

MEDIAWEEK

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Investment by Sony, Liberty seen as aid to Spanish-language network
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SPECIAL REPORT: CABLE TV

WHERE'S THE BOX?

In December 1992, TCI's John Malone announced the concept of the 500-channel system. Its time has finally come, but the debut will be slow and maybe even painful.

PAGE 24



MARKET INDICATORS

National TV: Quiet
 Most fourth-quarter scatter business wrapped up weeks ago at up to 20 percent increases over upfront pricing. First-quarter scatter business was not expected to start flowing until this week at the earliest.

Net Cable: Building
 First-quarter scatter is active among the general-entertainment nets. Drugs, autos, movies and packaged goods are spending. CPMs are around 6 percent above upfront.

Spot TV: Mixed
 Substantial activity continues for first quarter as buyers try to place the bulk of their business before the holiday lull sets in. Many shops await November-sweeps demos to gauge what gets spent where.

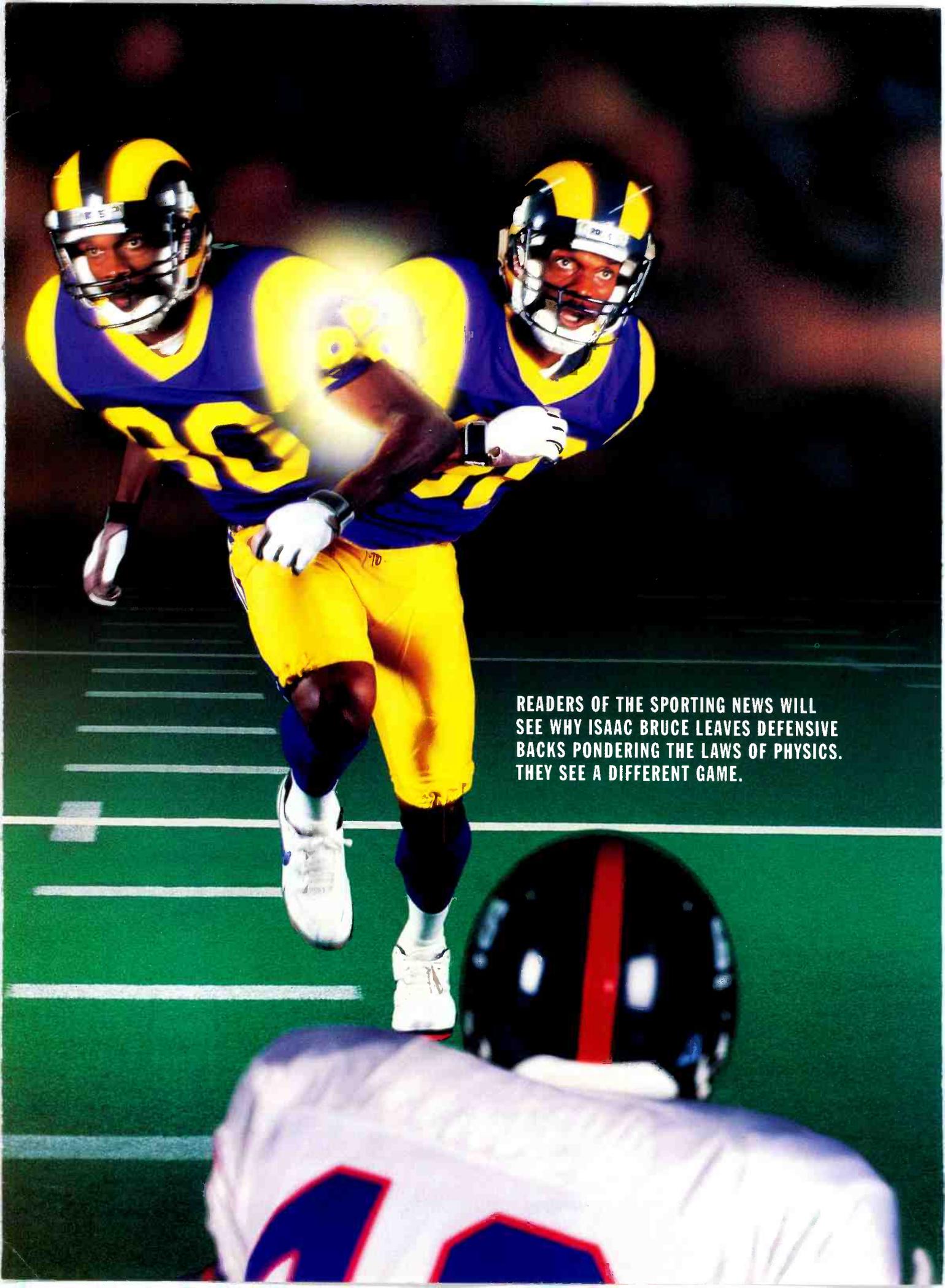
Radio: Warming
 After a Thanksgiving lull, buying is on for the first quarter. Autos are moving faster.

Newspapers: Strong
 National advertising rose 18 percent in October; trend seen continuing into '98. Computers, software, financials and travel lead the way.

FCC Set to Punt

Hearing on contested licenses goes nowhere **PAGE 6**

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Laura K. Jones DEC 01 1997

AT DEADLINE

3 Radio Giants Seeking Research Group

Three of the country's top radio groups have expressed interest in purchasing an equity stake of at least 51 percent in the Research Group of Seattle, a representative of the analysis firm said last week. Capstar Broadcasting Partners has reportedly been in negotiations to acquire the Research Group, a privately held company valued at \$25 million that has several radio conglomerates, including Capstar, as clients. Capstar officials declined to comment about any current involvement, and Research Group chairman and CEO Larry Campbell declined to name possible buyers or investors due to confidentiality agreements. A Cox Radio spokeswoman said that her firm is not among possible suitors.

Prince Pays Price to Go Global

Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. got a new major shareholder last week. Saudi Prince al-Waleed bin Talal revealed he has acquired 5 percent of the media conglomerate's stock for \$400 million. In an interview with *Time* magazine, the prince said that he bought into News Corp. because it is "the only truly global news and entertainment company." News Corp.'s largest investors are Murdoch, whose family owns about 30 percent of the stock, and institutional investor Capital Research, which owns between 6 and 7 percent.

Chain Links to South Shore Paper

News Communications Inc. has added the *South Shore Record* to its family, bringing the chain's total to 24 weeklies. With the exception of the Washington, D.C., *The Hill* newspaper, most of the holdings are concentrated in the New York metropolitan area. The goal, said chief executive Wilbur L. Ross Jr., is to increase circulation, now at about 570,000, to 1 million, thus putting the chain "on a level with the *Daily News*."

Evans to Zuckerman Edit Czar

Random House publisher and president Harold Evans, who lists *Primary Colors* by Anonymous and Colin Powell's *My American Journey* among his publishing successes, is leaving to head the *New York Daily News*, *U.S. News & World Report* and *The Atlantic Monthly*. Evans last week was appointed editorial director by Mortimer Zuckerman, who owns the three publications. The appointment, effective Jan. 1, signals an attempt by Zuckerman to take a more strategic role in helping the *News* reverse its circulation decline and take on the rival *New York Post*.

Trade Ass'n Wants More Power to Them

The Association of Local Television Stations filed a proposal last week with the Federal Communications Commission seeking to correct disparities the group said exists between the power allotments granted by the FCC to digital TV stations and the actual power requirements of those stations. The ALTV contends that the new digital UHF stations—unlike their higher-powered VHF analog cousins—will need more power. In asking for one additional megawatt for the digital UHF stations, the ALTV assured the FCC that stations will use a variety of technical means to ensure that the boost in juice will not cause interference above levels already allowed by the FCC.

Turshen Gets Gardening Spot

Doug Turshen, creative director of *Family Circle*, was named editor-in-chief of Gruner + Jahr's *American HomeStyle & Gardening*. Turshen has developed and launched several magazines, including *Child* and *Fitness*, and was creative director for the original prototype of *Martha Stewart Living*. "Doug will bring to his new assignment exactly what *American Home Style & Gardening* and its readers crave: vision, personality and creativity, combined with a practical approach to solving problems and providing value and service," said Judith Princz, Gruner + Jahr senior vp and general manager.

People Moving: Susan Lapinski, 49, has been named editor of *Sesame Street Parents*, owned by the Children's Television Workshop. Prior to joining *SSP*, Lapinski was articles editor for Gruner + Jahr's *Child* magazine... Earl G. Graves Publishing has appointed Ronn Harris as director of corporate communications and marketing. Before joining the publishing house, which produces *Black Enterprise*, Harris founded Haricom Advertising in New York.

Corrections: A news story in last week's issue incorrectly reported the weekday circulation for Bergen County, N.J., newspaper *The Record*. It is 146,089. In the same issue, Jody Watley was incorrectly identified as the host of *R&B TV*. The show has not yet named a host. And Cartoon Network counts 46 million subscriber homes. Also, Cartoon is discussing with Warner Bros. (a Time Warner sibling) the acquisition of *Animaniacs* and *Tiny Toon Adventures*, to run for the 1999 season, but no deal is yet in place.

INSIDE



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MEDIA WIRE

L.A. Bankers Pay \$310M For Newspapers in 11 States

Hollinger International has sold about 40 percent of its community newspaper group to Leonard Green & Partners for \$310 million. The 80 properties, representing 166 daily, weekly and free-circulation publications with a total circ of approximately 900,000, are in small-market clusters in 11 states, with the largest in southern Illinois, Mississippi, western New York, Pennsylvania and California. While Hollinger wasn't looking to sell, when the offer came "we certainly were receptive," said Paul Healy, Hollinger's vp of corporate development.

The Green acquisition, a company first, is only the beginning, said Peter Nolan, a partner at the Los Angeles merchant banking concern.

At Hollinger, the sale divests the company of papers with circ less than 10,000, which will help Hollinger reduce debt and redirect energy to managing larger assets. Case in point: The 67,000-circ Gary, Ind., *Post-Tribune*, which Hollinger is set to acquire from Knight-Ridder by early January. And while a growing number of investment banks have bought publishing properties in recent months, the acquisitions have tended to be magazines, not newspapers, which are less expensive, said Kevin Lavalla, managing director at Veronis, Suhler & Associates in New York. —Dori Perrucci

Universal's Rosenberg Said to Be Up for Promotion

Steve Rosenberg, the top programming sales executive for Universal Television Enterprises, will likely gain a promotion, said a source close to Universal. The source said that Rosenberg's new title could be president. Rosenberg has reportedly been in talks with Home Shopping Network CEO Barry Diller about increasing his responsibilities under the USA Networks banner. Diller has struck a deal to absorb Universal's television operations and its USA Networks cable operations under his new USA Networks Inc. company. A Universal Television spokesman had no comment about whether Rosenberg will be given additional duties or a promotion. —Richard Katz (continued on page 8)

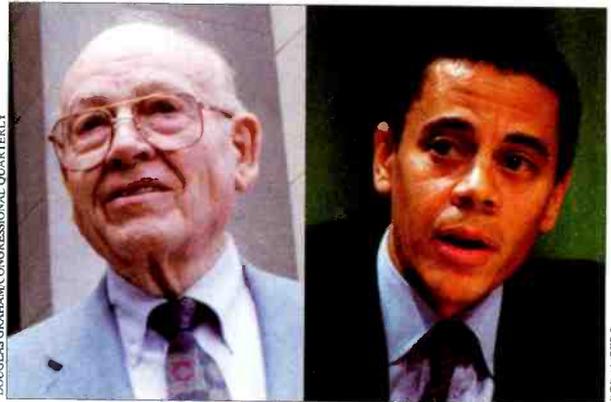
Hearing Impaired?

FCC defers yet again on disputed radio licenses

NETWORK TV / By Alicia Mundy

The newly reconstituted Federal Communications Commission held its first meeting on Nov. 25, and one of the first issues on its agenda was the 10-year-old case of broadcaster Zeb Lee (*Mediaweek* May 9, 1997), along with some 20 other lingering radio-ownership disputes. Though the commission left the door open on the issue of reviewing cases such as Lee's, it made clear that auctions would provide the easiest and fastest resolution, if not the most equitable. "It may not be fair," said new commissioner Michael Powell in an interview, "But there may be no way to develop criteria with which to judge competing applicants. The auctions may be the only legal way to settle these cases."

The Balanced Budget Act, passed in August, said that these 20 ownership cases could be settled by auction (a procedure that is mandatory for any license applications filed after July 1,



North Carolina broadcaster Lee (l.) may be out of luck as far as William Kennard's FCC is concerned.

1997). But it also gave the FCC discretion to find another solution for this subset, which includes several long-term disputes whose participants have already gone through the FCC process, including administrative law judge and court hearings. The commissioners voted to solicit comments on whether an auction resolution would be fair or whether certain "equities" should be considered and comparative hearings

Stunts Again Take Sweeps' Star Role

NETWORK TV / By Richard Katz

CBS, Fox and NBC all claimed victories in the November sweeps, which ended on Nov. 26, although much of the networks' successes were built on one-off specials rather than series programming. CBS (10.5 average rating through Nov. 24) took the total-households title away from NBC (10.2). CBS' win was driven by the miniseries *Bella Mafia* (14.4 rating average) and the original movie *What the Deaf Man Heard* (23.0). CBS' sweeps schedule

consisted of 15 percent specials, compared to 8 percent for NBC, 16 percent for ABC and 17 percent for Fox.

NBC won in the most important demographic, adults 18-49, with a 6.9, but the network was down 4 percent in the demo from a year ago. Fox was the only network among the Big Four to show increases in the most important demos; Fox pulled within 0.8 of NBC in 18-49.

Even though Fox's ratings were juiced with special programming including *The Magician's*

arranged. Chairman William Kennard said he would "welcome any useful ideas" for resolving these disputes.

Prior to his confirmation as chairman, Kennard had promised Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) that he would review these cases, including Lee's. Lee, 86, is a resident of Asheville, N.C. Helms said that it would be unfair to force applicants such as Lee into an auction at this late date because they have already spent years in the FCC and in court, incurring substantial legal costs. With the case going to the new commission for discussion and comment, Lee's lawyers worry that Kennard may have found a quiet way to bury the matter. "We will submit comments to the commission," said Steven Leckar of Butera and Andrews. "We believe Zeb Lee's case should be adjudicated on the record." The federal court of appeals has not yet ruled.

At the Nov. 25 FCC meeting, Kennard said he is open to suggestions but added that it will be very difficult coming up with comparative standards that will stand up in court. One of the observers at the meeting was Gene Bechtel, whose own radio license battle led to a 1993 federal court decision against the FCC's comparative standards in determining how licenses are awarded. Bechtel said he was "disheartened" by the outcome. Although all of the commissioners mentioned their concerns with fairness, and the equity that some applicants already have invested in their cases, the five commissioners lauded the auction resolution as the speediest and most efficient. Kennard noted that he had filed a radio license application for a client when he was in private practice in 1984. When Kennard became the FCC general counsel in 1993, he learned that case was still pending.

A staff report also "tentatively" recommended auctions. An FCC lawyer said Lee's is one of five "tough" cases which the so-called Bechtel ruling in 1993 interrupted at a crucial stage, leaving the FCC and the applicants unsure how to proceed. ■

Geraldo Upends CNBC

New deal led to change in management for net's prime schedule

CABLE TV / By Michael Bürgi

The balance of power within NBC News and CNBC shifted on several fronts last week, with clear-cut winners and losers. The winners: Andy Lack, president of NBC News who now also calls the programming shots on CNBC's prime-time schedule; and Geraldo Rivera, who not only remains at CNBC but wrangled four prime-time specials on NBC as part of a six-year deal reported to be worth \$40 million. NBC disputed that figure, saying it was inflated, but the network would not put a value on the contract.

Rivera's decision to turn down a not-as-lucrative deal from Fox News Channel—which offered him the chance to move his CNBC show intact to FNC, a 7 p.m. program and the chance to do several specials for Fox Broadcast Network, all for just under \$4 million a year—spelled bad news for others. CNBC president Bill Bolster, for one, gives up oversight of his network's prime-time lineup to Lack. He will, however, remain in control of all daytime programming, CNBC's most successful daypart. Bolster also will continue to oversee ad sales. The other loser is the legal reporting team at NBC News, which has grown in importance there since NBC's aggressive coverage of the O.J. Simpson murder trial in 1995.

According to Andrew Tyndall, a network news analyst, Rivera has established himself as the preeminent journalist covering trials and legal matters. "Geraldo has that market covered," said Tyndall. "He regularly scoops Court TV [a partner with NBC News on legal coverage] and he gets the best guests and analysis."

Insiders at NBC News said Lack cut the deal to keep Rivera under some pressure from

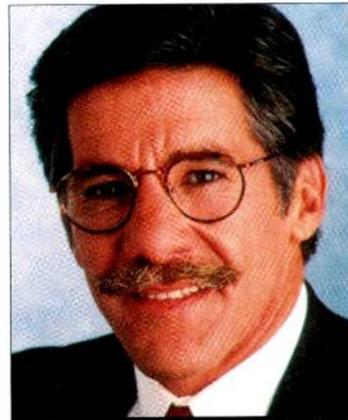
NBC president Bob Wright, who saw the necessity of keeping Rivera, the principal ratings draw for CNBC in prime time. Rivera regularly draws a 0.9 universe rating while the rest of CNBC in prime time draws a 0.5.

For years CNBC has struggled to find an identity in prime time. Don Ohlmeyer, president of NBC West Coast, was expected to have considerable input into reforming the prime-time lineup a year ago, but other than putting on repeats of *Late Night With Conan O'Brien* earlier this year—which were yanked after only a few months of poor ratings—Ohlmeyer's influence has not been seen.

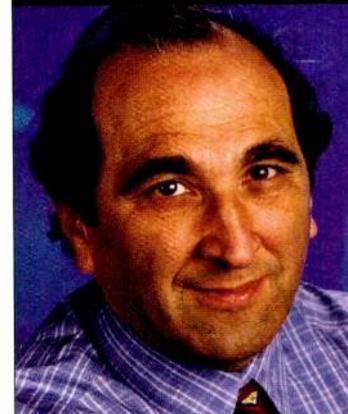
Now, said one agency executive who would not speak for attribution, Lack can put his resources to use at CNBC. "Andy is a fabulous talent and he turned around NBC News," said the exec. But, he asked, "Do they have the patience and fortitude to stick with whatever they do?"

Rivera's deal calls for him to drop his syndicated talk show, *The Geraldo Rivera Show*, which is produced by Tribune Entertainment. Tribune said last week that the show will run through the '97-98 season. But it may have lost clearance on CBS O&Os in New York and L.A. after this season anyway. A plan was being floated to move the show to New York and produce it live at Tribune's New York station, WPIX.

Fox News Channel also ends up a bit of a loser in this tussle for talent. But Roger Ailes, FNC's president and CNBC's former president, insisted at CNBC that contracts with talent include a right to match any competing offer. On the strength of that stipulation, NBC's legal department wrote a cease-and-desist letter to Fox once it had made its counteroffer to Rivera. It worked. ■



Geraldo got what he wanted from CNBC, which included exposure on NBC.



Andrew Lack, president of NBC News, was given control of CNBC in prime time.

