television Group, New York: **Eric Anderson**, account executive, KNVA-TV Austin, Texas, joins as account executive, Houston. **Andrew Perini**, account executive, Telerep, San Francisco, joins as account executive, San Francisco; **Jane Cluck**, director of advertising, Eyemirt Express, Dallas, joins Katz American Television, Dallas, as account executive.

Roseanna Giordano, director, Reflections of the Silver Screen, American Movie Classics, Los Angeles, joins KCET(TV) there as director, Southern and Central California regions.

Appointments, WMAR-TV Baltimore: **Sandra McKeller**, assistant news director, named news director; **Drew Berry**, news director/station manager, named station manager.

Susan Brier, local sales manager, WDAF-TV Kansas City, Mo., joins KCTV(TV) there as general sales manager.

Appointments, WKMG-TV Orlando, Fla.: **Angela Goss**, anchor/producer, KSBY-TV San Luis Obispo, Calif., joins as anchor and reporter; **Mike Holfeld**, anchor/producer/reporter, WXYZ-TV Detroit, joins as anchor and reporter; **Frank Torbert**, assistant chief engineer, named chief engineer; **Connie Albino**, general sales manager, WOFL(TV) Orlando, joins in same capacity.

Appointments, WTXX-TV Hartford, Conn.: **Gene Evans**, local sales manager, WTIC-TV Hartford, joins as general sales manager; **John Warden**, national sales manager, Hartford Civic Center, Madison Square Garden, New York, joins as national sales manager.

Janet Robinson, account executive, WTIC-TV Hartford, Conn., named local sales manager.

PROGRAMMING

Linda Govreau, senior VP, finance and administration, Jim Henson Co., Los Angeles, Calif., named executive VP.

Martha Van Gelder, executive director,



Van Gelder

Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Malaysia, joins Children's Television Workshop, New York, as regional VP, Asia and Latin America.

Lee Barstow, director of marketing, USA Networks, New York, joins Titan Sports, Stamford, Conn., as VP, business development, new media department.

JOURNALISM

Jim King, weekend anchor, WCCO-TV Minneapolis, joins WPRI-TV Providence, R.I., as weekday anchor.

Kevin Freeman, morning co-host, WFMS(FM) Indianapolis, named director, news and information.

RADIO



Deas

Appointments, United Stations Radio Networks, New York and Chicago: **Rita Deas**, affiliate relations manager, named account executive, ad sales. She will be based in New York. **Dan**

Weisenberg, account executive, AMFM Radio Networks, Chicago, rejoins as account executive, Midwest sales. He will be based in Chicago.

Appointments, Katz Radio Group, New York: **Sean McCormack**, manager, stations, West Coast, Sentry Radio, Los Angeles, named VP; **Peter Kakoyiannis**, manager, stations, East Coast, Sentry Radio, New York, named VP; **Louis Romero**, New York sales manager, Katz Hispanic Media, New York, named VP, Northeast regional manager; **Scott Lancaster**, casting associate, Mini Webb-Miller Casting, Los Angeles, joins as sales coordinator, Los Angeles.

CABLE

John Burns III, president and CEO, The Burns Group, Los Angeles, joins

Fox Family Channels there as president, distribution.

Ron Semiao, director, programming, ESPN2, Bristol, Conn., named VP, programming, ESPN.



Pate

Tobie Pate, senior VP, creative services, Pax TV, West Palm Beach, Fla., joins TBS Superstation and Turner South, Atlanta, as senior VP, creative director.

Scott Perlmutter, VP, MuchMusic USA, Los Angeles,

joins Game Show Network, Culver City, Calif., as VP, affiliate sales, Western region.

Madeleine Forrer, VP/senior product manager, video services, TV Guide Channel, Tulsa, Okla., named senior VP and general manager.

Appointments, Bravo Networks, Central region, Chicago: **Lydia Holsteen**, regional marketing coordinator, Disney Channel/Toon Disney, Chicago, joins as regional sales manager; **Sandra Palmer**, sales and marketing coordinator, M&M Office Interiors Corp., Pewaukee, Wis., joins as marketing manager.

ADVERTISING/MARKETING/ PUBLIC RELATIONS



Wooten

Wendell Wooten, supervising producer, film and video department, Universal Creative, Universal Studios, Los Angeles, joins Pitarid Sullivan, New York, as VP, head of production.

Appointments, Insight Media Advertising, the ad sales division of Insight Communications, Columbus, Ohio: **Dyann Lynch**, marketing manager, Wyandot Lake Premier Parks, joins as account executive; **Sean Trickey**, senior account executive, Coaxial Communications, Cincinnati, joins as account executive.

—Compiled by Mara Reinstein
mreinstein@cahners.com

OPEN MIKE

Requiem for a too-dutiful newswoman

EDITOR: Relentless is the pace of local television news. Getting on-scene for a story even a minute or two late can mean the difference between "late breaking" and simply "late."

But often, that sense of urgency supersedes common sense and the need for caution. Apparently, it did in the case of one of our close friends, Michelle Lima. She was an anchor and reporter at KSAT-TV in San Antonio. And on March 26, in a rush to gather up equipment and get to another live-shot location, she darted into the path of a sport utility vehicle going 45 miles per hour. Michelle's kind heart stopped beating about 16 hours later. She was just 30 years old.

The young woman behind the wheel of the Chevy Blazer that night was not at fault, according to all police reports. But perhaps the "run-and-gun" culture of TV news is to blame. In the competitive rush, we all have taken too many chances.

Our friend Michelle is gone, and we have to come to terms with that. But in her memory, we're taking on a mission: To start a dialogue in the industry, and maybe enact some change. That taking foolish chances in the name of "good TV" should not be tolerated or encouraged anymore. Live shots on the sides of roads, like Michelle's was, are never a good idea. With only a few feet separating people from the ever-after, you realize the story is just not that important. The same holds true for stand-ups in the middle of hurricanes with debris flying through the air at 50 miles per hour.

So we're asking everyone in the business, from general assignment reporters to general managers, to take a look at how you gather news. It all comes down to using judgment. The formula for recklessness is simple: When you look at your reporters in the field, ask yourself, "Would I want my own child in that spot?"

After all, no story is worth a person's life. And no family should have to bury a loved one because of simple carelessness. What happened to Michelle Lima must never happen to anyone else. It just can't.—*Paul Herdmer, WHIO-TV Dayton, Ohio; Patricia Crosby, WTLV-TV Jacksonville, Fla.; Jim Basquil, WWL-TV New Orleans; Deaidra Griffin, WFSB-TV Hartford, Conn.; Wanda Williams, WATE-TV Knoxville, Tenn.*

Two sides to Kessler's story

EDITOR: In your April 12 issue, the article about Sara Lee Kessler's "award in bias suit" was a biased title written only to show that she won the suit for the bias charges when in fact she won it for disability and retaliation only, not bias.

You also failed to note that while Ms. Kessler was supposed to be on disability, she had her doctor write a note to the station (without examining her), that she could only sit for one half-hour to an hour at a time. He stated that she could only anchor and not work as a reporter. During that same period of time, she testified under oath that she took a trip to England (which takes about six hours of sitting each way). She and her husband also testified that she went horseback riding while in England on that vacation. She also went horseback riding another time back in the United States.

So, she couldn't do the work at the station that was

required of her because she had a broken tailbone, but she could go on vacation, fly for 12 hours or more, and go horseback riding.

Was she really disabled? I certainly could not ride a horse if I had a broken tailbone. Could you? It would help in the future if you would give all the facts by just doing a little homework. We all deserve to know the whole truth from all sides.—*Anne Harding, New York*

Where are LPFM pioneers?