Code: Magic's Biggest Secrets Finally Revealed (11.0 in 18-49), the network also gained momentum with series *The X-Files*, *Party of Five*, *Ally McBeal*, *King of the Hill* and *The Simpsons* (see related story on page 12). Media buyer Paul Schulman said that Fox could move one or more of these shows to build viewership on weak nights.

There also was some good news for the WB, which grew by 14 percent in adults 18-49 over November 1996 by sticking with regularly scheduled programming on its three nights. Although the WB grew from a much smaller base than the Big Four, its Monday drama *7th Heaven* increased 82 percent to a 2.0 in adults 18-49. ■

MEDIA WIRE

Fox Trots Out 20th Century Project With \$10M Marathon

Fox is revving its corporate media engine behind a \$10 million interactive project. Called "The Best of the 20th Century, The Official National Survey," the millennial poll will provide a content platform for programming and promotion, and will anchor nearly two years of marketing activity by almost every unit of News Corp.'s conglomerate and its advertisers.

Fox intends to spend more than \$10 million and 20 months of airtime on the project, which will conclude with a programming event across its network, cable and international channels. Category-exclusive advertisers will sponsor on-air vignettes, a prime-time special set for shortly before the millennium, and a host of grassroots marketing programs through station affiliates and its ad partners' points of distribution. Fox's "Best of" team has hammered out licensing agreements with 50 major cities and will spawn local events highlighting "bests" in their areas. Among Fox divisions involved in the program are News America; News America New Media, which will conduct Internet polling; the FoxWorld Web site; HarperCollins publishing; and *TV Guide*, which will run ads promoting the poll. Other Fox channels, such as Fox Family, FX and Fox Sports, could spin their own specials using bits and pieces of the survey of interest to their respective target audiences. —T. L. Stanley

Honda Special Puts Focus On Top College Sportswomen

The television-programming arm of Rubin Postaer & Associates, Honda's ad agency, has developed a half-hour TV special featuring the country's top women collegiate athletes. Coproduced by Rubin Postaer and Chicago-based Intersport, the show will air on ESPN2 in early February. For the past 11 years, the Honda Awards annually have recognized the best female collegians in a variety of sports. The top award, the Honda Broderick Cup, is presented to the female collegiate athlete of the year.

Extending its link to women's collegiate sports, Honda is close to a deal with CBS to be (continued on page 10)

TBS Hit by Makegoods

Advertisers getting extra spots after prime-time rating tumbles

CABLE NETWORKS / By Michael Bürgi

TBS Superstation's prime-time ratings have dipped sharply over the past two months, largely due to the dismal performance of *Coach* reruns. The cable network in October began a double-run of the off-network show from 7:05-8:05 p.m. *Coach*'s weak ratings performance as a lead-in has created under-delivery problems for TBS' prime-time schedule, forcing the network to provide makegoods to advertisers.

TBS' average prime-time household universe rating of 1.9 plunged to a 1.4 (off 26.3 percent) in October and to a 1.5 in November, according to Nielsen Media Research ratings data provided by Turner Broadcasting. "We did under-perform," said Joe Uva, president of Turner Entertainment Networks ad sales. "But we have enough inventory put aside to accommodate [the shortfall]. It has not been a problem for our advertisers."

Uva would not disclose the dollar value of the advertising makegoods. He said that *Coach* did not bring to the early fringe time period the concentration of kid and teen viewers that TBS had been drawing with a double-run of *Family Matters*, which previously occupied the time slot and moved ahead to 6:05 p.m. in October. "When you lose those teens

going into prime time, it's rather hard to get them back," Uva said.

Bill Burke, TBS Superstation president, said that beginning tonight, a double-run of *The Andy Griffith Show* will take the place of *Coach*. *Griffith* was a staple of TBS' schedule during the 1980s. *Coach* is being retired from TBS.

"*Andy* is a show that continues to surprise us," said Burke. The vintage sitcom has been off

TBS' evening schedule for two years, but it has been airing at 11 a.m. Burke said he is unconcerned that TBS, which has been on a program-acquisition tear this year, is adding such an old show back to its key prime-access slot. "Once [advertisers] see the audience [*Griffith*] delivers," they will understand why the show is there, Burke said.

The Superstation president added that several

prime-time programming stunts slated between now and the end of the year should help revive the channel's ratings. Among the specials scheduled for this month are a marathon of James Bond films that TBS has tied loosely into the theatrical release of the latest Bond flick, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, and a Clint Eastwood movie festival. ■



Goodbye, Coach: Craig Nelson and Shelley Fabares

New Life for Telemundo

Investment by Sony and Liberty seen as major boost for network

TELEVISION / By Richard Katz

Struggling Spanish-language broadcast network Telemundo is expected to become a more formidable competitor to market leader Univision as a result of last week's investment by Sony Pictures Entertainment and Liberty Media. Sony, Liberty, Apollo Management and Bastion Capital fund have agreed to buy Telemundo for \$539 million in cash plus \$200 million in debt. Sony will become managing partner of Telemundo.

The Telemundo network will be split into a

separate entity from the company's eight-station TV group. Apollo and Bastion will acquire 50.1 percent of the TV stations, with Sony and Liberty gaining about 24.5 percent each. Once the deal is done, Sony and Liberty will buy the company's network assets for \$75 million.

Telemundo's chief executive, Roland Hernandez, will be replaced, although Sony and Liberty sources said Hernandez will likely be offered a different role with the network.

Telemundo has an 18 percent share of U.S. Hispanic viewers compared to Univision's 82

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DOW JONES

MEDIA WIRE

presenting sponsor of a Jan. 3-4 weekend of NCAA women's basketball games. As part of the CBS deal, Honda would be the telecasts' exclusive import automotive advertiser. —Langdon Brockinton

Discovery Helps Cable Guys In Quest to Snare Local Ads

Discovery Networks, which already has one of the more successful content-driven Web sites, last week said it will launch a business-to-business Web site created for cable operators that carry its networks. Magnet Interactive Communications, a privately held company located in Washington, will create the site. The site will provide online access to program grids, promotions and audience research for operators to use for local ad sales. Discovery is building the site to complement its quarterly promotional and advertising kits with updated material. Networks covered on the site include the Discovery Channel, The Learning Channel, Animal Planet and Travel Channel. —Michael Bürgi

New York Magazine Sues City Agency Over 'Rudy' Ads

New York Magazine has filed suit in federal court after New York transit officials removed a bus advertisement poking fun at Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

The magazine's formal complaint charged the transit agency with violating its right to free speech and breaking a contract to run the ads on 75 Metropolitan Transit Authority buses for \$85,000. In the ads, the magazine calls itself "possibly the only good thing in New York Rudy hasn't taken credit for."

The complaint said the Giuliani administration acted "with neither a compelling governmental interest nor a sense of humor." The suit said that the magazine's parent corporation, Primedia, agreed to supply and the "MTA agreed to display" the ads. The ads were to roll out before Thanksgiving and run through Dec. 31.

Giuliani contended that he objected to a business using his name for promotional purposes and not to the ad's humor. Giuliani said last week that he would contest the suit, which was scheduled to be heard last Friday.

percent, and Telemundo has performed well below financial expectations this year. "Roland's not a bad manager, but he was being asked to do too much," one source involved in the deal said of Hernandez. "He's not a programmer." David Koff, vp/corporate development for Liberty, a unit of Tele-Communications Inc., said that the new partners "have a tremendous amount of respect" for Hernandez.

Sony and Liberty are said to be committed to rebuilding the network through its existing broadcast base rather than switching to cable. The partners believe that regulatory hurdles to selling the stations would be high. The network has 10-year affiliate agreements with its stations.

Sony sources said that Telemundo fits into the company's strategies of producing indigenous

programming around the world and expanding its Spanish-language programming assets in Latin America. In addition to airing its hit English-language movies (dubbed or in subtitles) on Telemundo, Sony also plans to use scripts from its hit TV series to produce Spanish-language versions. Sony distributes *Married With Children*, *Seinfeld* and *Wheel of Fortune*, and other shows. The company did not say which titles might be reproduced for Telemundo.

Even competitors applauded Sony and Liberty's move to rescue Telemundo. "It sends a bad message to the industry if the business can't support two Spanish-language broadcast networks," said Javier Saralegui, president of cable network Galavision, which is managed by Univision. ■

Boycotts Bring Response

Disney's Eisner does '60 Minutes' to refute claims of religious groups

NETWORK TV / By Richard Katz

Walt Disney chairman Michael Eisner took to the airwaves on CBS' *60 Minutes* Nov. 23 to defend Disney and subsidiary ABC from boycotts from the Southern Baptists and Catholic groups such as the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

The Southern Baptists began boycotting all things Disney in June to protest—among other items—the gay lead character in ABC's *Ellen* and the extension of health benefits to the same-sex partners of Disney employees. The Catholic League has been trying to drive advertisers from ABC's *Nothing Sacred*, a new drama about a young priest who questions some of the Church's doctrines.

On *60 Minutes*, Eisner attacked the merit of the religious-based boycotts, saying that Disney was "not pushing any agenda. We are pushing in our corporate marketplace, tolerance and understanding, expansiveness. We are totally onto an ethical compass, a moral compass."

Right before Eisner's *60 Minutes* interview, ABC announced that it made a full-season commitment to *Nothing Sacred*, a move that raised some eyebrows because the show has attracted minimal viewership and many adver-

tisers have pulled their ads from the show. In ABC's core 18-49 demo, *Nothing Sacred* has so far this year averaged only a 2.0 rating, good for number 106 of 128 regular series. According to the Catholic League, 28 advertisers, including Isuzu, K Mart and Weight Watchers, have pulled ads from the series. ABC insiders said the number is actually lower but declined to be specific. The ABC spokesman said the show is "fully sold."

An ABC spokesman said the show was renewed "because we believe in it creatively and we feel strongly about letting the show find its audience."

However, Steve Grubbs, executive vp/director of national broadcast for BBDO, said the boycott likely was part of the reason ABC renewed the show. "Somewhere in this whole thing is an element of not wanting to appear to react to a pressure group," said Grubbs, adding that the quality of the show and its difficult Thursday 8-9 p.m. time

slot were also factors in its renewal. "If you do, you give credence to these people's claims that they can have an effect on the business."

Nothing Sacred was one of the cheapest shows sold in the upfront with a 30-second unit priced at around \$55,000. Although many advertisers have pulled out, network sources said it is unlikely ABC is selling spots at fire sale prices but is using the avails for makegoods. ■



BRUCE MACALLAY/STRINGER

Nothing Sacred's Kevin Anderson lends a hand.

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CABLE TV

Cartoon Network will introduce two original animated series as part of its 1998 programming lineup, which the network announced last week. *The Powerpuff Girls* is a creation of Craig McCracken, who has been involved in the production of *Dexter's Laboratory*. The series, which has a Japanimation-meets-the-'70s flavor, was among the first batch of original shorts developed two years ago by Cartoon. The other new original series, *Ed, Edd n' Eddy*, is a take on three kids coping with growing up in the suburbs. In other Cartoon program news for '98, John Kricfalusi, creator of *Ren & Stimpy*, will make a special looking at Ranger Smith of *Yogi Bear* fame. *Dexter's Laboratory* and *Cow and Chicken* will begin running as daily strips; both have 52-episode orders. The same is expected of *Johnny Bravo*, though the ink isn't dry on that deal, said Betty Cohen, president of Cartoon Network Worldwide. Also, a fifth season of *Space Ghost: Coast to Coast* is in the works. And Cartoon has acquired the rights to several animated films in an effort to establish a movie franchise. Titles include *Balto*, *Fievel Goes West* and the *Land Before Time* series. Time Warner's Cartoon is in 46 million homes.

Lifetime plans to launch Lifetime Movie Network, a 24-hour, ad-supported channel featuring original films, miniseries and theatricals. The service, which cable operators can either launch as an analog channel or (more likely) as a digital offering, will debut next September. LMN will air such Lifetime originals as *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story* and *Choices of the Heart: The Margaret Sanger Story*. Lifetime, which is half-owned by Disney, may also acquire off-network rights to some ABC made-fors to air on LMN. The network will carry only four minutes per hour of national ad time, plus two minutes of local ad time.

Comedy Central last week hired Bert Gould as senior vp of marketing and new business. Gould, most recently a consultant for Classic Sports Network by ESPN, was an architect of Fox Kids Network and also worked at Marvel Entertainment. He replaces Paul LaRocca, who left CC two months ago for a post at Channel One. —Michael Bürgi

Formula-Driven Futility

Oversupply of cookie-cutter sitcoms hobbles prime-time ratings

NETWORK TV / By Richard Katz

By pitting sitcom against sitcom and making little room in their schedules for counterprogramming, the Big Four broadcast networks have suffered through a lackluster first half of the season. Network execs admit that their slotting of more than 60 sitcoms has contributed to an overall decline in viewership so far this season. Many of the comedies are little more than knockoffs of each other, and most have failed to generate

of NBC's new comedies have followed the *Seinfeld/Friends* formula of young, single professionals in Manhattan.

That sameness of many new sitcoms has fallen flat with viewers. One of the few new comedies that has caught on is ABC's *Dharma & Greg*. Bob Igiel, U.S. broadcast director for The Media Edge, summed up the season so far this way: "There's nothing to write home about. Nobody is standing up and cheering."

The Big Four networks "run programs for people who are just like them and the people in their development departments," said Dean Valentine, president of UPN. "NBC is satisfied to keep programming the same show over and over. ABC is desperately trying to imitate ABC."

The networks have scheduled sitcoms against sitcoms, newsmagazines against newsmagazines and movies against movies. "Networks on many nights are not offering viewers enough alternative programming, so [viewers are] going to other places," like cable, said Igiel. The Big Four broadcast nets' total household rating was down 4.3 percent for this season through Nov. 23.

ABC, CBS and NBC all scheduled sitcoms on Wednesday night to start off the season. "That's splintering the audience, and benefitting anyone that's counter-programming," noted Steve Sternberg, a senior partner at J. Walter Thompson.

"Generally speaking, counterprogramming is effective," agreed Leslie Moonves, CBS Television president. "One of ABC's bright spots is *The Wonderful World of Disney*, because it is something for kids to watch instead of *60 Minutes*" on Sunday night. The TV-movie version of *Cinderella* that aired on *Wonderful World* in early November was a major ratings hit.

The plethora of comedies is the biggest factor in the networks' struggles so far this season. "Eating a bale or two of cotton candy at the fair tastes good, but when you eat 12 bales, you get sick," said Garth Ancier, president of entertainment for the WB. "The audience is saying, 'I just don't want to see another comedy.'"

The WB's viewership gains this year (season-to-date average of 1.6 among viewers 18-49, up 14 percent) have been built on the back of two dramas, *Seventh Heaven* and *Buffy*. On Jan. 20, the weblet will launch its fourth night of pro-



GUY DALEMA

Going fourth: WB program chief Ancier has twinned the teen drama *Dawson's Creek*, (above, starring Katie Holmes and James Van Der Beek) with *Buffy* on the net's new Tuesday slate.



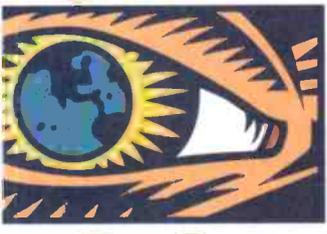
WB

the buzz of the shows they were modeled on—*Seinfeld* and *Friends*.

Bright spots this season have largely been provided by dramas, including Fox's *The X-Files*, *Ally McBeal*, and *Party of Five*; CBS' *Promised Land*; and the WB's *Seventh Heaven* and *Buffy*, the *Vampire Slayer*. "The key words are distinctive, alternative, clever and well-crafted," Peter Roth, Fox Entertainment president, said about his network's successful shows.

Sounds elementary, but in many cases the networks have done the opposite this season. NBC launched an attack on its competitors' sitcoms on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights with sitcoms of its own. Many

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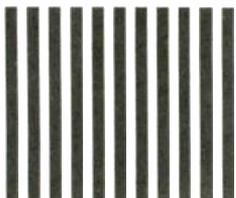
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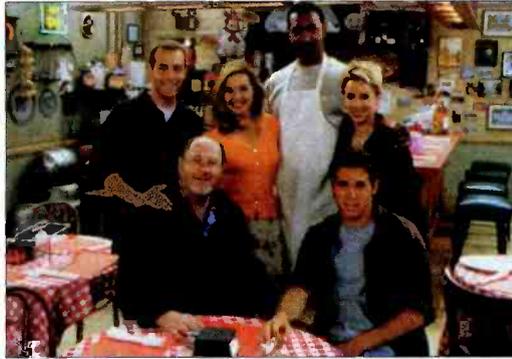
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Playing for laughs: Fox hopes to score at least one hit among four midseason sitcoms, including *Two Guys*, *a Girl* and *a Pizza Place*.

ROB BROWN/FOX

gramming, moving *Buffy* to Tuesday at 8 p.m., to be followed by a highly anticipated teen drama, *Dawson's Creek*.

Fox's Roth attributed much of its network's good fortune this year to its commitment to keeping its drama-heavy schedule largely intact from last season. One of Fox's new dramas, *Ally McBeal*, has significantly boosted the network's Monday-night young adult viewership as a lead out to *Melrose Place*. And Fox's premiere of new episodes of its hit *X-Files* has made the network dominant on Sunday nights.

Fox faces a major challenge to keep its ratings momentum going in the first quarter with the launch of four new comedies to balance out its drama-heavy schedule. The new sitcoms are *Ask Harrier*; *Damon*; *Two Guys, a Girl and a Pizza Place*; and *Personal Days*. The network has not announced where the shows will appear on the schedule.

While Fox is doing its part to keep the right balance between sitcoms and dramas, buyers still maintain that there's simply not enough talented writers and producers in Hollywood to create 60 or more successful weekly comedies. "The sitcom is not an easy form," said Igiel of the MediaEdge. "To be funny and relevant week after week is very difficult."

Partly because it is now so difficult to launch a hit out of the gate, the networks have become more patient with series. In many cases, marginal shows allowed to hang until their second or third seasons have begun to generate respectable numbers. Moonves noted that CBS is experiencing decent growth from second-year

shows such as *JAG*, *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *Promised Land*. So while many of its new series are struggling this season, CBS has yet to cancel a single show so far. The network has had several shows that did well in their first weeks on the air but have tailed off sharply since, including *Michael Hayes*, *Brooklyn South* and *George and Leo*.

CBS—driven by a strong November sweeps performance—has become a strong No. 2 to NBC in the race for total household viewers (CBS 9.8, NBC 11.0). CBS' made-for movie on Nov. 23, *What the Deaf Man Heard*, did a 23.0 household rating. A Friday-night special, *Kids Say the Darndest Things*, performed so well on Nov. 14 (12.9 in households) that CBS has decided to order it as a series for the second half of the season. "We were disappointed we didn't do better in

attracting kids to our [Friday] audience," Moonves said of the network's schedule. "The good news is, we think that we've found the solution."

In the crucial adults 18-49 demographic, NBC is still tops this season—although the network was flat in the demo through Nov. 23, with a 7.0. CBS was down 4 percent, to 4.3. ABC was down 7 percent in 18-49 through Nov. 23 with a 5.5. Although Fox was down 4 percent in adults 18-49 to a 5.4, media buyers believe that Fox has done comparatively well because last year's ratings included the World Series.

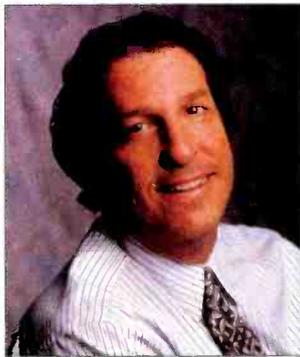
While CBS continues to struggle in the 18-49 demo, the network's gains in households are encouraging. "It's not bad to start getting the households, because they might get the demos to follow," said J. Walter Thompson's Sternberg.

UPN's Valentine said that once his new development team begins churning out shows early next year, that programming will fill a void on network TV—populist programming for the middle class. Valentine cited shows such as *The Brady Bunch* and *Married With Children* as examples he would like UPN to emulate.

"American mainstream comedies like that are now rare—there's a tremendous opportunity to for us," said Valentine. Despite being held back by a distribution system that is weaker than those of the Big Four, Valentine vowed that UPN will be competitive with the bigger networks within several years.

Igiel, who spends \$3 billion annually for The Media Edge's clients, agrees that

UPN could attain parity. But he believes it will be due to the Big Four's shrinking viewership more than more UPN's growth. Igiel projects that within five years, all six broadcast networks will settle in at ratings averaging 4 to 6. The Big Four currently average 8 to 10 in households, while UPN and The WB average ratings in the 3s. ■



GWENDOLYN CATER/FOX

Roth: "Distinctive, alternative" shows win ratings.

TV STATIONS

WCBS-TV, the troubled CBS flagship station in New York, last week appointed Steve Friedman as its new vp and station manager. Friedman, a former executive producer of *NBC Nightly News* and a cocreator of *Dateline NBC*, will oversee both the news and promotion operations of station. Friedman said he plans to take a hard look at WCBS' fast-paced "More News in Less Time" format for its newscasts. "We're not blowing up the place," Friedman said. "But you're not going to see us promo [a news piece] and then do a 15 second story on it. You can't disappoint people like that." Of the current slogan, another WCBS executive said: "If we can win with something else, I'll go there in a heartbeat." Sources at the station say that the newsroom is committed to producing more tie-ins to CBS network programming. WCBS two weeks ago released general manager Bud Carey after Carey's six-year stewardship failed to produce significant ratings improvement. Jonathan Klein, president of the CBS Station group, personally stepped in to manage the station. Friedman will report to Klein, who continues as general manager.

Shop at Home, the Nashville-based home shopping network, has agreed to sell one of four stations it acquired two weeks ago to Paxson Communications Corp. Shop at Home reached an agreement on Nov. 20 to acquire four TV stations from bankrupt New York-based Global Broadcasting Corp. for \$77 million. Shop at Home's rights to purchase one property, WPMC-TV in Knoxville, Tenn., were sold last week to Paxson for \$5 million (see related story on page 20). The remaining former Global properties—KCNS-TV in San Francisco, WRAY-TV in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., and WOAC-TV in Cleveland—will add nearly 4 million TV households to Shop at Home, increasing the network's coverage to 11.6 million households.

Ray Carter, vp of news at KSL-TV, Bonneville International Corp.'s NBC affiliate in Salt Lake City, will leave the station next week to become news director of Cox Broadcasting's flagship, WSB-TV in Atlanta. Carter will succeed Al Blinke, who recently was promoted to director of program development for WSB. —Claude Brodesser

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TV SPORTS

By Langdon Brockinton

4 More Years of French

USA Network renews rights for second leg of tennis' Grand Slam

USA Network has renewed its cable rights to the French Open Tennis Championships. The network has agreed to a four-year extension that will last through 2001, said Donald Dell, chairman/CEO of ProServ Television, which represented the French Tennis Federation in the rights negotiations. Terms were not disclosed.

On the broadcast front, NBC is the incumbent French Open rightsholder. "We're moving forward with NBC on a renewal," Dell said last week. "We're hopeful it will be finalized shortly."

Under its most recent deal, USA has carried the French since 1994; the network also had the tournament from 1983 through 1985.

USA's French Open telecasts had an average universe rating of 0.4 this year, down 20 percent. NBC earned a 1.7 this year, down 5.6 percent.

Elsewhere at USA, Anheuser-Busch has agreed to return as title sponsor of the *Tuesday Night Fights*. A-B, whose previous agreement with USA spanned 1996 and '97, has signed a one-year renewal, sources said.

Speaking of boxing, it's very unlikely that CBS will air any events in 1998. "It's difficult to make money," said Rob Correa, CBS Sports vp of programming. The net has carried several bouts each year since 1995, when it returned to the sport after a two-year hiatus.

Advertisers don't exactly flock to a sport that is so violent and troubled—a sport in which Don King's loquaciousness is not the only thing that can chew off an ear. Also, the broadcast networks have difficulty attracting marquee bouts because all of the big-time, big-money fights are on pay-cable and pay-per-view.

Chrysler is close to signing a four-year deal with ABC to be a sponsor of the network's new College Football Championship Series, sources said. The Series, which begins after the 1998 regular season, includes the Rose, Sugar, Orange and Fiesta bowls.

For its telecasts of the Rose, Sugar and Citrus bowls next month, ABC is said to be looking to



sell ad time as a package deal. If an advertiser wants to buy just the Rose on a scatter basis, the asking price will be at least \$500,000, sources said. The Rose, which does not join the Bowl Alliance until next season, will feature top-ranked Michigan against Washington State on Jan. 1.

If Michigan wins on ABC's Rose and keeps the No. 1 national ranking, then CBS' Orange Bowl—which will match the highest-ranked Bowl Alliance members on Jan. 2—will lose some luster. The good news is that CBS has sold 80-85 percent of its Orange inventory, with some 30-second spots going for \$475,000 apiece.

Bank of America is close to a multiyear deal with the PGA Tour that would make the San Francisco-based company the presenting sponsor of the Tour's West Coast swing, sources said. This is said to be the first time that the PGA Tour has offered such a sponsorship. In 1998, the West Coast swing consists of eight tournaments, all in January and February: Events include the Mercedes Championship (ESPN and ABC); Bob Hope Chrysler Classic (NBC); and AT&T Pebble Beach (USA and CBS).

To supplement the sponsorship, Bank of America also would buy time on the early-round and weekend telecasts of the eight tourneys. BofA also is expected to become the official

bank of the PGA Tour. Tour and BofA executives declined comment.

Buick and Dodge have struck sizable deals with Raycom to buy ad time on regionally syndicated telecasts of Atlantic Coast Conference basketball games this season. Sources said that the deals are valued at about \$1 million each. Neither Buick nor Dodge advertised on the ACC regional games last season.

Charlotte, N.C.-based Raycom not only handles sales and marketing for ACC hoops, but the company also sells the commercial time for ABC's college basketball telecasts. Having renewed an ad deal with State Farm Insurance last week, Raycom says it has sold about 65 percent of ABC's 1997-98 college b-ball inventory. ■

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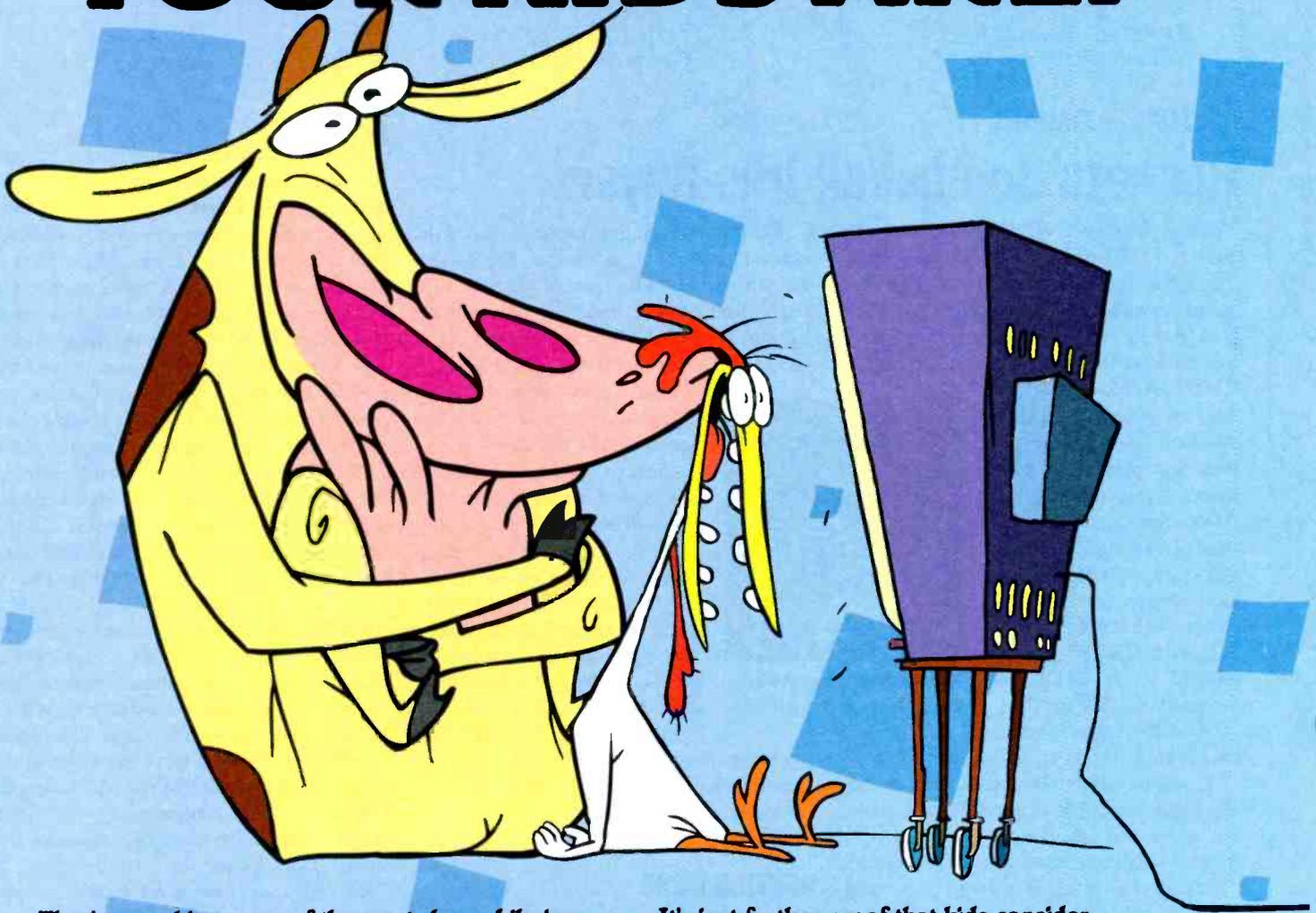
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Local Media

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Langdon Brockinton

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HOUSTON/TV STATIONS

Rockets Bombshell Irks Buyers

• WHILE HOUSTON'S WB AFFILIATE HAS EXECUTED the TV equivalent of basketball's artful steal and an in-your-face slam dunk, some area media buyers are troubled that it's really their pocketbooks that are getting slammed. In a Houston Rockets deal unlike any before, KHTV, a Tribune-owned station, has unseated rival UPN station KTXH by inking a three-year pact to carry the team's National Basketball Association games. But instead of allowing the host station to sell profitable spot and local advertising time during games—as has been the case at UPN affil KTXH for the past 10 years—KHTV has agreed to be paid a flat fee.

And the Rockets retain total control over the spot TV inventory.

Consequently, buying into Rockets games also requires advertisers to buy Rockets radio, TV and arena advertising—and even contribute to Rockets charities, media buyers said. "You really have to get in bed with them," said Shamarion Whitaker, senior media buyer at McCann-Erickson in Houston.

The advertising takeover by the Rockets has changed the face of the local and spot ad scene, buyers contend. "The Rockets control the vast majority [of their ad time] now; it really took away the vehicle and denies access for local advertisers," explained Brenda Love, CEO of Love Advertising in Houston.

The move, while likely to boost KHTV's ratings by allowing it to promote its prime-time lineup during highly rated Rockets games, won't likely be a huge boon to KHTV's bottom line or to the local ad sales community, said buyers and sales execs at KTXH.

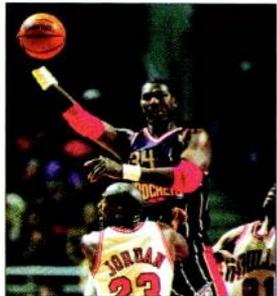
Other buyers said that despite the loss of the local ad time, compensation from the Rockets likely more than makes up for it. (Both KHTV and Rockets execs declined to comment on the terms of the deal.) KHTV vp/gm David Tynan said he did the deal "for promotional purposes,"

and he values the four KHTV promo spots that air inside the game "at \$1.6 million."

Said McCann-Erickson's Whitaker: "For KHTV, the benefits will outweigh the cost."

Still, real questions remain about the effectiveness of the Rockets' in-house staff in handling ad sales. Buyers hinted that a number of factors may eventually change the franchise's attitude about total TV ad-sales control. "Channel 20 [KTXH]

has an excellent sales staff, and even they sometimes didn't sell all the inventory," Love said. —CB



Rocketman: Hakeem Olajuwon spins on MJ.

JONATHAN DANIEL/ALLSPORT

HOUSTON/RADIO

Stations Twirl Ideas To Lasso New Revenue

• EVERY SELF-RESPECTING HOUSTON RADIO station needs an event. The bigger the event, the better—so long as it brands the outlet in listeners' minds and generates a second stream of revenue. The quest is for "nontraditional revenue" in the nation's No. 9 radio market, a town where some six stations compete to croon country and adult contemporary is abundant at eight stations. "The price of playing poker has gone up," said Michael Crusham, market manager for SFX's four

stations.

But unlike some competitors, Crusham has yet to devise his own new-money scheme. Still, he said he knows that he will have to go beyond using advertising as a traditional source to help fatten Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst's coffers when it takes over. "The expectations on radio's profitability have risen since it became the darling of the stock market."

The path to find new revenue streams also embodies creativity, friendly competition and new technology. For example, there's "Web Radio," a Web site that has drawn net surfers from Hawaii to Finland using cameras installed at KPRC-AM and other Houston stations. Web users get a view of deejays in action and, over time, listeners will grow more interested in radio, said KPRC gm Dan Patrick.

Country station KILT-FM is a major sponsor of February's Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, a popular event that makes millions each year. Musical entertainment at the shindig is, naturally, courtesy of the artists on KILT's playlist. Then there's the recent "Sauceapalooza" rivalry between two Clear Channel stations, KBXX-FM and KHYS-FM. The respective urban adult contemporary and dance stations held a barbeque-sauce competition featuring bands played by both stations. A "Sauceapalooza" sequel will feature sponsorship from Reebok and the Fiesta Mart grocery chain. Through such strategies, Clear Channel is "interested in doubling" revenue by the year 2000, said Mark McMillen, general manager for both outlets.

According to Ogilvy & Mather's Roni Skwiersky, a New York-based media buyer for Houston, such radio events work twofold—"as a revenue stream and as presence of mind" to remind viewers about the station. "You're seeing this everywhere," she said.

Just ask Cindy Cohen-Abreu. At KPWR-FM in Los Angeles, she worked on promotional bashes before heading to Houston's adult contemporary KHM-FM, owned by

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No FT, no comment.

Nationwide Communications (soon Jacor). The national sales manager is now working on a KHMN New Year's fete featuring the Wallflowers that thus far has netted \$150,000 in outside sponsorship. —RF

HOUSTON/NEWSPAPERS

Direct Marketing Push May Lead to Double Take

• AS PART OF ITS ACCELERATED PUSH into target marketing, the *Houston Chronicle* this year created a new sales division dedicated to database and direct marketing. So far, that group has earned more than \$5 million in revenue in 1997, and *Chronicle* executives expect the take to double next year. "It's the paper's greatest growth opportunity," Dwight Brown, the daily's vp of advertising, said of direct marketing, which enables advertisers to target specific households. "More than 80 percent of our current customers were already using direct marketing, so we realized an opportunity existed," he said.

Besides attracting several local clients, the newspaper's program—whose product line ranges from inserts in the paper to mailed catalogs—also has secured national business from Toys 'R' Us. It's "business that our database marketing competitors have had a lock on in the past," said Jim Pollard, the *Chronicle's* ad director.

Direct marketing is big in Houston, accounting for 26 percent of all ad revenue generated in the metro area, *Chronicle* execs estimated. For its part, the *Chronicle* gets a 24 percent share of those ad dollars. In 1997, the Hearst-owned newspaper is having a healthy year in ad sales. Revenue is up about 12 percent, buoyed by a robust local economy, said vp Brown, declining to disclose the *Chronicle's* ad sales total.

By contrast, the newspaper's circulation remains flat. Daily circ is up just 1 percent, to 549,101; Sunday circ stands at 748,036. On weekdays, the paper's penetration of metro-area homes stands at 41 percent.

Chronicle officials, however, are optimistic about circ increases because Houston is one of the country's fastest-growing cities. In addition, the *Chronicle* sees growth potential for its 21 *This Week* zoned editions—community newspapers distributed inside the *Chronicle* to subscribers and also delivered as stand-alone products to nonsubscribers.

Back in 1995, the *Chronicle* got a hefty boost in circulation when the rival *Houston Post* died. As a result, the paper's ad rates

skyrocketed, leaping 30 percent in some cases and undoubtedly causing some advertisers to take their money elsewhere. Nevertheless, several Houston-based media buyers maintain that there's plenty of room for negotiating with the *Chronicle*. "Maybe they're trying to placate advertiser concern about iron-fisted control in a one-newspaper market," surmised one buyer. Responded Brown: "We have rate cards, which are frequency- and volume-based. We have so many different products; we package. To an advertiser, that's flexibility." —LB

KNOXVILLE, TENN./TV STATIONS

2 New Stations Need 2 To Fill Inventory Shelf

• THE ANTICIPATED ARRIVAL OF TWO Knoxville network TV affiliate stations won't likely solve the inventory crisis, area buyers said. "The market continues to be unbelievably tight, and hopefully [the new stations] will take some of the pressure off the market," said Bill Cowen, a media buyer at BJK&E in New York.

Local buyers attribute the dearth of local and national spot availability to many clients' requiring a minimum 2 Nielsen rating for any given program. As such, lower-rated stations don't even make the cut, buyers said. And there are plenty of those:

Gannett Broadcasting's WBIR-TV, a local news ratings hog, leaves most stations "far, far behind" and frequently below a 2 rating, according to one buyer.

Indeed, where TV stations fail to meet advertiser ratings requirements, another medium benefits: Radio advertising is up 23 percent over the same time last year, with ads for autos and telecommunications leading the way, said Scott Piper, local sales manager at Raycom Fox affiliate WTNZ.

Meanwhile, buyers are hoping that the inventory pinch will be eased somewhat with the arrival of WBXX-TV and WPMC-TV. WBXX, Acme Television's WB affiliate in nearby Lovell Road, Tenn., is expected to launch on the area's second cable system this month. And WPMC, Paxson Communications' PaxNet station, will enter the market late in the summer of 1998. "New stations add inventory, but you've got to have a market for those really low numbers," said Elaine Christoph, a local broadcast manager at McCann-Erickson in New Orleans.