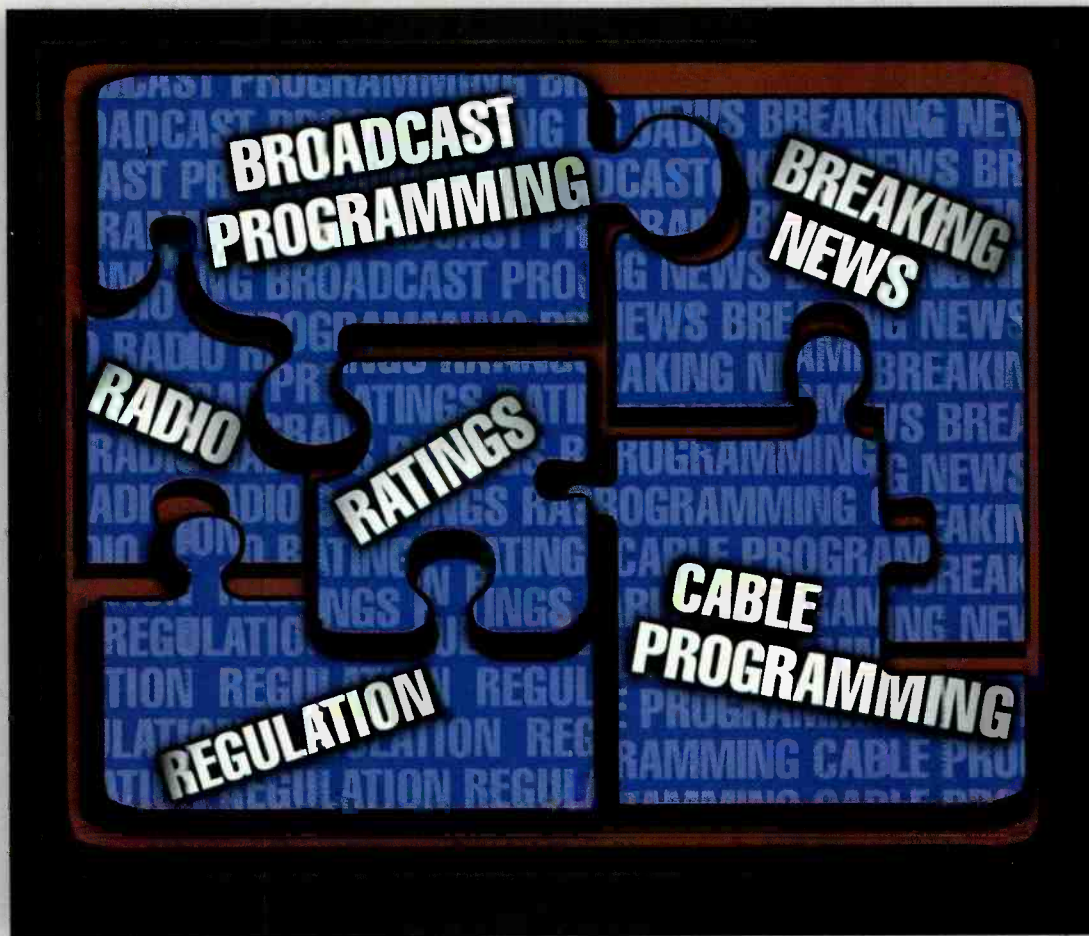
EDITOR: I read the article with interest regarding low-power stations (April 19). I am rather dismayed because several individuals were interviewed, but the most critical folks on the side of low-power FM were not interviewed—particularly those who filed the individual rule-making proposals for low-power FM to the FCC—Rodger Skinner, Don Schellhardt, and Nicholas and Judith Leggett. In fact, it is Rodger Skinner's rule-making proposal, RM-9242, that formed the bulk of the FCC's proposal for LPFM. These four individuals are conspicuous by their absence in the BROADCASTING & CABLE article. I'm wondering why they weren't included. They certainly are accessible.—*Greg Caliri, Bradford, Mass.*