Further compounding the inventory problem: Several of the market's major network-affiliated stations refused to pay Nielsen Media Research's \$30,000 monthly fee to replace the ratings diary systems with TV set meters. If the stations had agreed to the plan, it would have been a step towards boosting the local netlets' ratings, thus creating more options for advertisers. —CB

SCARBOROUGH MEDIA PROFILE: HOUSTON

How Houston adult consumers compare to those in the country's top 50 markets

	Top 50 Markets %	Houston Market %	Houston Market Index (100=average)
MEDIA USAGE			
Read any daily newspaper (average issue)	58.8	N/A	N/A
Read any Sunday newspaper (average issue)	68.5	N/A	N/A
Total radio average morning Drive M-F	25.5	25.1	98
Total radio average evening drive M-F	18.2	19.4	106
Watched A&E past 30 days	40.6	33.4	82
Watched BET past 30 days	8.0	9.4	99
Watched Discovery past 30 days	45.4	44.7	95
Watched MTV past 30 days	23.6	20.1	85
Watched TNN past 30 days	25.0	26.3	105
Watched TNT past 30 days	42.2	43.0	102
Watched USA past 30 days	45.5	40.7	89
Watched The Weather Channel past 30 days	42.5	37.8	89
DEMOGRAPHICS			
Age 18-34	34.1	37.4	110
Age 35-54	38.9	42.1	108
Age 55+	27.0	20.5	76
HOME TECHNOLOGY			
Connected to cable	75.4	66.6	88
Connected to satellite/microwave dish	3.7	4.0	108

Source: 1996 Scarborough Research—Top 50 Market Report

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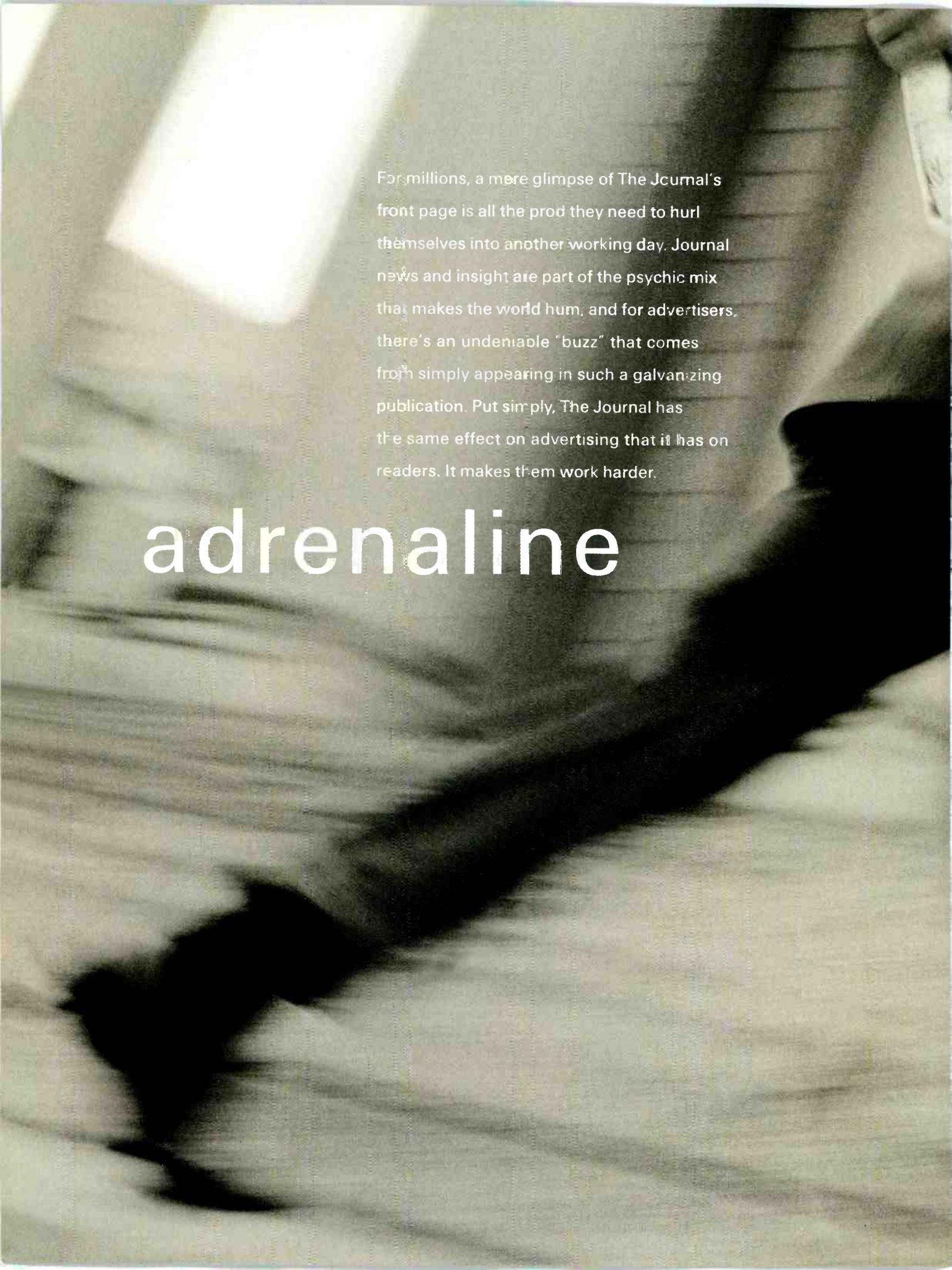
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Out of the Box

By Verne Gay

This box is sleek and low-slung. It looks like a VCR, or maybe a CD player. It is black. It has blinking lights. It looks mysterious. And compared to the standard set-top cable box—the homely, squat beast that has sat upon millions of TV sets for more than a generation—it is mysterious indeed. This box is called the DCT-1000, and its manufacturer, NextLevel, claims that it is not only the next generation of cable converter box but also the future.

This box is literally the gateway to the much-discussed-but-virtually-unseen world of digital television. It can take a single digital signal composed of billions of bytes of information and, through the magic of computers, potentially split it up into dozens of channels. Where, say, 75 analog channels once existed, suddenly there can be 75 or 100 more digital ones. Theoretically, this box could even convert a signal into one thousand channels, which brings new meaning to that old Bruce Springsteen line about “57 channels and nothing on.” Such boxes can also pipe in “video-on-demand” or create so-called high-definition images (even though no TV sets can deliver such images).

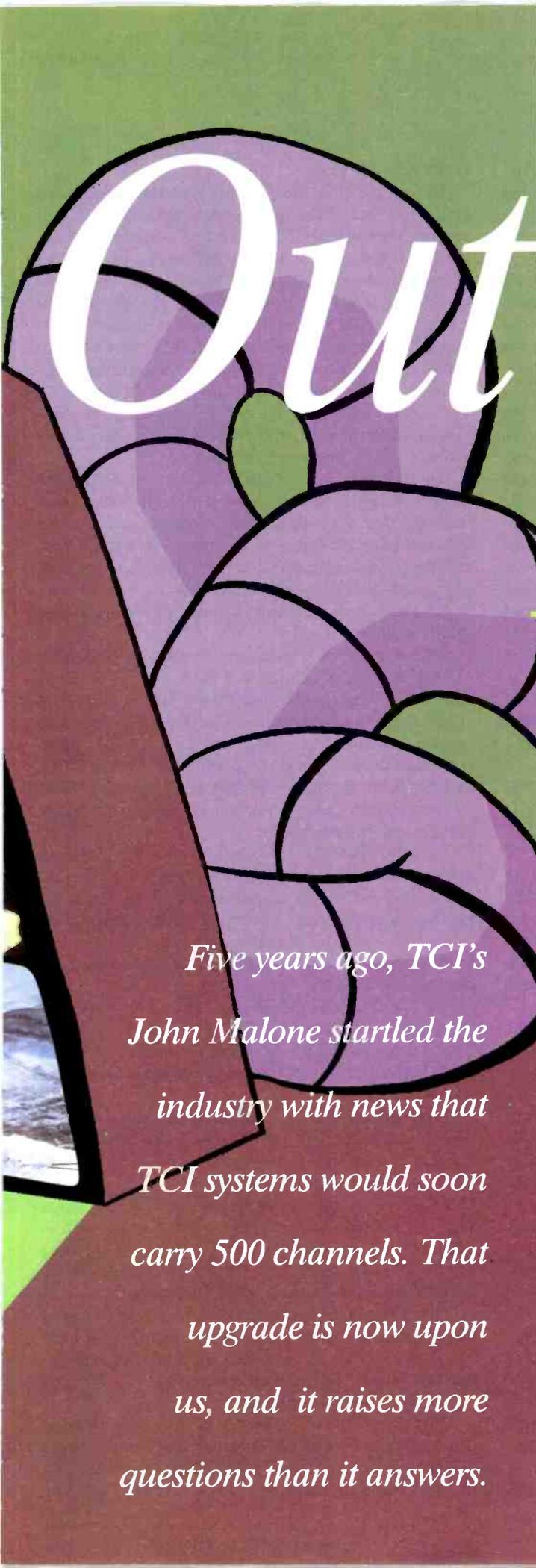
And yet, even with all the hoopla, there are still two nagging little problems with these boxes:

First, very few people—between 10,000 and 20,000—actually have one. That should change fairly quickly, though, because huge cable operators such as TCI, Adelphi, Cox and Comcast have only just begun to roll out set top digital boxes like these.

And the second nagging problem: They may be completely obsolete within about a year.

Welcome to the new and confusing world of digital TV on cable, where there are more questions than answers. For example, will high-definition television—which will debut in the nation’s top 10 cities a year from now—find a place on cable TV? How many people will actually shell out an

Illustration by Ed Reynolds



Five years ago, TCI's John Malone startled the industry with news that TCI systems would soon carry 500 channels. That upgrade is now upon us, and it raises more questions than it answers.

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extra \$10 per month to get the new digital boxes? And what happens to the "first generation" of digital set-top boxes when those *really* new boxes—essentially computers that could transform TV sets into home-entertainment centers—are available?

No one has the answers, perhaps, because there are no answers. Nevertheless, early last month Tele-Communications Inc., the nation's largest cable operator with more than 14 million subscribers, announced plans to offer the first generation DCT-1000 boxes to many of its subscribers. So far, only about 8,000 homes have taken one.

Meanwhile, TCI—fully aware that the box will be old technology a year from now—has hedged its bets by ordering only 500,000. Leo Hindery, TCI president and the man who is suddenly digital TV's biggest and most

"There is a little dilemma: A great deal of new shelf space will be created but not a lot of new products to fill it."

important champion, says: "Last spring [with the launch of a test in Hartford and other cities] TCI said on behalf of itself and the industry, 'Let's get started.' If I always wait for the next generation [of set-top boxes], I'm always waiting. [Some people] will be thrilled with this product. I've got one and I think I've died and gone to heaven."

Hindery adds, "The analogy I use internally is that if someone had said to Henry Ford [early on], 'I want you to build the first car, but let's make it a Mercedes 600,' then a whole lot of food shopping and driving back and forth to the store over the last hundred

years would never have happened."

There is one good reason for TCI to forge ahead right now. Over the last few years, major direct-to-home satellite broadcasters like DirectTV have snatched thousands of TCI customers by offering literally hundreds of channels. For the average TCI customer in a small heartland town, satellite TV has become especially alluring. And with Christmas looming, TCI wants to blunt all those direct-to-home satellite dish sales that are taking place at Sears stores out there. The new TCI plan will offer as many as 136 channels—compared to the current 50. But while it all sounds relatively simple—offer more channels, get more customers—it is not. A debate is growing in the industry on how best to proceed and whether more channels will necessarily add up to greater profits.

With the advent of digital TV, "there is a little bit of a dilemma [for over-the-air TV stations and cable operators] because a great deal of new shelf space will be created but not a lot of new products to fill it," says Edward Hatch, managing director and media analyst for UBS Securities LLC. As a result, he says, "people are scrambling to find out what they can put on that would be attractive to viewers and be an economically favorable

business model."

So what has given the collective television industry this massive headache? The much-lauded digital revolution, of course. With digital TV, a so-called "digital video bit-stream"—composed of up to a billion bits of code per second—is transmitted by the broadcaster. This signal can then either be converted to a high-definition TV image that is 100 percent sharper than the usual TV picture or be compressed and split into a number of channels. Typically, one analog channel is split into four digital ones, but that number continues to grow dramatically. The average TCI cable subscriber gets around 50 channels of programming; with digital compression, a subscriber could ultimately get 200 or more.

There is a major problem, however: The greater the number of digital channels spawned from one analog channel, the poorer the picture quality. Another problem is that high-definition takes up so much digital bandwidth; broadcasters and cable operators cannot simultaneously improve picture quality and expand channel choices.

Something's gotta give, and for now, it looks like picture quality will be sacrificed.

Indeed, some TV broadcasters are mulling the creation of multiple channel services that would effectively mimic their cable counterparts. The plans—still in very early stages—have outraged members of Congress who have insisted that broadcasters use the digital bandwidth recently granted them to provide high-definition TV. But broadcasters reason that there will be few TV sets capable of receiving crystal-clear high-definition signals, so why not put the signal to better use?

For cable operators, the situation is radically different. For somewhere between \$25,000 and \$50,000, the typical cable "head-end" can be converted to send out digital signals to viewers at home. Already, about 25 percent of all subscribers—or some 16 million—are what's called "digital-ready," meaning they could get digital TV if they had a box like a DCT-1000.

But like their over-the-air counterparts, the mavens of the cable industry must now make a difficult choice. Should they go with high-definition TV or add more channels? To them, the answer is patently obvious. They want to add more channels.

Like network and TV station executives, cable execs reason that people *will* pay for more channels, but it's unlikely they will pay for a sharper picture. Yet this scenario poses its own peculiar Rube Goldbergian dilemma. HBO, Showtime and, ultimately, some pay-per-view movie suppliers, will offer some of their programs in high-definition. And this, of course, means that the cable operators will likely have to make sure that their subscribers can see the HBO movie, for example, in high definition.

What's a poor cable operator—who is intent on adding more channels at the expense of high-definition—to do? The answer appears to: Set aside some portion of their digital bandwidth for high-definition.

But how much? No one seems to know.

Gary Poon, executive director of the DTV strategic planning office for PBS, says that the cable industry has to decide "whether or not they are willing to sacrifice a little more channel capacity for HDTV." Hypothetically, he

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* Source: Media Metrics most recent numbers



says, “[an individual system] might have a hundred channels, and then when it goes digital have four hundred channels. But instead of saying, ‘I want 400,’ he might say, ‘Let’s go for 300 and set aside a portion [of the bandwidth] for HDTV.’” (PBS, in fact, plans to offer several daytime channels, and a single high-definition channel during prime time starting next year.)

There is another complex issue taking shape here as well. For the entire cable industry, the future of television lies not so much in delivering more channels as in delivering *everything*—entertainment, pay-per-view on demand, e-mail, the Internet, two-way data transmission—which would allow for a range of activities as diverse as rewinding a show in progress to calling a friend in Alaska.

Already some major cable operators, such as Time Warner, are offering limited high-speed cable-modem services (TW’s Roadrunner is available in about nine cities) for home computers. But the big money will come when the home TV set effectively becomes an integrated entertainment center/computer.

To get there, cable operators will need a new type of set-top box—one that will put NextLevel’s DCT-1000 to shame. In early November, CableLabs, the Louisville, Colo.-based cable consortium, began to seek specifications from electronics manufacturers for this new generation of set-top boxes, so-called “OpenCable.” The idea is to create a “process...[that] would establish a box that could be built by multivendors and be interoperable—that is, work on any cable system, regardless of who makes it,” says Mike Schwartz, CableLabs’ senior vp of communications. The new boxes, which are at least a year away from production, “will have computer capability, so that you could do more advanced things,” notes Schwartz.

Partly because of this next generation of boxes, some major cable operators have declined to invest in the DCT-1000 or other similar boxes. Time Warner, the nation’s second-largest MSO (12.5 million subscribers), has ordered a new box from Scientific-Atlanta called the Explorer 2000. Michael Luftman, TW’s senior vp of corporate communications, calls the DCT-1000 “a good box, but not as advanced as the one we expect to deploy next year.”

Apparently not. The Explorer 2000 is, effectively, a two-way digital receiver—the holy grail of the computer industry. Beyond that, it might hold another key advantages over the DCT-1000, and TCI. Like the entire cable industry, both TCI and TW are replacing their aging coaxial cable lines with fiber optics (a little more than half of their subscribers receive their cable through fiber-optic land lines).

Two-way digital transmission is possible only through fiber optics. Thus, TW cable executives made the strategic decision to hold off rolling out digital boxes until they have more fiber-optic lines down.

But when the lines are down, TW promises, it will offer a basic core of 75 to 80 analog channels, and then a digital service of 200 or more channels. Not all of these new channels will be filled with new networks, however. Luftman

says they will be used “for multifeeding the same [pay-per-view] movies” so that customers don’t have to wait for a movie to begin. “If you have 50 movies, you’ll need 200 channels,” he says.

Meanwhile, giant rival TCI has had its own problems to deal with. Last year, the company’s cash flow was squeezed as it continued to upgrade its system to fiber optics nationwide.

To add insult, satellite broadcasters soaked up some 70,000 subscribers last fall. TCI launched a digital test in three markets—Arlington Heights, Ill., Hartford, Conn., and Fremont, Calif.—and the response, said company executives, was encouraging. So encouraging, in fact, that TCI decided to do a national rollout. When TCI flipped the switch on the new service on Thanksgiving day, a tiny handful of digital subscribers will get, in addition to their regular analog channels, another 36 digital channels featuring networks like Classic Sports, Home & Garden TV, the Game Show Network, Outdoor Life, and—of course—TCI-owned channels like Discovery Kids and Discovery Science. They will also get additional premium “movieplexes” like HBO 1, 2 and so on. And there will be ten commercial free digital music channels (DMX audio channels).

For a TCI subscriber used to a diet of CNN and MTV, it will be a stark change. TCI will also sell its digital feed to other cable companies as well. Little do they know that fancy new box will be outdated before too long.

TCI president Leo Hindery admits that his thinking on digital has changed over the past year simply because digital itself has changed so much.

Yes, he says the DCT-1000 will not do a lot of the things future boxes will do, and he insists that he will buy no more from Nextlevel: As he puts it bluntly, “I bought my last [DCT-1000] metal box [from the company] but not my last [computer] device.”

And no, the DCT-1000 will not be a horse-and-buggy anytime soon. The reason, he says, is that the so-called compression ratio—the number of digital channels that can be squeezed onto one analog channel at the head-end—continues to improve dramatically. “Last year,” he says, “we were talking a four-to-one [ratio]...Today, we are twelve to one, and that’s not the ceiling.” (Of course, the more channels that are compressed, the poorer the picture quality.)

Some customers, he concedes, will want a fancier box one day. This futuristic gizmo, he explains, “will be very adaptable, like a chameleon. It will go through ten generations through [software] downloads.” It is also a device that people will be able to buy in their corner electronics store.

In the meantime, there’s the good old DCT-1000. The plan is to roll these boxes out—but not too fast. Lela Cocoros, TCI senior vp of media and employee communications, says that “1.2 million potential homes” can receive the digital services.

However, that could pose a huge problem for the company, which has ordered a mere half a million boxes.

What happens, for example, if every TCI subscriber suddenly decides to throw down \$10 per month for all those nice new digital channels? “The drug of choice,” says Hindery drily, “is Prozac.” ■



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Channel Change

Digital set-top boxes will make more space available for new networks.