Of Mutual respect

EDITOR: I highly enjoyed the article from Dick Rosse about the demise of Mutual. His observations were very entertaining. As a young radio announcer working in "the boonies" of Washington, Mutual provided my first day-to-day exposure to the world (literally) of network news. I would eventually go into radio news, and while I don't recall ever doing a "feed" for Mutual among the dozens sent to other networks over the years from here in the Northwest, I always considered them an "independent component" of the network radio news world that is, alas, no more.—*Dennis Bragg, news director, Northland Cable News, Port Angeles, Wash.*

EDITOR: A note to thank you and Dick Rosse for the Mutual Broadcasting System obit in your April 19 edition. As a former Mutual employee and colleague of Dick's, the MBS holds a special place in my heart. I have never before or since experienced such whimsical lunacy under the banner of radio broadcasting. I'll drink to that...and we did.—*Denny Meyers, former executive producer, Mutual programming/sports, Annapolis, Md.*

EDITOR: Mutual may be gone as a brand name, but *The Larry King Show* continues, only now it is *The Jim Bohanon Show*, sent out under the Westwood One label. In the days before satellite interconnection, MBS found the call-in show a way to utilize its costly leased land lines between its five-minute newscasts on the hour and half-hour. Bohanon's former Mutual wake-up news hour, *America in the Morning*, also continues in Westwood One syndication and is likewise widely imitated, even on Mutual's sister network, NBC Radio.—*Thomas Bratter, Los Angeles*



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Buena Vista Television executives have opted not to go forward with their syndicated remake of 'Let's Make a Deal.'

The one-hour show that was to be emceed by former talk show host Gordon Elliott was cleared in nearly 100 markets representing more than 60% of the country for next fall. A Buena Vista spokeswoman said it was a "business decision" and that it did not make sense from a financial standpoint to move forward. Buena Vista executives had yet to clear the show in New York or Los Angeles, although the spokeswoman said the studio had recently received offers in both markets.

SBC Communications last week said it will oppose AT&T's proposed takeover of MediaOne to protest FCC rules that allow cable companies to shield their networks from competitors.

Cable monopolies don't have to play by the same rules as the rest of the industry," said SBC Chairman and CEO Edward Whitacre.

A consortium of public advocacy, civil rights and public health groups today will ask the FCC to hold hearings on the public-interest obligations of digital broadcasters.

A fund for public-interest programming paid for by fees from digital broadcasters is among the initiatives being pushed by People for Better TV. The group's members include the Consumer Federation of America, the National Organization for Women, the America Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The May 3 press conference will be at the American Society for the Advancement of Science in New York.

'Law & Order' co-star Benjamin Bratt is leaving the Studios USA-produced series at the end of this season.

Bratt, who has been on the NBC series for the past four years, will be replaced by Jesse L. Martin (*Ally McBeal*, *The X-Files*) next season, Studios USA executives announced last week. Bratt's exit from the

show will be handled in *Law & Order's* two-hour season finale on May 26.

Syndicated newsmagazine 'Inside Edition' will air a report today that claims a number of recent network reality series have segments with "phony" footage.

The show's producers say the May 3 report will focus on segments from three previous Fox reality programs; *World's Wildest Police Videos*, *When Animals Attack* and *Busted on the Job*. *Inside Edition* executives say certain segments "never adequately informed viewers when they strayed from reality." Fox responded that the network policy remains to clearly identify all re-creations, re-enactments and training video within any reality program. Producers must adhere to this policy, as Fox does not intend to mislead its viewers or misrepresent footage, Fox said.

The Box Music Network will sink up to \$3 million in branding over the coming months,

according to Greg Willis, The Box senior vice president of affili-

ate sales and marketing. "Music You Control" will be the theme of the network's effort to differentiate itself from competitors MTV, VH1 and MuchMusic. It will capitalize on The Box's customized video packages for different demographics, similar to a request line. "We put a computer file server in the headend of every cable system, so the brand is the same, but we are putting a different music mix, depending on the demographic," Willis said. While a drop in the bucket for a major network, the investment is substantial for The Box, a small player compared to MTV & VH1, which have a combined subscribership of 128 million. Branding The Box will play up the request-line aspect, made possible through the \$40,000 system the network provides for each of its MSOs. With a core demo of mostly teens and Gen-Xers, The Box, now reaches 33 million broadcast households, plus 7 million cable subscribers, twice its number of cable subs a year ago, Willis said.