Several companies are wasting no time in developing new services.

By Michael Bürgi

Digital fever is starting to catch on in earnest among major cable programmers. Last week, both ABC's cable arm and MTV Networks said they would launch new cable channels that would roll out as digital offshoots of their existing services.

They join Discovery Networks, HBO and Showtime, which have also separated themselves into several subsets defined by movie genre—family, kids, etc. But the other large cable programmers—most notably the stable of networks run by Turner Broadcasting—have yet to make their plans known. ESPN is rumored to be mulling a fourth channel, and to some degree its struggling ESPNNews, which now counts about 5 million homes, stands the best chance for greater distribution as a digital service.

But MTV's moves to split itself up into several

musical genres in July 1998—dubbed “the Suite from MTV”—embodies the kind of promise a digital future offers the TV viewer. The Suite is made up of seven channels: M2, which already exists; a Latin music channel called MTV Ritmo; MTV Indie, which incorporates rap, techno and college music; MTV Rocks, which covers hard rock and

heavy metal; VH1 Soul, a channel that covers R&B and soul; VH1 Country, which will try to distinguish new country from traditional country music; and VH1 Smooth, which will cover jazz, new age and adult contemporary sounds.

Tom Freston, MTV Networks chairman, argues that his channels are a sort of first in digital cable programming expansion in that the lion's share of videos seen on The Suite have not or would not be seen on MTV or VH1 today. “Most of these channels are like niches themselves,” explained Freston. “For example, MTV Rocks [will feature music] that has an active, avid following. With MTV we want to play the music that's most popular.”

The further segmenting of MTV and VH1 is not, however, a fresh idea. Back in 1991, MTV said it would spin itself off into several musical niches, but the plan fizzled when it was clear that distribution would be a huge obstacle. Now, ostensibly, the distribution will be there if cable operators sign up subscribers to digital boxes. The moves announced last week could finally motivate cable operators to accelerate the rollout of digital set-top boxes now that there's at least a smattering of programming available to put on them. “There are a million boxes on order,” said Freston, who seems to believe “it's happening.”

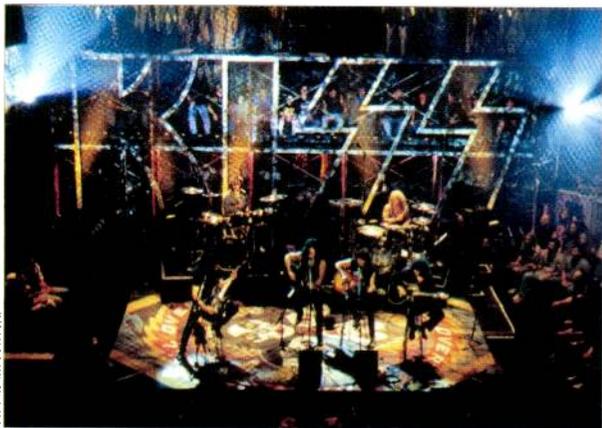
“The operators are saying that it's coming into focus,” concurred Doug McCormick, president/CEO of Lifetime Entertainment Services. “We can now put down the telescope and pick up the binoculars. And soon it will be right in our faces.”

Lifetime's second channel, Lifetime Movie Network, will debut in September 1998. McCormick said he's confident that the Lifetime brand has established itself enough to warrant a full-time movie service. “This is a slam dunk,” he noted. “It doesn't even need three or four sentences to explain it. Our research shows that 93 percent of women watching Lifetime know that the movies we buy or make are specifically targeted to them.”

McCormick said LMN, which will carry four minutes of advertising (along with two minutes of local time for cable operators to sell), will tap its own growing library of original films but will also license movies from its parents, Disney and Hearst, who both produce originals and movies of the week. But he added that Lifetime will ramp up its original movie production from one a month to greater frequency.

The tricky part in the infancy of digital programming is the revenue stream. Freston said in the early going MTV will seek a 10-to-20-cent license fee from cable operators to fund the low-cost spinoffs. Once critical mass is reached—he said that probably won't be more than about 5 million subscribers—some ad sales effort will kick in.

It remains to be seen which other cable programmers follow suit. But before any of them does, it's up to the operators to convince subscribers who already feel they're paying too much for their service now to pay another \$10 for a digital box and all the programming that comes with it. ■



FRANK MICHOTA

MTV Rocks, one of seven digital niche services from MTV Nets, will feature heavy metal and hard rock acts such as Kiss.

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* Source: June, 1997 BPA audit statements



Windows On the World

MTV's new studio is helping redefine the network with a combination of live TV and the attitude of Times Square.

By Karen Hudes

FRANK MICELOTTA

Above: A view of the main studio. Below, Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs in the studio with Ananda Lewis, host.

These days in the business of live TV, it seems that you're nobody if you don't have a studio that looks out onto a famous street in New York City. Ever since the *Today* show started airing from a fishbowl in Rockefeller Center and the Fox News Channel went on the air from the corner of 6th Ave. and 48th Street, networks have been hunting down space where they could stage shows against the *film noir* backdrop of a New York City street. ABC recently signed a lease at 1500 Broadway in Times Square for new studio space. CBS is also said to be looking around the Times Square area. For now, though, there is only one studio that looks out on Times Square, and it is owned by MTV at 1515 Broadway. Execs call the place "the crown jewel of our brand."

MTV's new studio occupies the mezzanine level of the Viacom building, the headquarters of MTV and its corporate parent since 1989. It overlooks Broadway through expansive floor-to-ceiling windows, which at night transform the studio into an illuminated stage. The studio, which went

into operation Sept. 5, not only affords MTV a glittering, organic backdrop, but it facilitates production of live, interactive programming, which many here expect to help propel the network in an ambitious new trajectory.

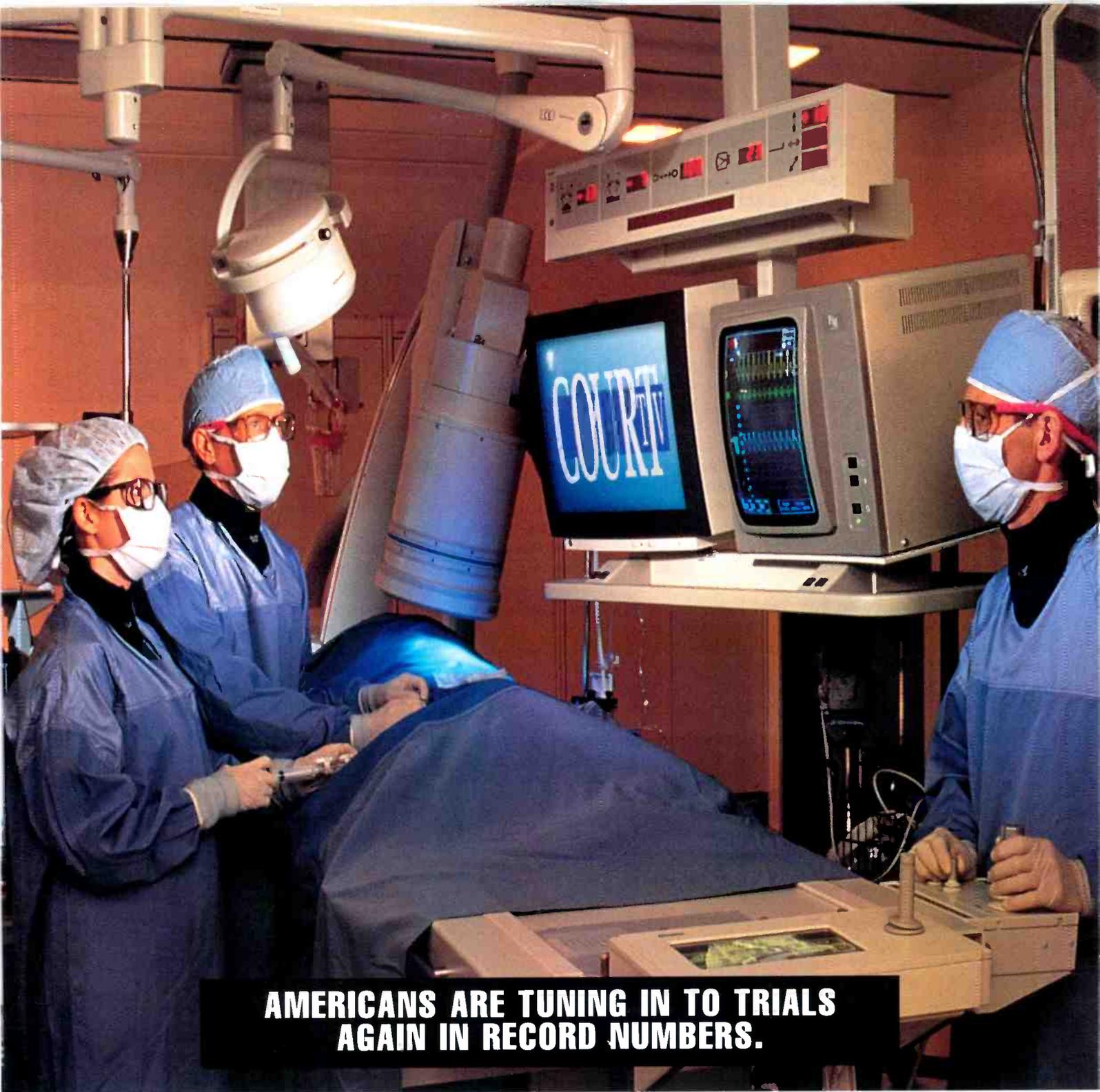
MTV formerly rented its studio space from National Video on 42nd Street, which president Judy McGrath says, "like most studios, was a big dark room disconnected from the offices, perfectly fine, but not anywhere you'd be happy to say, 'Michael Stipe, come on in.'"

Having shot a Lenny Kravitz concert on 42nd Street a few years back, McGrath says she saw the possibilities of the neighborhood's electric ambiance and hit on the idea last year of converting a floor right at MTV's home base. At the time, she says, "1,000 reasons went up" why the space should not become a studio, including such impracticalities as the glare from the windows, acoustic flaws and the need to install bullet-proof glass. Also, spending \$8 million on 20,000 square feet of real estate went against conventional thinking as to where a network should devote its budget. In the end, McGrath says, "I came to the conclusion that for us to move forward creatively, to say yes, we are emanating from a place, and it's New York City, and it's Times Square," the investment was worth it. She adds that the payback will be "the kind of energy it injects into the network over time."

The key advantage of the new location is the technological capability to broadcast live at a low cost. To date, the studio has been used rather sparingly. MTV currently broadcasts one hour of live TV a day, including news segments, as well as concerts in its "Live at the 10 Spot," series. And it did



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Source: Nielsen StarTrak MF 12:30-7:15P, 7/15-7/25/97, exclusions: 7/15 12:30-1:45P, 7/17 12:30-1:30P and 7:15-7:30P, 7/18 7-7:30P, 7/21 12:30-1P, 7/22 12:30-1P and 6:30-7P, 7/23 12:30-1:45P and 6:45-7:30P, 7/24 12:30-7:30P, 7/25 12:30-2P and 6:30-7:30P, MF 9A-4P 9/18-10/1/97, exclusion 9-10A 9/22-9/25/97, 10/7-10/30/97 MF 9A-4P, exclusions: 10/13 9A-4P, 10/24 9A-4P, 10/29 9A-4P, 10/31 10-11A, 11/4 9A-4P, 10/30-11/4, MF 12:30-7:30P, exclusions: 11/3 12:30-2P, 11/4 12:30-2P, 1/24-10/3/95 MF 12:30-7:30P, MF 9A-5P, 1/1-12/29/96, 10/27/97, 10/28/97 9A-5P, 10/27/97 All ratings in Court TV universe 9A-5P



a seven hour live video countdown that was telecast in mid-November. It will get much more use in the future, says McGrath, who wants the studio to give viewers the impression that MTV is unpredictable.

Adding to the immediacy of live broadcast, the studio features some interactive capabilities furnished by Intel, an MTV sponsor. So far, the channel has taken advantage of this by planting kiosks on campuses that enable them to talk to students. VJs also invite viewers to call in with video comments, questions for guests, and sometimes to stump Matt Pinfield, a VJ known for his encyclopedic musical knowledge.

There's another kind of interactivity on the set, where VJs and guests mix with the gathering crowds outside—in Drew Carey's case, singing karaoke with them, in David Bowie's case, mooning them. Also conducive to experimentation is the design of the space. One section is the bright, central set where the daily show is based, another is in a darker corner, designated for live concerts, and yet another provides the option of filtered-out background scenery. Among the studio's other features are a pool table as well as a blue screen that the on-air talent use occasionally to step into videos. Aside from the studios, the rest of the floor, lined with colorful glass-doored offices and buzzing with activity during telecasts, is also lit to be shot.

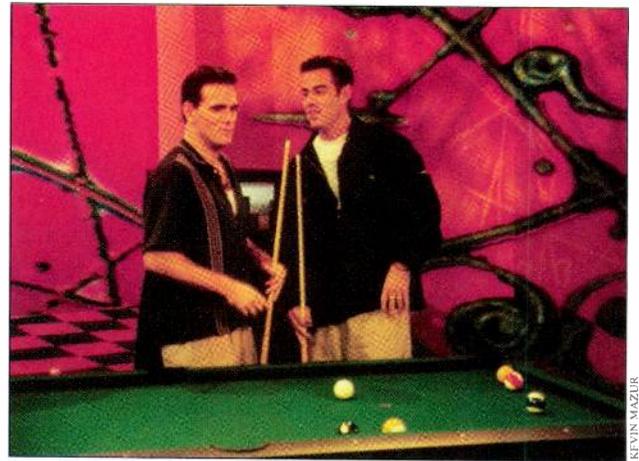
Senior vp of production Bob Kusbit, who came to MTV seven months ago to help orchestrate the transition to the new space, says the studio was designed "to be a great place to hang out" and adds that "every celebrity is trying to get in

Singer/song-writer Fiona Apple opened the brand new studio with a performance in early September.



here now." He says the network may explore possibilities of broadcasting sound into the street—though the issue is tricky due to the theater district neighbors. He plans to televise a New Year's Eve bash to coincide with the annual Times Square festivities.

The casual aesthetic of the studio was partly influenced by the feedback of young people whom vp of research and planning Todd Cunningham classifies as trendsetters and whom he and his staff talk to on the street and on-line. Tired of the "overhyped" feel of entertainment in the '80s and ear-



ly '90s, Cunningham says those on "the bleeding edge" are embracing "the notion of being laid back."

Actor Matt Dillon (l) drops by for a round of pool with MTV host Carson Daly.

Such input also informs the development of new programming, and a number of MTV's latest shows reflect what Cunningham calls a growing intellectualism and introspectiveness in youth culture. For "12 Angry Viewers," participants critique the week's acquisitions and pick a favorite to go into high rotation, and on the segment "Videsection," experts in such fields as filmmaking and psychology interpret the significance of the videos.

According to McGrath, delivering well-contexted shows that present music in a fresh way is the main mission for next year. MTV has been criticized for moving too far away from its musical roots with the proliferation of programs like *MTV Sports* and *Singled Out*, but recent management changes are expected to address the problem. Kusbit has enlisted more "music-credible VJs" to host and has assembled a new music department, including former *Rolling Stone* music editor Mark Kemp, to help develop upcoming shows.

Though ratings have been relatively flat for the past few years, MTV remains a top choice for advertisers to reach 18-24 year olds, the demo the channel remains committed to. Tom Winner, director of broadcast media for Weiden & Kennedy, views the studio change as an effort for MTV to revitalize its image. "The key to MTV is its brand, which lost its luster a bit by having the ratings hold steady...The live format does add excitement."

According to Larry Novenster, senior vp, associate media director for BBDO, who handles Visa and Pepsi, the channel's largest advertiser, "[MTV] reaches the right people, a niche audience...There's only so much you can say about a 0.5 rating." What's important, he says, is that the network keeps its image fresh through experimentation.

Looking to the future, McGrath says, "We need to challenge some forms of TV again...we do better when we invent something like the *Beavis and Butthead* format or the *Real World* format." In addition to new series, she intends to produce a made-for-MTV movie.

Overcoming the once-prevalent complaint that the video format would not compel viewers to stay tuned, McGrath expects that a new wave of spontaneous, intelligent TV "will give people reason to stick around." ■

Theodore Waitt

*Gateway 2000, North Sioux City, SD.
34. Married, 4 children.*

Talked out of joining family cattle business. By father. Left college senior year to start computer mail order business in farmhouse. With \$10,000 start-up loan secured by grandmother's CD.

"Everybody was heading to Silicon Valley. So I picked a cornfield."

Cofounded Gateway 2000 with partner, Mike Hammond. 1985. Direct-market PC seller and manufacturer based in South Dakota. First year revenues \$100,000. Explosive growth due to low costs, fast service. Expanded overseas, 1993. Marketing coup: chose Holstein as company mascot.

"It was either the family cow or the family dog. 'Bunky' lost."

1996 revenues: \$5 billion.

Started reading Forbes as a student at the University of Iowa in 1984.

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Where Are They?

As viewers move from the big broadcast networks to cable, second-tier networks like TLC, FX, Cartoon and Comedy Central are gaining the most.

By Michael Bürgi

The ratings erosion that has plagued broadcast network TV in recent years is well documented. The usual explanation for where viewers are turning is basic cable TV. But basic cable is not a single entity. In the past, the big cable networks, such as TNT, Nickelodeon, USA and TBS, have benefited greatly from the migration to cable. This year, however, the viewers are going to second- and third-tier networks, several of which are now poised to join their bigger brethren.

Among the big winners this year has been The Learning Channel, which now ranks among the top 10 cable networks in reaching both adults 18-49 and 25-54. It's the first of the second-tier networks (E!, Comedy Central, Sci-Fi, etc.) to join the top rung. This sibling network to Discovery Channel has seen its ratings and share of audience climb from month to month for at least a year now. However, its ratings for November 1997 fell to the same level as November 1996. Still, TLC is now available to 25 percent more homes than it was at this time last year, so it is reaching more total viewers.

Looking at total households—as opposed to any demographic breakdowns—the two biggest success stories are FX and Cartoon Network, which each added three-tenths of a ratings point during the just-ended November sweeps.

Compared to November 1996, Cartoon rose 27 percent from a 1.1 universe rating to a 1.4, and its household delivery just about doubled from 331,000 homes reached to 650,000. Cartoon's delivery grew so much in part because of strong distribution growth (it now counts 46 million homes). Cartoon's strength lies with kids 2-11 and 6-11. According to Karl Kuechenmeister, senior vp of ad sales for Cartoon, Cartoon's kids 2-11 delivery has surged 91 percent in 1997, though it still lags well

behind Nickelodeon.

Looking at November 1997 compared to November 1996, FX saw its prime-time rating jump 43 percent from a 0.7 to a 1.0, while its household delivery went up 73 percent from 186,000 homes to 339,000. FX's prime-time schedule sprang to life in August when it added reruns of *The X-Files* and *NYPD Blue*, and the numbers have been climbing ever since. Though it doesn't register among the top 10 cable networks in delivery of adults 18-49—mainly because its distribution still needs to grow considerably from its current 30 million homes—its delivery of that coveted demo has shot up in recent months to the hundreds of thousands.

Other mid-sized networks are showing strong gains. The History Channel, for one, has seen its household delivery grow 86 percent. And Comedy Central, in many ways on the strength of one incredible breakout show, *South Park*, jumped 20 percent in prime-time ratings and 37 percent in household delivery. The network has seen somewhat of a halo effect around the show, though one program cannot single-handedly raise a network's rating.

Sci-Fi Channel and ESPN2, though their ratings remained flat, also saw their household delivery grow on distribution gains, ESPN2 40 percent and Sci-Fi 25 percent. Court TV doubled its prime-time rating and delivery, but that meant jumping from a 0.1 to a 0.2.

Among the major networks, some were ratings losers. TBS suffered a recent ratings hit because *Coach* has tanked leading into prime time. ESPN was down 10 percent in ratings and delivery during November, but it's a victim of NFL games that didn't draw as high an audience as last year. CNN was also down 11 percent in both ratings and household delivery.

Not only the big boys suffered. CNBC, for one, saw its prime-time rating drop 29 percent to a 0.5, while its household delivery dropped 26 percent to 311,000 homes. The Weather Channel, never a big ratings-getter, also dropped 25 percent in ratings and 21 percent in delivery.

But far more small networks gained than lost. And though the broadcast networks feel the collective pinch of cable as a whole, the day is inevitable when the big cablers will feel the same pain. ■

FX's prime-time schedule sprang to life when it added reruns of 'The X-Files' and 'NYPD Blue', and the numbers have been climbing ever since.



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CABLE TV

The Weather Channel has named **Terry O'Reilly** senior vp of programming/production. O'Reilly was formerly vp of the London-based subsidiary of ABC, Worldwide Television News Corp....**David Friend** has joined CNBC Business News as executive producer of the 5:30 to 8:30 a.m. dayparts, overseeing production and development. He had been executive producer of Warner Bros.' *Extra* syndicated newsmagazine.

TV STATIONS

A.H. Belo Corp. has named **Ken Middleton** president and gm of its ABC-affiliated station WHAS-TV in Louisville, Ky. Middleton was president/gm of Belo's KMSB-TV (Fox) and KTTU-TV (UPN), operated under a local marketing agreement in Tucson, Ariz.

AGENCIES

Nicole Paulsen has been upped from assistant media planner/buyer to media planner/buyer in Cramer-Krasselt's Chicago office. She is assigned to the Haworth (office furniture), Hyatt and LaSalle Banks accounts.

PRINT

After 10 years as art director of Hachette Filipacchi's *Boating*, **Randy Steele** has been named editor of the title, replacing the departing Richard Stepler. Prior to joining *Boating*, Steele was associate editor at HFM's *Flying*. Also at HFM, **Janet Finkel** has joined as sales development manager for *Home* and *Metropolitan Home*. She had been textile manager at Fairchild's *Home Furnishing News*.

The Media Elite

Edited by Anne Torpey-Kemph

Holt's Helping Hand

Ted Turner and Wayne Huizenga have been there. Bob Dole, Billy Graham and Oprah Winfrey too. Now Dennis Holt, founder and chairman/CEO of Western International Media, is to be honored with the Horatio Alger Award, given by the nonprofit Horatio Alger Association to people who "triumph over adversity" and show an "uncommon commitment to helping others."

In Holt's rags-to-riches story, known to many in the media community, a central character is '50s TV star Ozzie Nelson. Hearing of the struggling Holt family situation—Holt's father suffered a heart attack that prevented him from working—do-gooder Nelson gave Dennis, then 13, a job as a stand-in cast member on ABC's *The Adven-*

tures of Ozzie and Harriet.

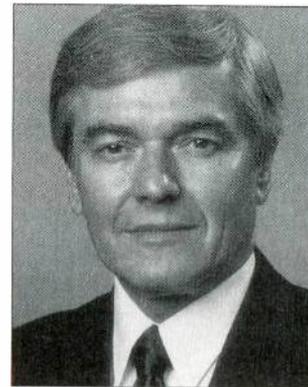
"Having lived on 17th and Figueroa [in downtown Los Angeles], things were pretty tough on my family, but then came along Ozzie Nelson to change our lives," recalls Holt. The TV job helped him support his family and, he says, gave him hope and faith in his ability to survive. Holt went on to form Western in 1969 and build it into the largest media-buying agency in the world.

Never forgetting his childhood, Holt is involved in

many charitable works, among them the Advertising Industry Emergency Fund, which assists ad people through hard times. He also regularly contributes to the homeless-helping Midnight Mission in downtown L.A. and the Challengers Boys & Girls Club of Southern California.

"I still work seven days a week, and it says in the Bible to find time to do quiet giving," says Holt. "That's a mission I'll carry for the rest of my life."

The Alger award will be presented next April in a ceremony in Washington, D.C., to be broadcast on PBS. —*Michael Freeman*



Holt's latest award reminds him of his roots.

'Worth' Turns Trump Topsy-Turvy

Two stuntmen, a heavy-gauge rope, a high bar, a Brioni suit, an art director, a millionaire and a bodyguard. That's what it took to pull off (or should we say *up*?) the cover shoot for the December/January issue of Capital Publishing's *Worth*, featuring a head-over-heels Donald Trump.

Though the Donald came into the studio knowing that *Worth* wanted to turn him upside-down for the cover effect,

Trump balked when he saw the bar-pulley system that would string him up, recounts *Worth* art director Philip Bratter. After some coaxing by Bratter, some demonstrating by the

stunt guys and a lot of consulting with his bodyguard, Trump finally submitted. "But," said Trump, "I don't want you to touch my hair or makeup—I just came from doing *Dateline NBC* and I like the way they did it."

—ATK



He lost his lunch money, but his hair stayed put.

TV Gets Classy

The ivory towers of academia have begun to embrace what was once considered oh-so-lowbrow: television. By spring 1999, the revered S.I. Newhouse School of Communications at Syracuse University will launch a history of prime-time programming course as part of its new Center for the Study of Popular Television. Predicting it'll be "a real hot seller," Dr. David Rubin, dean of the Newhouse School, says the undergrad course will study how shows ranging from *I Love Lucy* to *All in the Family* have shaped America's values.

Schools that already offer TV studies include the University of Texas, Wisconsin and UCLA. —*Richard Katz*

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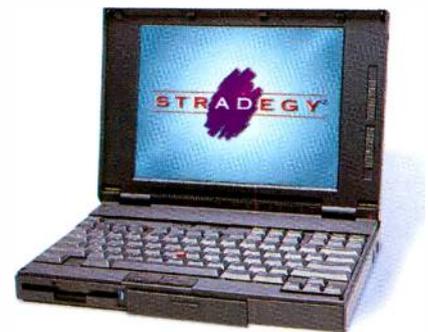
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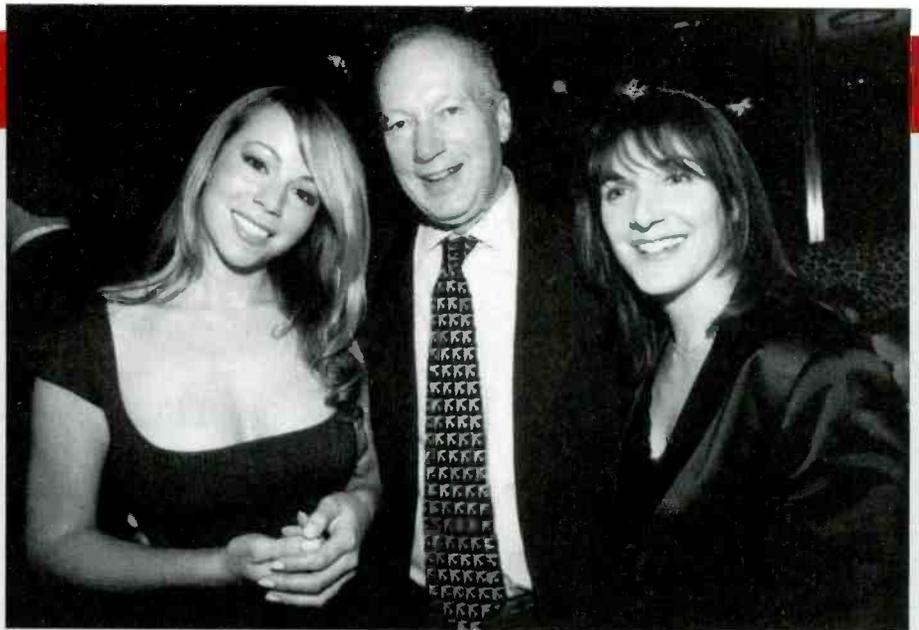


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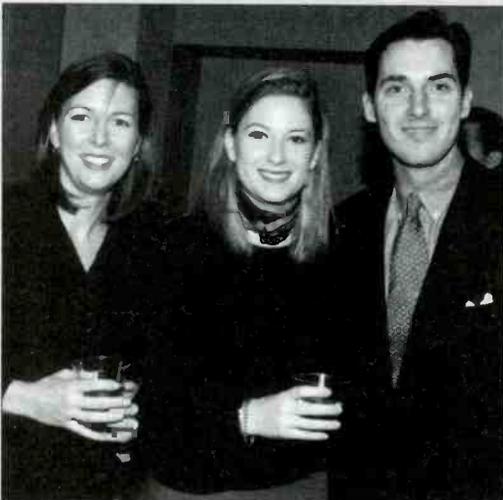
At New York's Cheetah Club in mid-November for a party honoring *Cosmopolitan's* December cover girl, singer Mariah Carey (l. to r.): Carey; Bud Konheim, CEO, Nicole Miller; and Bonnie Fuller, editor-in-chief, *Cosmo*



Bride's magazine and Cosmetic Executive Women hosted a recent reception at the Yale Club in Manhattan to celebrate the just-published *The Rules II: More Rules to Live and Love By* (Warner Books). From left: Millie Bratten, editor-in-chief, *Bride's*; *Rules* authors Ellen Fine and Sherrie Schneider; and Deborah Fine, publisher, *Bride's*



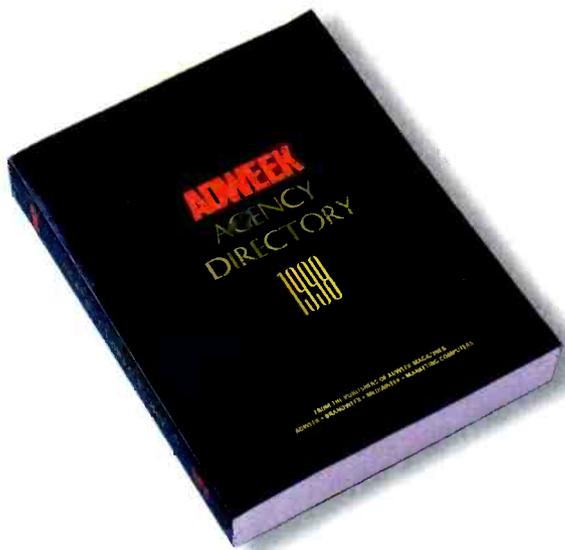
At an Intel-sponsored reception at the Fall '97 Comdex conference in Las Vegas last week were (l. to r.) Greg D'Alba, executive vp of ad sales for CNN; Lou Dobbs, president of CNNfn, the financial news network; Dennis Carter, vp and director of sales and marketing, Intel Corp.; and Richy Glassberg, senior vp, Turner Interactive Marketing & Sales.



At Accent Condé Nast, the publishing company's annual daylong seminar for young media planners, CN ad directors enlightened reps from 16 agencies. (Left photo) Robin Naylor, ad director, *Allure*; Lisa Fazio, media planner, Publicis Bloom; and Bill Wackerman, ad director, *CN Traveler*. (Right photo) Kimberly Hayes and Lori Robinson, media planners, CRK Advertising; Jim Taylor, ad director, *Architectural Digest*; Stephanie Huff, media planner, Calvin Klein Cosmetics; and Beth McCain, beauty/fashion manager, *AD*

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New reports reveal that there are more obstacles facing the Secure Electronic Transaction protocol, which is meant to streamline Internet commerce. But the new hurdles—concerning the cost and time involved in using SET—show that the discussion has moved beyond the security of Internet commerce itself. Finally. Maybe the digerati realize that since it is easier to steal credit card numbers in the real world, Internet security may be a greatly overhyped debate on the Web.—*Catharine P. Taylor*

@deadline

One Show for the Web

The One Club for Art & Copy, a nonprofit organization that annually hosts the highly regarded One Show, will hold its first-ever awards program dedicated solely to new media. Called One Show Interactive, the show will reward creative excellence in Web banners, alternative forms of online advertising, Web-based corporate images and promotional campaigns. The ceremony is scheduled to be held on April 29, 1998.

New Chunky Site

Campbell Soup Co., Camden, N.J., launched the second of its brand sites last week. Developed by **Interactive Marketing & Creative Concepts**, Dallas, www.chunky.com features football-related content and games, based on **Chunky's NFL** sponsorship and endorsement deal with Green Bay Packer player Reggie White. Campbell's next online launch, for **Healthy Request** soups, is due out this month.

Worldwide Kickoff

A promotion for **World Cup Dream League**, a fantasy league for soccer fans, will involve an integrated online and print campaign that is being billed as the largest in the world by **Total Sports** magazine, which is creating a site for the league. With banners and newspaper ads incorporating new information daily, the campaign is expected to reach approximately 500 million print readers and 78 million online users in 20 countries around the world.

Yahoo Launches Yuletide Electronic Commerce

By Bernhard Warner

In an effort to tie more of its advertisers directly to online commerce, Yahoo last week unveiled "Holiday Extravaganza '97," the first of two Christmas promotions, with a dozen participating sponsors including J. Crew, Clinique and FTD. A second, zanier holiday initiative, "Holiday Psychic Gift Guide" on Netscape Guide by Yahoo kicks off Dec. 2 to promote Prodigy Internet, Beneficial Bank and online retailer Z Auction.

The back-to-back promotions have the biggest advertiser participation of any Yahoo effort to date. Others participating in "Holiday Extravaganza '97" include: De Beers Jewelers, Micron Technology, Shopping.com, Toys.com, CyberShop, Pets.com, *Computer Shopper's* NetBuyer and CDnow.

In each case, advertisers will be featured on specific holiday-themed pages within Yahoo that enable visitors to order gifts directly from the advertisers' site. In a first for Yahoo, a rotation of products from each of the sponsors will be featured catalog-style in one of three sections of "Holiday Extravaganza '97," which launches Thanksgiving Day and runs through Dec. 18.

Advertisers' product links will be housed in

one of three new holiday pages: "Snowflake Falls," "Santa's Big Squeeze," and "Holiday Dreamland." Additional links will be seeded throughout Yahoo. "We've structured it so that it's as easy as possible to send [a visitor] to information on the products or directly to the site," said Bill Miltenberger, sales promotion manager at Yahoo.

The price tag for the three-week promotion is believed to be more than \$100,000 per participant.

For J. Crew, New York, the promotion marks the first online marketing splash for the cataloger. The company views it as a means to accumulate prospective customers,

boost online sales and promote the brand, said Michael Cohen, president of iballs Internet Media, New York, which handles J. Crew's online media. J. Crew intends to increase its Net presence in 1998 with an online catalog, Cohen added.

"Holiday Psychic Gift Guide" runs Dec. 2 through Dec. 22 on the Netscape Guide by Yahoo. After visitors answer a few humorous riddles, one of three fictitious psychics will offer what appear to be random holiday shopping tips, which are actually linked to one of three Gift Guide sponsors. ■



Yahoo's "Holiday Extravaganza '97" features holiday-themed pages for advertisers including J. Crew.

Search	News	Features	Reviews	People	Events
NEW MEDIA UNIT EVOLVES AT FALLON p. 48 ANOTHER SPIN-OFF FROM POPPE p. 48		GETTING INTO MEDIA AT NICHOLSON p. 50 MOTRO: INFOSEEK'S LATEST FIND p. 50			

bits

► **Microsoft's** New York Sidewalk and New York-based promotional company **PromoCart** will once again blanket Manhattan with the outdoor black-and-white letter campaign created by **Wieden & Kennedy**, Portland, Ore. The campaign, which first launched last summer, will begin appearing on food vendor umbrellas this week.

► **Discovery Networks** has selected **Magnet Interactive Communications**, Washington D.C., to construct a site for the cable network that permits local cable operators to access information about programming, audience research and ad sales partners.

► **Yahoo**, Santa Clara, Calif., will launch **Yahoo Sports** on Dec. 1, marking the company's first official sports news offering. **The Sporting News** will be its primary source of sports news.

► Advertising network **LinkExchange**, San Francisco, has expanded its national sales efforts by opening a New York sales office. In addition, the company is teaming with Chicago-based rep firm **The Graffiti Group** to handle some LinkExchange business through a new unit, **Graffiti Interactive**. LinkExchange will be the new unit's only client for one year.

► **Think New Ideas** has launched a new look for **Logitech's** Web site. The redesign is phase one in a three-part assignment involving an intranet and extranet for the Fremont, Calif.-based computer attachments manufacturer.

► In conjunction with this week's Internet Online Summit: Focus on Children in Washington, D.C., **webnet-marketing**, an Internet placement shop, launched a site to educate parents about online content. **Infoseek**, **WebTV**, **Wire Networks** and **Yahoo** have donated banners to drive traffic to the site—**SmartParent.com**.

► **Interactive Bureau**, the New York-based new media shop founded by designer Roger Black, has joined with London-based public relations firm **Lowe Bell Communications** to open a London office of **Interactive Bureau**. Lowe Bell's holding company, **Chime Communications**, will maintain a 75 percent stake in the venture.

► As a sponsor of the 1998 Olympic Winter Games, **Coca-Cola**, Japan, has launched a site for the February event in Nagano, Japan. Located at www.cocacola.co.jp, the site's features include athlete profiles and a virtual tour of the Olympic Village.

Revolv-olution: Fallon To Open New Media Unit

BY LAURA RICH—Fallon McElligott will launch a separate interactive marketing unit next week, spinning off a department that has built award-winning Web sites for such clients as BMW, Nikon and Miller Lite.

"To be the best in the world in interactive, we need to be more than the interactive department of Fallon McElligott," said Mark Goldstein, president of integrated marketing at Minneapolis-based Fallon.

Called **Revolv**, the new unit will be independent but not freestanding. Similar to Fallon's relationship with design shop **Duffy Design**, the unit will not be its own profit center, but will follow Fallon's practice of centering profits around each client. **Revolv** can pursue its own clients, but it will not go after clients that conflict with Fallon's roster.

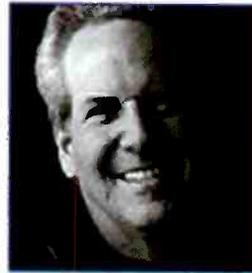
Joe Duffy, whose reputation as a strong, cutting-edge designer has boosted Fallon's image, will be **Revolv's** president. He is expected to split his time evenly between **Duffy Design** and **Revolv**. Goldstein said that in general, **Revolv** will equally emphasize design, technology and strategy. In a recent campaign for BMW's 1998 models,

the agency marketed the cars online by giving interested consumers a CD-ROM. When it was integrated with the Web site, it gave a more detailed look at the line. Goldstein remarked that the campaign incorporated Fallon's design style into online technology.