Time Warner is preparing to pull the plug on its Pathfinder site within the next several months.

The magazine titles aggregated there, including *Time*, *Entertainment Weekly* and *Fortune*, were drawing virtually all of their traffic directly through their own sites, according to a Time Inc. New Media spokesman. The move is part of Time Warner's strategy to create hub sites for news, finance, entertainment and sports content to house its respective brands with e-commerce links to be developed.

Perth tapped to head Henson TV

Former USA Networks entertainment president Rod Perth has been named president of the Jim Henson Television Group.

Perth, who left USA last July, will oversee all of Henson's TV development and programming divisions. He will also have oversight of the company's cable channel interests, which include ownership stakes in The Odyssey Channel and the soon-to-launch Kermit Channel.

He fills the position left vacant last November when Margaret Loesch became CEO of The Odyssey Channel. "I'm excited to be a part of an organization that represents such a fantastic brand and something that viewers really understand," says Perth. "I think my network background, station background and my cable background will all really help me in this position. I truly have a great deal of respect for what The Jim Henson Company is doing."

Perth, who started at USA Networks in October 1994, was previously vice president of late night programming at CBS. Perth was also vice president and general manager at CBS-owned station WBBM-TV Chicago from 1986 to 1989.

—Joe Schlosser

Fox News will soon be the premier news provider on @Home, supplanting CNN in that role.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed, but Fox is paying @Home for distribution on the service, according to a source familiar with the deal. It comes on the heels of a pact News America Digital Publishing struck with Road Runner in February. Fox News will launch on Road Runner in the next six weeks. Fox Sports introduced content to Road Runner last week. "This cements Fox's position as the premier broadband programmer that's out there right now," says Scott Ehrlich, senior vice president and executive producer of News America Digital Publishing. Fox expects to have broadband satellite distribution deals and a telco deal in place shortly.

ABC ended its five-year relationship with America Online, pulling its entertainment and sports content from AOL with the expiration of the most recent contract. An AOL spokeswoman said the move was a "mutual decision." A spokesman for ESPN Internet Ventures, which produces online content for all Disney/ABC sites, said it gives the ABC Sports properties license to produce content around special events, including the Triple Crown and the Indianapolis 500, that would have previously appeared only on AOL. ABC News terminated its relationship with AOL late last year, with CBS News

Conomikes toasted at Golden Mikes

John Conomikes and Hearst-Argyle Television received the Broadcasters' Foundation Golden Mike Award April 26 at the Plaza Hotel in New York. The award, presented by Edward McLaughlin, chairman of the Broadcasters' Foundation and event emcee Regis Philbin, is the highest honor bestowed by the Broadcasters' Foundation, whose mission is to provide anonymous aid to broadcasters in financial need.

Conomikes is the president, co-CEO and a director of Hearst-Argyle Television. Under his leadership, Hearst Broadcasting has grown from a three-station TV group into a national television company that owns and/or manages 26 network affiliate TV stations and seven radio stations. He was toasted by several fellow broadcasters, including David Barrett, executive VP and COO, Hearst-Argyle Television; Jim Beloyianis, president, Katz Television Group; Frank Bennack Jr., president and CEO, Hearst Corp.; and Nick Trigony, president, Cox Broadcasting.



Philbin, honoree Conomikes and McLaughlin celebrate after the award ceremony.

—Mara Reinstein

replacing it as AOL's broadcast news provider.

Wink Communications struck deals with ABC and CBS last week to develop interactive features for shows on those networks this year. Wink enables interactive functions with software in cable set-top boxes, giving viewers access to additional program information and e-commerce options. NBC, CNN, TBS, ESPN and The Weather Channel are already working with Wink on developing interactive elements in their programs.