According to Goldstein, **Revolv** will be an element in every Fallon office, beginning with 30 staffers working from the Minneapolis headquarters, as well as staffers in New York. As Fallon embarks on its recently announced overseas expansion, **Revolv** will expand in tandem. By mid-1998, **Revolv** is expected to have an esti-

mated 40 employees. Its revenue in 1997 of approximately \$3.5 million will grow to about \$5 million by the end of 1998, predicted Goldstein.

Fallon's interactive history began about three years ago with an assignment from **Ameritech**. Goldstein has headed up the agency's interactive efforts, maintaining its integration with the rest of the agency. He will remain on **Revolv's** executive board, but will turn over day-to-day duties to Duffy. ■



Goldstein wants the unit to be the best in interactive.

Poppe Tyson Sprouts New Advertising Research Firm

BY LAURA RICH—Poppe Tyson is spinning off yet another company. This time, it is in the advertising research field.

DecisionTree, a repositioned incarnation of former **Bozell Advertising** research firm **KRC Research** and Consulting, launches today. Clients include **Polygram**, **Easter Seals** and **Intershop**.

"We are the second generation of research firms," said Nick Nyhan, managing director of **DecisionTree**. Nyhan joined **KRC** two years ago, following stints at *George* magazine and working for former New York governor **Mario Cuomo**.

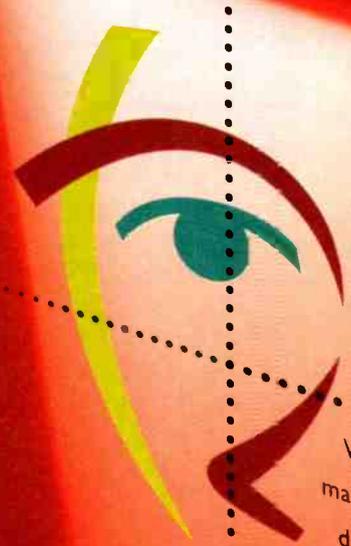
DecisionTree plans to focus on online research of consumer attitudes toward brands and creative messages. Using ad banners to recruit respondents, as well as quick-turnaround, computerized systems created by **Poppe**, the company says it has found more effective methods of conducting online ad research.

For example, in conducting a recent survey for **Easter Seals**, the company was able to quickly find an online sample group of women over 50 and research its attitudes towards a new logo and brand positioning. Even though it was trying to recruit an atypical online audience, the company said it has actually found larger sample groups more quickly over the Internet, even among targets that are not thought of as online users.

Nyhan noted that **DecisionTree's** online recruitment banners have been successful, generating 800 clicks in 36 hours for a recent survey conducted on **PointCast Direct**, as compared to an average campaign's rate on the service of 150 clicks.

DecisionTree's sole financial backer is **Poppe Tyson**. **Poppe's** previous spinoffs include Internet advertising sales firm **DoubleClick** and, more recently, software developer **Neterra**. ■

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Nicholson Expands Media, Research

Nicholson New York is sharpening its skills for developing strategic Web advertising. The interactive agency, which has a minority investment from Interpublic Group, is expanding its media buying and planning, and research and measurement capabilities. Instead of being treated as basic services, the company is integrating these disciplines into the interactive marketing process earlier, before creative work is produced. Previously, some of Nicholson's buying and planning was executed outside of the agency.

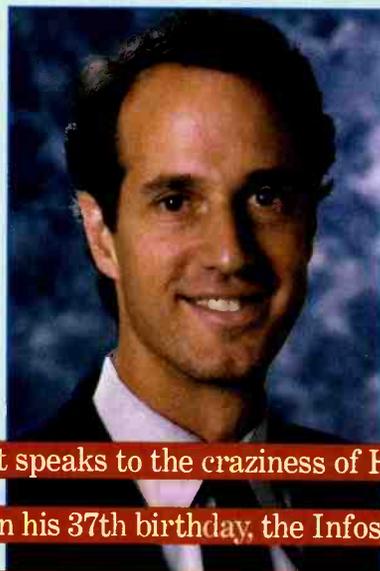
As part of the initiative, the shop has made two new hires within the past month: media director Kathleen Sheridan, who had been an associate director of interactive media at Wunderman Cato Johnson, and Michael Wexler, director of research and measurement, who joined from Bronner Slosberg Humphrey's Strategic Interactive Group, where he was manager of marketing analysis.

The company's revamped media and research departments position Nicholson in a somewhat similar fashion to stand-alone online media shop i-traffic and iballs Internet Media, the interactive media unit spun off earlier this year from Kirshenbaum Bond & Partners. "We're taking a more holistic approach by looking at clients' business goals and needs and integrating Michael and Kathleen into that process," said Chad Gallant, Nicholson executive vice president.

Nicholson has no plans right now to spin off a separate group to compete directly with those companies. Wexler admits, however, "It is something that can be independent."—AS

IQ movers

Eagle River Interactive, New York, has made the following appointments: **Chris Bishop** to senior project manager from project manager at CKS Partners; **Dotan Saguy** to project manager from senior consultant at Andersen Consulting; and **Ed Bocchino** to senior developer from media integrator at Viacom Interactive Services . . . **Floyd Williams** has joined Internet Profiles Corp. as vice president, engineering from the same post at Evolve Software, San Francisco . . . **Rick Robinson** has been promoted to general manager from executive vp, account services at K2 Design . . . **Brian Powers**, formerly an attorney, has joined Vantage One Communications Group, Cleveland, as COO and general manager.



INSIDER

MOTRO'S MANDATE

By Anya Sacharow

It speaks to the craziness of Harry Motro's online career: Recently, on his 37th birthday, the Infoseek chief executive could only squeeze in an interview in a Manhattan office lobby between stops on an

Infoseek investor tour. Ever the entrepreneur, he joined the company in April as president from CNN Interactive, where he started AllPolitics.com, CNN.com and CNNfn.com.

Motro was named Infoseek CEO within a month of joining, with the mandate to build a company that by some measures is third among search engines behind Excite and Yahoo. According to October Media Metrix data of home-based online usage, 41.2 percent surfed the Yahoo network of sites, 25.1 percent went to the Excite network, and 17.3 percent went to Infoseek.

But Motro's take on Infoseek's performance betrays how much he likes a good fight. On the day last month that he held this interview, he enthusiastically reported that Infoseek had just had its first 16-million-page-view day. He also made the argument that Infoseek's numbers are ahead of Excite's, with Infoseek recording 7.9 million unique users in August to Excite's 7.6 million. "Competitors make me a better company," he contends. Motro came to Infoseek to turn it into a "connected media company"—his words for describing how search can serve to connect people with similar interests.

Not surprisingly, Motro was raised by an entrepreneur. His father came to the United States from Israel and started a lumber business. He eventually

turned down his father's offer to take the business over, instead working at Coopers & Lybrand, where he advanced to manager of audit services. He moved to Turner Broadcasting in 1988 to learn the media business, focusing on mergers and acquisitions.

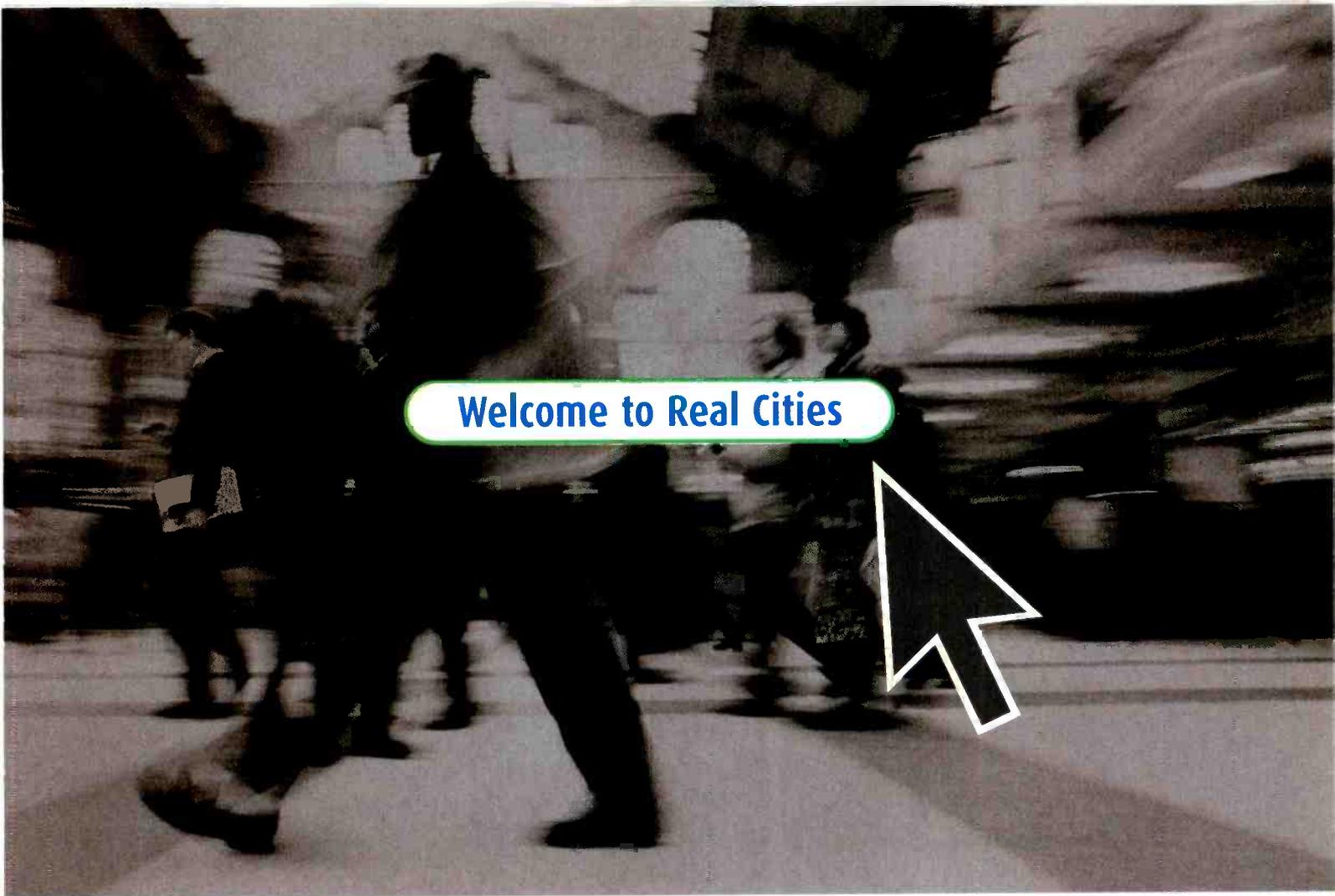
By 1994, however, he had offered to start an interactive unit for Turner. He became its senior vice president and built it to a staff of 200. In Ted Turner, he found a second father figure. "I dealt with Ted the same way I dealt with my father," he explains. "Ted is an entrepreneur. All he understands is how to grow a business."



Motro's ideas for the future of Infoseek were definitely informed by the time he spent at CNN Interactive. In early 1994, he had looked at interactive businesses as a method of supporting Turner's entertainment division, but he soon began to view the Internet as more of an information medium.

Now, he envisions the next stage in that evolution. Motro believes that the past ten years of technology growth have been about how computers affect peoples' work lives. But, he predicts, "The next ten years are about computers affecting peoples' personal lives." ■





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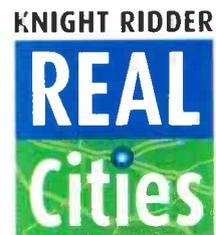
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In January, Adweek's editors will undertake the arduous task of choosing the 50 best new TV commercials of 1997, plus the best new campaign of the year. The winners will be announced in Adweek's February 2, 1998 issue.

Single spots and campaigns which aired in the U.S. for the first time in 1997 are eligible for submission. English language commercials only. PSA's are not eligible for review. Send all spots on 3/4" NTSC video, dubbed from a broadcast quality master. Please include bars and tone at the front of the reel on all dubs. Multiple spots and campaigns may be submitted on one reel.

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ADWEEK  **OF THE YEAR**

CULTURE TRENDS

Billboard's Top 10 Video Rentals

For Week ending Nov 29th, 1997

Title	Label
1. Liar Liar	Universal Home Video
2. Batman & Robin	Warner Home Video
3. The Fifth Element	Columbia Tri Star
4. Austin Powers	New Line/ Warner Home Video
5. The Lost World	Universal Studios Home Video
6. Grosse Pointe Blank	Hollywood Pictures/ Buena Vista Home Video
7. Breakdown	Paramount Home Video
8. Anaconda	Columbia Tri Star
9. Volcano	FoxVideo
10. The Saint	Paramount Home Video

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Billboard's Top 15 Singles

Compiled from a national sample of retail, store and rack sales reports, for the week ending Nov 29, 1997 provided by *Sound Scan*.

This Week	Last Week	Peak Pos.	Wks on Chart	Title	Artist
1	1	1	8	Candle In the Wind	Elton John
2	2	2	15	You Make Me Wanna	Usher
3	3	3	24	How Do I Live	Leeann Rimes
4	6	4	14	My Love Is the SHHH	Somethin' For the People
5	5	5	5	My Body	LSG
6	8	6	12	Tubthumping	Chumbawumba
7	13	7	3	Show Me Love	Robyn
8	7	1	10	4 Seasons of Loneliness	Boyz II Men
9	4	4	14	All Cried Out	Allure featuring 112
10	10	10	5	Feel So Good	Mase
11	11	2	53	Foolish Games	Jewel
12	15	12	5	I Don't Want To Wait	Paula Cole
13	9	9	9	The One I Gave My Heart To	Aaliyah
14	12	12	7	Sock It 2 Me	Missy Elliot & Da Brat
15	New	15	1	I Will Come To You	Hanson

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President, Advertising Club of New York
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The Hollywood Reporter's Box Office

For 3-Day Weekend ending November 24, 1997

This Week	Last Week	Days in Rel.	Picture	3-Day Weekend Gross	Total Gross Sale
1	New	3	The Jackal	15,164,595	15,164,595
2	1	10	Starship Troopers	10,034,337	39,193,193
3	New	3	The Little Mermaid	9,814,520	9,814,520
4	2	31	Bean	7,938,313	31,803,014
5	New	3	The Man Who Knew Too Little	4,604,819	4,604,819
6	3	31	I Know What You Did Last Summer	4,062,163	60,379,357
7	4	31	The Devil's Advocate	3,502,688	50,524,294
8	5	17	Red Corner	2,619,291	19,195,587
9	7	36	Boogie Nights	2,577,634	18,575,435
10	8	10	Eve's Bayou	2,538,199	6,925,575
11	6	10	Mad City	2,203,249	8,535,963
12	26	138	Men in Black	2,117,200	247,659,078
13	9	45	Kiss the Girls	1,515,236	57,299,946
14	10	24	Fairytale: A True Story	1,305,173	12,179,342
15	11	40	Seven Years in Tibet	1,202,033	36,110,878
16	14	96	The Full Monty	1,072,100	30,104,685
17	New	3	One Night Stand	978,819	978,819
18	20	52	The Ice Storm	785,931	3,448,354
19	31	10	The Wings of the Dove	781,197	1,062,783
20	15	59	In & Out	655,232	61,719,348
21	16	59	L.A. Confidential	609,032	33,870,546
22	13	24	Gattaca	583,157	11,743,599
23	18	124	George of the Jungle	522,284	103,679,716
24	12	17	SwitchBack	508,018	6,033,246
25	32	150	My Best Friend's Wedding	476,024	125,687,657
26	19	52	Soul Food	436,353	41,554,883
27	25	33	Snowriders 2	383,024	1,454,460
28	17	38	RocketMan	320,068	14,727,508
29	50	87	G.I. Jane	290,544	47,266,071
30	27	115	Air Force One	237,020	171,372,714
31	22	66	The Game	218,632	47,582,791
32	21	52	The Edge	218,054	26,882,586
33	-	17	Nueba Yol 3	204,286	459,977
34	24	87	Money Talks	164,869	40,743,356
35	29	155	Hercules	129,241	98,315,777

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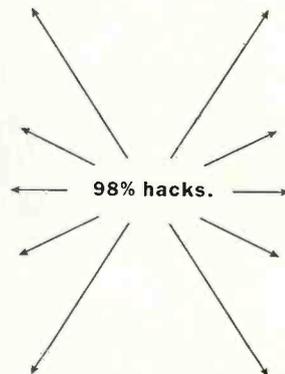
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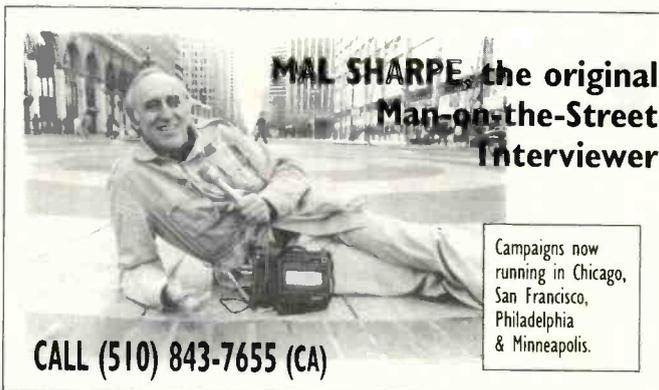
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Because of the Holidays, ADWEEK magazines classified will have early deadlines. Services & Resources for January issues will close Monday, Dec. 15, 1997 at 3:00 pm. Employment & Offers & Opportunities ads for the Jan. 5, 1998 issue must be received by Tuesday, Dec. 30, 1997 at 4:00 pm.

Thanks to all our customers. Have a Happy Holiday.

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Must be organized and detail oriented with good communication skills. The ability to handle many projects simultaneously is essential.

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Compensation commensurate with experience and skills. Please fax resume, with compensation expectations, to S. Murray at 904-359-0029 or email resume to smurray@rssrpr.com

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HELP WANTED

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SALON, the most critically acclaimed magazine on the Internet, is seeking a sales manager and a sales coordinator for its New York office.

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FocusVision Network, the worldwide leader in videoconferencing for focus group research, seeks sales/client service personnel to handle both existing and prospective clients.

Duties include sales calls to senior research executives and project managers of major companies and ad agencies. Presentations and demos are a key part of the job. Duties also include developing business for both U.S. and our expanding international network of focus facilities. Candidates should have 1-5 experience in focus facilities. Candidates should have 1-5 years experience in focus facility management or market research sales. Background should also include college degree. The ideal candidate should also be outgoing, have high energy and be team player. Some travel is required. FVN offers a competitive salary, team bonuses, a liberal vacation policy and a pleasant office environment in Stamford, CT.

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Leading music and movies CD-ROM publisher seeks NYC Ad Sales Planner for professional relationship. Must love music, movies and occasional late evenings with Power Point. Must be ready for commitment. Serious inquiries only.