The Small Cable Business Association (SCBA) is changing its name to the American Cable Association, citing both a need to reach out to cable distributors of all sizes and frequent confusion with

another trade organization, the Satellite Broadcasting and Communications Association (SBCA). "We've run into barriers when we talk to cable operators because they don't perceive themselves as small," said SCBA President Matt Polka. With the demise of the Cable Telecommunications Association (CATA), the cable industry needs an organization to represent the needs of cable distributors separately from cable programmers, said David Kinley, president of SunTel Communications and an SCBA board member.

Correction: Some Tribune Broadcasting Co. holdings were incorrectly reported in "Top 25 Television Groups" (April 19). Tribune's Seattle station is KCPQ(TV) Ch. 13. It has sold WGNX(TV) Atlanta and the correct call letters in

Miami are WBZL(TV). Tribune remains the nation's fourth-largest station group owner, with total U.S. household coverage of 35.8% and 26.9% under the FCC's method of accounting (discounts 50% of UHF-station coverage). The percentages of some of Tribune's other media holdings as reported by Hoover's Online also were incorrect. Tribune owns 29% of cable's Food Network; 17% of Career Path.com; 3% of iVillage Inc.; 2.5% of Excite Inc. and .24% of America Online.

Correction: An April 19 article, "Broadcasters face ENG crunch," incorrectly stated that the law firm Covington & Burling represents the National Association of Broadcasters. The firm represents the Association for Maximum Service Television.

Printed in the U.S.A. Founded in 1931 as *Broadcasting*, the News Magazine of the Fifth Estate. *Broadcasting-Television* introduced in 1945. *Television* acquired in 1961. *Cablecasting* introduced in 1972. *Broadcasting/Cable* introduced in 1989. *Broadcasting & Cable* introduced in 1993. *Broadcasting & Cable* is a registered trademark of Reed Elsevier (Nederland) B.V., used under license. *Telemedia Week* is a registered trademark of Reed Elsevier Inc. *Reg. U.S. Patent Office.

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Incorporating The Fifth Estate TELEVISION BROADCASTING

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COMMITTED TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND THE FIFTH ESTATE

High cards in High Court

The Supreme Court heard arguments last week in broadcasters' challenge of the ban on TV advertisements of legal gambling. As it stands, the government can encourage gambling, and does, through ads for state lotteries and the exception it has made for ads from casinos run by Native Americans. Other legal gaming establishments, however, may not advertise on TV. The government's reasoning: It is in the public interest to discourage gambling by banning advertisements for it. First of all, if it is in the government interest to do so, the government is violating that interest by advertising its own gambling. But the government's case is weakened by more than hypocrisy.

The Supreme Court has already made itself heard loud and clear on this subject. In the *Liquormart* case in 1996 that overturned a state ban on price advertising for hard liquor, the court held that the state "does not have the broad discretion to suppress truthful, non-misleading information for paternalistic purposes." And of course, with the casino gambling ban, papa is only trying to suppress the speech that doesn't put money directly into state government coffers.

In *Liquormart*, the court specifically repudiated an earlier High Court decision (*Posados*) that upheld a ban on casino gambling advertising (talk about being on point), calling that decision a "sharp break from precedent" and an erroneous application of First Amendment analysis and asserting that bans on speech are more, not less, intrusive than those on conduct. Justice Stevens wrote in the majority opinion: "The text of the First Amendment makes clear that the Constitution presumes that attempts to regulate speech are more dangerous than attempts to regulate conduct.... As a result, the First Amendment directs that government may not suppress speech as easily as it may suppress conduct, and that speech restrictions cannot be treated as simply

another means that the government may use to achieve its ends." Broadcasters are holding all the high cards.

A time to talk

Take a close look at the cover of this magazine. It didn't take our editors and graphic artists long to pluck those images of mayhem from TV and computer screens. Some are comic, some are dramatic and some are real. In any event, none can deny that TV and the Internet are filled with them. That fact alone last week prompted politicians and others desperate to do something in the wake of Littleton to lash out at the media and threaten harsh action. If the entertainment industry doesn't regulate itself, warned Senator Joseph Lieberman, "there will be attempts...to impose censorship in this country." Indeed, Senator Ernest Hollings moved quickly to resurrect his part-time ban on violent programming.

The outrage is understandable, but the strength of our representative democracy is that it puts a layer of reasoned debate between impulses and actions. And in a reasoned debate, the media can show that the images of violence are offset by many more portraying the positive values the President believes the media should. Such a debate will also show that censorship or more forced "voluntary" self-regulation are blunt instruments that would do far more harm than good to our national discourse and psyche.

As we have said before, the media cannot, and should not, be excluded from the dialogue both on the causes and possible remedies to the growing violence in our society. Industry leaders acknowledged as much last week. But we could never endorse a rush to judgment against the media when the problems are clearly deeper and solutions more complicated than any offered in the heat of the moment. To do so risks attacking the symptoms at the expense of treating the disease.

New York 245 West 17th Street, 10011; 212-645-0067; Fax 212-337-7028

Harry A. Jessell, editor

Stephen McClellan, John M. Higgins, deputy editors
Dwight Cunningham, managing editor

Evette Porter, assistant managing editor (special projects)
Todd Gast, art director

Glen Dickson, Richard Tedesco, associate editors
Karen Anderson, Deborah McAdams, staff writers
Kim McAvoy, contributing editor
Christopher Jones, Web editor

Lesley Gaspar, Beatrice Williams-Rude, copy editors
Nolan Marchand, assistant editor
Ed Reynolds, assistant art director
Mara Reinstein, editorial assistant

Washington 1627 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202-463-3711 Editorial Fax: 202-463-3742

John S. Eggerton, assistant managing editor, bureau chief
Dan Trigoboff, senior editor
Elizabeth A. Rathbun, assistant editor
Paige Albinak, Bill McConnell, staff writers
Alisa Holmes, Web production manager

Los Angeles 5700 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 120, 90036;
323-549-4100; Fax 323-937-4240
Joe Schlosser, bureau chief

Denver 28310 Pine Dr., Evergreen, CO 80439;
303-670-4124; Fax 303-670-1082
Price Colman, bureau chief

Broadcasting & Cable

Peggy Conlon, vice president/group publisher

Donald V. West, editor at large

CAHNNERS BUSINESS INFORMATION
Bruce Barnett, president and chief executive officer
Glenn Rogers, executive vice president
Dan Hart, vice president, finance
Albert A. Seraydar, director of finance
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Louis Bradfield, distribution director
Steve Labunski, director of special events
Dave Borucki, group art director
Rick Higgs, systems manager
John Caggiano, production manager
212-463-6524; Fax 212-463-6563

Circulation Inquiries
Broadcasting & Cable: 800-554-5729
Broadcasting & Cable Yearbook: 800-521-8110

Soi Talshoff, founder and editor (1904-1982)
Lawrence B. Talshoff, chairman emeritus

New York 212-337-6940; Fax 212-337-6947

Gary Rubin, associate publisher

Robert Foody, director of technical advertising
Yvonne Pettus, senior account executive
Robert Payne, Sandra Frey, account executives
Georgina Sculco, creative services
Nikki Kraus, marketing services coordinator
Estrella Diaz, manager administration and special events
John Snyder, sales assistant
Yukari Atsumi, advertising sales coordinator

Los Angeles 323-549-4113; Fax 323-937-5272

Craig Hitchcock, western sales manager
Chuck Bolkom, senior account executive,
(technology/cable), western U.S. 775-852-1290;
Fax 775-852-1291
Nivie Samaan, sales assistant

Classified advertising 212-337-7073; Fax 212-206-8327

Helen Steriti, manager, inside sales
Sari Welner, inside sales representative
Doris Kelly, office manager, Washington

International Group
Television International □ Television Asia □ Television Europe
Randi T. Schatz, associate publisher
Antoinette Pellegrino, sales manager USA
212-337-6944; Fax 212-337-6948

Richard Life, group editor, international
6 Bell Yard London WC2A 1EJ England;
44-171-520-5280; Fax 44-171-520-5227

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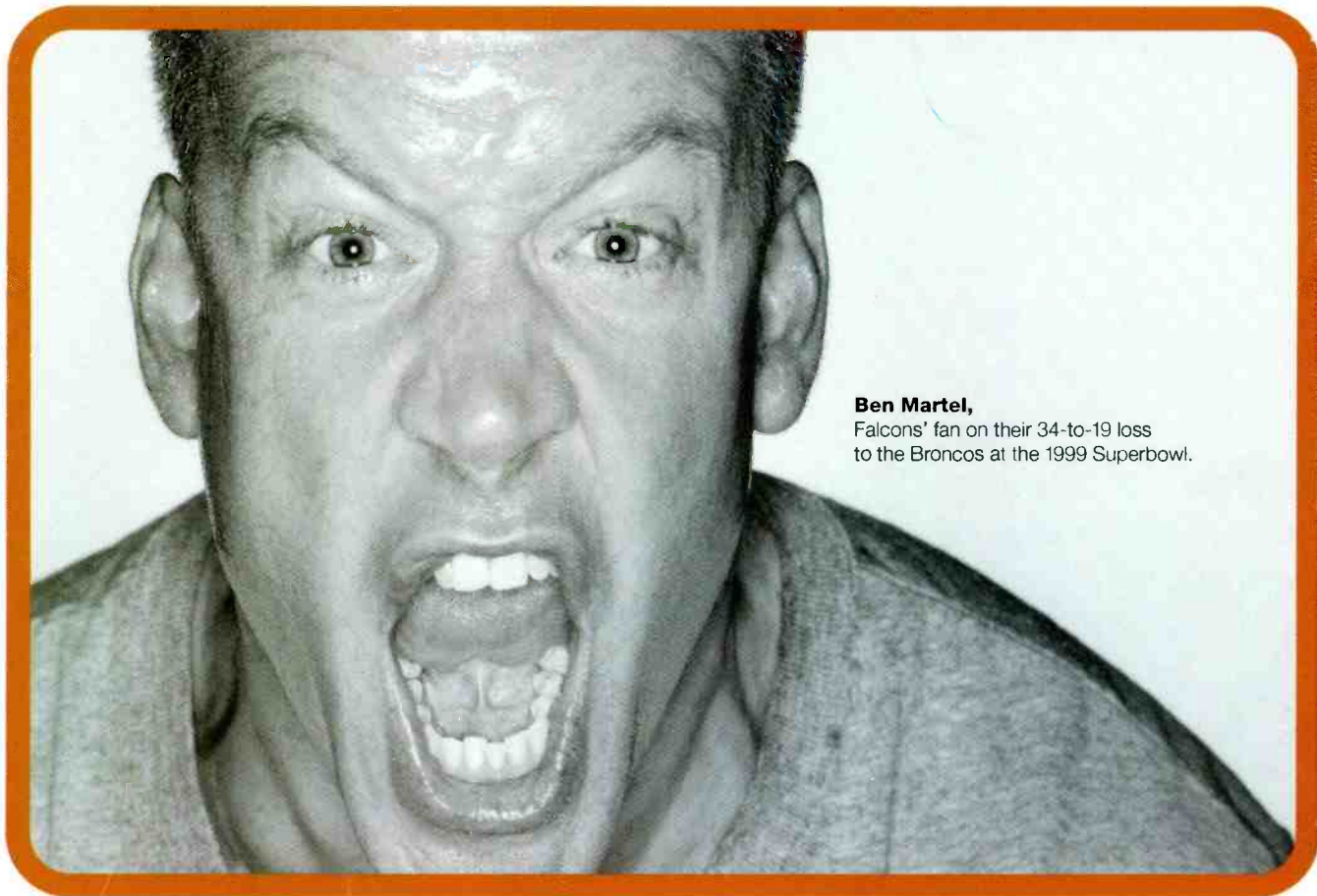
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