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**CORPORATE MEDIA
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EvansGroup seeks experienced media research professional to handle all corporate research needs for 8-office system. Candidate will be responsible for media research consultations to all offices, client presentations & recommendations, and negotiation and distribution of syndicated research throughout the company. Experience with SMRB, MarketQuest, CMR as well as other major syndicated resources required. Person will be based in the Seattle office. Please forward or fax resume & salary requirements to:

Media Director
EvansGroup
190 Queen Anne North
Seattle, WA 98109
fax: 206-283-2018

EvansGroup**RESEARCH
DIRECTOR**

Publisher of Rolling Stone Magazine seeks individual to oversee daily activities of busy Research Dept, which include compiling research for ad sales applications, negotiating contracts, working with ad agencies on prototyping, etc. Min 5 yrs agcy/mag research exp, strong managerial, analytical & report writing skills reqd. Must be proficient with syndicated sources (MRI, JD Power, etc.), MS Word & Excel/Lotus. MAC exp a plus. Send resume to: Box ME

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MALDEF, Attn: HR Dept., 634 S.Spring St., Los Angeles, CA 90014. EOE.

ADVERTISING SALES

NY, NJ, PA, and specific accounts in the DC area. The success-oriented candidate must be well organized with excellent communication skills. High energy team player, account servicing and relationship building are priorities. Prior high-tech publishing sales is preferred. Experience dealing with NY ad agencies is a plus. Fax resume to **Tony Calamaro at 703-876-5128** or send to: **FCW Government Technology Group, 3141 Fairview Park Dr., Ste. 777, Falls Church, VA 22042, Attn: Mark Ventre.**

**ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT**

Major talent agency is seeking an administrative assistant for a position with the commercial department. Responsibilities include general assistant's and secretarial duties 55+ wpm typing, IBM & Wang computer proficiency, phone work, filing, good organizational skills and attention to detail. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills. Familiarity with the entertainment industry necessary. Related experience a plus.

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Promotion Assistant Consumer Magazines

Major international magazine publisher has an excellent entry level opportunity for a well-organized individual with exceptional computer skills to break into the marketing department of a successful shelter magazine and its ancillary businesses. In this position you will create research charts/studies, design/generate promotion sheets, and coordinate magazine sections. Additionally, you will assist the director with various administrative duties and special projects. Qualifications needed include MAC (Quark) computer, coordination and time management, proofreading, light writing, and good phone skills. Prior magazine internship and/or 1 year prior experience at an agency or busy office required. Send resume, cover letter and salary requirements to:

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50 E. 42nd Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10017
Fax: 212-547-1830
NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE

ACCOUNT PLANNING/RESEARCH

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200 S. Broad St., Phila., PA 19102
Fax#: 215-790-4146. No phone calls, please. EOE

ADVERTISING SPACE SALES

Major trade magazine publisher seeks dynamic, energetic self starter with proven sales record to sell in the NY metro area. Good presenter, quick thinker who thrives in a team environment. 3 yrs experience required, publishing or marketing services experience a plus. Salary, commission, benefits.

Fax resume and salary history to:

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ATTN: MARY T. MOORE
203-750-6565

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ADVERTISING SALES

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STAMFORD CONNECTICUT AD AGENCY

Account Executive to step into new position managing business to business accounts. 4-6 yrs of agency exp, including media planning, production and client service required. Excellent opportunity. Fax resume and salary history to:

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203/969-0266

PROMOTION DIRECTOR

Promotion Director needed for busy New York Creative Services arm of national magazine publishing company. Minimum 5 years magazine sales promotion experience required. Management experience desired. Must be jack-of-all-trades: copywriter/editor/art director, with knowledge of Quark and basic design, plus understanding of MRI, MMR research, rate base & ABC circulation standards. Ability to handle pressure, meet tight deadlines and liaison with individuals at all corporate levels is essential. Salary commensurate with experience. NO PHONE CALLS, please.

Please send resume WITH SALARY HISTORY TO:

Petersen Publishing Co.
Attention: Promotion Director-ER
110 Fifth Ave., 4th Floor
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or Fax (212) 886-2806

COPY EDITOR

Adweek Magazines is looking for a full-time copy editor accustomed to working in a fast-paced weekly newsroom environment. Candidate must also be able to handle proofing and copy editing of feature/analysis pieces and should be familiar with Quark CopyDesk. Familiarity with technology and Internet issues preferred. Salary to low 30s. Send resume to: Department CT, Adweek Magazines, 1515 Broadway, 12th Fl., NY, NY 10036.

EOE

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CALENDAR

Advertising Women of New York will hold its **Advertising Woman of the Year luncheon** Dec. 2 at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York. Honorees include Beth Gordon of The Media Edge; Ann Moore, president, *People* magazine; and Linda Srere of Young & Rubicam New York.

The Addressable Advertising Coalition will hold a summit Dec. 4 at the New York Palace hotel. Members of the advertiser and media communities interested in speaking or attending should contact Elizabeth Barlow via fax at 914-255-2231 or e-mail at gdnclm@ix.netcom.com.

The California Cable Television Association presents **The Western Show** Dec. 9-12 at the Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, Calif. Contact: 510-428-2225.

New York Women in Film & Television presents its **annual holiday luncheon** honoring top talent Dec. 11 at the New York Hilton & Towers. Honorees include Judy McGrath, president, MTV Networks. Contact: 718-263-6633.

The 20th International Sports Summit will be held Jan. 14-15 at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York. Featured speakers will include Mike Levy, CEO, CBS Sportsline. Contact Steve Goodman at 301-493-5500.

The Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau will present **CAB's Cable Sales Management School 1998** Jan. 15-17 in Orlando, Fla. (site TBA). Contact Nancy Lagos at 212-508-1229.

Media Notes

NEWS OF THE MARKET

Edited by Anne Torpey-Kemph

'Oprah' Tops Sweeps

The Oprah Winfrey Show has performed strongly again in the November sweeps, pulling the highest ratings of any daytime TV show in Nielsen's 38 metered markets in the first 18 days of the sweeps period. Show distributor King World reports that with an 8.6 DMA weighted average, *Oprah* outperformed all network morning shows, talk shows, soaps and other nationally syndicated talk shows. During the week of Nov. 17, the show went on the road to New York and featured guests including Janet Jackson, Sarah Ferguson and Paul McCartney.

Leno, NFL First to Get Winks

As part of its programming partnership with Wink Communications, NBC last week announced that it will add interactivity to its nightly broadcasts of *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno* and weekly broadcasts of National Football League games starting next year. NBC is the first U.S. broadcast network to deploy the Wink platform, which will allow viewers who have Wink-capable TV sets to access special program elements onscreen via their set-top boxes and remote controls. For *The Tonight Show*, Wink will provide features such as guest biographies, band information and interactive trivia quizzes. For NFL games, Wink features will include continually updated around-the-league scores, head-to-head matchup information, full team rosters with statistics, current team rankings, a glossary of football terms, coaching histories, team schedules with performance data and individual team draft information. The NBC announcement coincided with an announcement by Toshiba America Consumer Products

that it will be the first manufacturer to market Wink-capable TVs in the U.S. in 1998.

EW Intros Theater Section

Entertainment Weekly will introduce a new quarterly theater section in its Dec. 18 issue. Called Stage, the section will cover on- and off-Broadway productions, touring shows, regional theater and concerts, news, reviews and box-office information. Like the title's sections on film, TV and books, Stage reviews will include grades by the magazine's critics.

NBC Orders More *Fired Up*

Not content to keep its Sharon Lawrence vehicle, *Fired Up*, on

the back burner, NBC has picked up the sitcom for an additional seven episodes. This brings the total number of shows ordered this season to 20. Introduced last spring as a midseason replacement on "Must-See TV" Thursday night at 9:30, the Paramount Television-produced show later moved to Monday at 8:30. In that time slot, *Fired Up* has earned an average rating of 5.3 among adults 18-49.

Rosie-Babs Gab Hits High

Barbra Streisand helped propel *The Rosie O'Donnell Show* to its highest-ever ratings when the reclusive star appeared on the afternoon talk show Nov. 21. O'Donnell's chat with Babs—



Ex-Maxim editor Clare McHugh takes top NW post.

'New Woman' Names McHugh

Clare McHugh will return to the realm of women's service books after her brief stint as editor-in-chief of newcomer men's book *Maxim*. Following the news two weeks ago week that McHugh had resigned from the Dennis Publishing title after only four issues, Rodale Press last week announced that it has

named her as editor-in-chief of its *New Woman* magazine, a post that has been vacant since Betsy Carter left in mid-October. McHugh, 36, served as executive editor for the U.S. edition of *Marie Claire* from 1994 to 1996, working under Bonnie Fuller, now the editor of *Cosmopolitan*. Rodale bought *New Woman* from K-III last August.

Media Notes

CONTINUED

which included an appearance by James Brolin, Streisand's much-hyped love interest—averaged a 10.2 rating/26 share in the overnight markets. The show also had the distinction of being the most-watched syndicated talk show of the day in Nielsen's metered markets as well as the highest-rated episode of daytime programming this season, according to *Rosie* distributor Warner Bros. The Streisand session even outperformed *Rosie's* previous ratings high—the 8.9 rating/26 share earned when the host greeted her lifelong crush, Tom Cruise, last December.

'97 Is Golf Digest's Greenest
Golf Digest is having its best year ever in ad pages, circulation and total revenue, the New York Times Co. announced last week. Publisher Tom Brown credited the high marks to a growing interest in golf, spurred by high-profile golfers such as Tiger Woods and Ernie Els. The title will up its rate base to 1,550,000 starting in February.

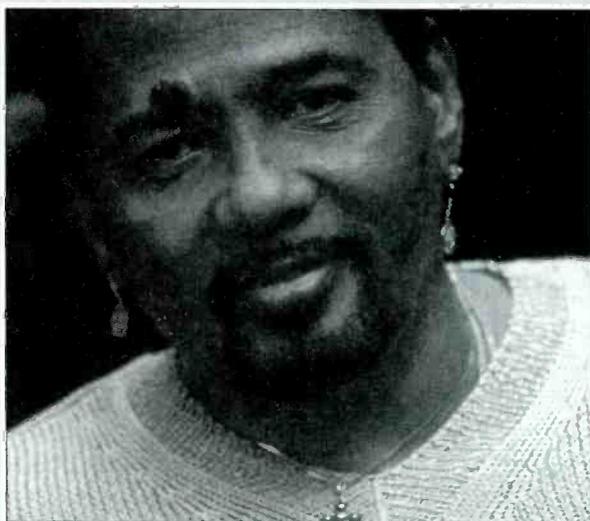
Cardell Heads Mecklermedia
Mecklermedia Corp. last week announced that Christopher S. Cardell, formerly executive vp and chief operating officer of the Westport, Conn.-based company, has been promoted to president. Cardell joined Mecklermedia, publisher of *Internet World*, *Web Week* and *Internet Shopper*, in January 1996 as senior vp and chief financial officer. In his new role, he will retain his COO title.

Classic Sports Adds Subs
Classic Sports Network by ESPN signed a deal last week with MediaOne to expand its carriage by about 1 million subscribers on MediaOne systems.

The service, which was purchased by ESPN only months ago, is already carried on MediaOne systems serving the Southeast and New England. It will roll out onto systems in California, Michigan, Ohio and Illinois next year. Classic Sports reaches 12 million homes.

ABC Radio Expands in Calif.
Radio Disney will expand to the Oakland, Calif., market (DMA No. 4), ABC Radio execs announced last week. ABC Radio has reached an agreement to acquire KDIA-AM, currently an urban-format station, for \$6.4 million from Pacific-FM Inc. Disney will begin programming the station with its children's service by mid-December. Radio Disney is currently in 12 other markets, including Los Angeles, Boston, Atlanta, Seattle, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Salt Lake City.

News Anchors on the Move
Floyd Kalber, for 40 years the lead anchor at ABC's Chicago O&O WLS-TV, has announced that he will retire in March. Speculation continues about whether Ron Magers, the anchor at Chicago's WMAQ who quit in protest last summer over the brief tenure of Jerry Springer as WMAQ commentator, will take Kalber's place. A source in the station's news department said that no decision has been made yet. Elsewhere, Dina Ruiz, the small-market anchor renowned for being married to Clint Eastwood, last week left NBC affiliate KSBW-TV in Monterey-Salinas, Calif., to care for the couple's 11-month-old daughter, Morgan. However, Ruiz will return to the station to work on special events, according to a KSBW representative.



Crooner Neville joins the kids cause on TNT.

TNT Fetes UNICEF

TNT will broadcast a live concert on Dec. 10 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Committee for UNICEF. The program, *Gift of Song*, will feature such artists as Aaliyah, Bryan Adams, Mariah Carey, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Celine Dion, Aaron Neville, Simply Red, Chris Rock and Rod Stewart, along with other performers and celebrities. *Gift of Song* essentially reprises a 1979 event that raised \$10 million for UNICEF. Both the 1979 event and this year's special are produced by Ken Ehrlich Productions. This year's event will be held at New York's Beacon Theater.

Burks Upped at NBC Ent.

Lisa Burks has been named manager, electronic publicity, talent, radio and interactive media for NBC Entertainment. In the new position, Burks will oversee radio interviews with NBC talent and publicity campaigns that involve interactive media outlets. Burks has worked in the electronic publicity and talent relations department since January 1996. She will report to Kathleen Tucci, vp of the department.

TPNI Shifts Execs

Turner Private Networks, the division of Turner Broadcasting that handles out-of-home, place-based television networks, last week announced several executive changes. Deborah Cooper, vp and general manager of CNN Airport Network, has been named senior vp of TPNI. She will continue to oversee the Airport Network, adding responsibilities for all of TPNI's place-

based networks. Barbara Dean, director of operations for the Airport Network, becomes vp of network technology and operations; Jesse Paynter, recently named vp of sales and marketing, will oversee all sales and marketing efforts for TPNI out-of-home networks; and Jack Womack, executive vp of CNN Headline News, will add the job of overseeing the editorial content of CNN Airport Network programming.

Fox Kids Intros PSAs

Fox Kids Network last week introduced the first in a series of eight new public service announcements to air throughout this broadcast season. The PSA campaign includes spots featuring the *Power Rangers Turbo* cast in support of D.A.R.E., the international drug resistance educational program. The PSAs are produced by Saban Entertainment, which produces the *Power Rangers*, in association with D.A.R.E.



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Alec Gerster

Company: Grey Advertising/MediaCom Worldwide

Title: EVP Grey Media & Chairman MediaCom Worldwide

Job: Oversees \$6 billion+ in media buying

Career: Started in marina management while playing rock & roll. Joined Grey in 1972 as planner/buyer. Named Media Director Grey New York at age 34 in 1981. Assumed worldwide responsibility in 1989.

Favorite Charity: Director, John Reisenbach Foundation, working to improve the safety and quality of life in New York City.

Spare Time: Loves to be on the water because it brings people together while challenging the individual. Idea of a perfect day: tacking across Long Island Sound with daughter Eileen for a crew.

His Thoughts on Media:

Single-source research. Optimization. Respondent level audience data. Modeling. These new tools can be great. Too much of what passes as media planning today is really just a dumb recitation of the old rules of thumb.

Bring on the black boxes! But use them wisely. Our goal is not just lower CPMs. It is greater media value for our clients.

Media connect with their audiences in wonderfully varied ways. Few buyers, however, spend the time to understand the connections and make the most of them.

Understanding the bond between the media and the consumer will continue to be as important as knowing how to achieve reach optimization with shrinking ratings.

As the newsweekly of the media business, MEDIAWEEK follows closely the leadership ideas of key media executives. These are the people who determine the content of media, the mix of advertising media and the flow of advertising dollars.

We hope this ad series sheds a little light on the immediate future of the media business and on MEDIAWEEK's mission: to know where money is being spent on media, and why. To subscribe, call 800-722-6658.



Follow the Money

BIG DEAL

REESESTICKS

Advertiser: Hershey
Agency: Ogilvy & Mather (expected)
Begins: April 19
Budget: \$15 million (est.)
Media: TV, print

Seeking to add more crunch to its Reese's franchise, Hershey Chocolate will throw an estimated \$15 million behind the launch of ReeseSticks, a high-fat entry that marries crunchy wafers with Reese's trademark peanut butter. Hershey will promote the new product aggressively next year, and will also likely use next summer's release of *Godzilla*, as the candy giant has signed on as a promotional tie-in partner with Columbia Tri-Star Pictures.

The agency is likely to be Ogilvy & Mather, N.Y., the shop handling most of Reese's business.

Hershey will unleash its usual promotional might with ReeseSticks, distributing 40 million coupons via on-pack and an April 19 insert in *Parade Magazine*. Print ads will appear in *Sports Illustrated* and *People*, among other books, underscoring the wide target audience.

ReeseSticks is the second major Reese's brand extension in the last year, following on the heels of last winter's launch of Reese's Cookie Cups. That product got \$9.5 million in ads through August, per Competitive Media Reporting.

The new entry comes in 2-stick packs with chocolate covering a wafer and peanut butter. At 13 grams of fat and 220 calories per serving, it follows in Reese's high-indulgence tradition.

The tie-in with *Godzilla* follows on the heels of this year's link with *Jurassic Park: The Lost World*. Special *Godzilla*-marked wrappers and displays will begin hitting retail in April, in anticipation of a Memorial Day release.

In the year ended Oct. 12, Reese's various entries had food, drug and mass merchandiser sales of \$421.2 million, according to Information Resources Inc. Kit Kat, meanwhile, had \$136.2 million in sales. Through August, Hershey spent \$22 million advertising its Reese's products, versus \$22.6 million for all of 1996, per Competitive Media Reporting. —Sean Mehegan

Real Money

ADVERTISING ACTIVITY IN THE MEDIA MARKETPLACE

RAMADA INNS

Advertiser: HFS
Agency: Messner Vetere Berger McNamee Schmetterer/Euro RSCG, N.Y.
Begins: January
Budget: \$7-10 million
Media: TV

After five years of running pure price-comparison ads, Ramada will drop its Red (Ramada) versus Green (Holiday Inn) campaign in favor of a \$7-10 million push to sell the HFS brand as a leader in service.

The new pitch carries on the humor of the Red/Green ads, taking an edgy approach to show just how far Ramada employees will go to make their guests' experiences the best. Over the past year or so, Ramada has been working to improve service via an employee training initiative dubbed "Personal Best."

The new tack was necessary because the Red/Green campaign, while establishing Ramada's place in the market as a solid midscale operator, left its identity completely tied to a key competitor, said Scott Deaver, vp of marketing.

As Ramada's service continues to improve, Deaver hopes the chain "will be able to make a strong service superiority claim," based on internal data matching Ramada's record against the competition's. That possibly could include a service guarantee, said Deaver.

The ad strategy shift also was prompted by complaints from franchisees of the 1,000-hotel chain who, while pleased to see their reservations on the rise, lamented the lack of nice property shots in the Red/Green ads. The Personal Best campaign addresses that issue by setting a trio of ads in top-notch Ramadas in California.

One, set in a lobby, shows an employee diving across the floor like Indiana Jones to save a suitcase from being crushed, to the tagline: "At Ramada, we throw ourselves into our work." Another ad shows a maid going after a fly, ninja-style, to the likely kicker, "At Ramada, we attack even the smallest problem." The third shows a bar waiter jumping in front of a kid's water gun

to "take the bullet" for a sunbather, to the possible tag, "At Ramada, we jump at the chance to do something special." Every ad will show the employees sporting "Personal Best" buttons on their uniforms, as real Ramada employees will.

Media buys, still being set, include prime-time network TV and mainstream cable, including CNN, ESPN and The Weather Channel, said agency account director Curtiss Bruno. Ramada's business skews 60 percent business and 40 percent leisure; 70 percent of business customers are men 25 to 54.

—Shannon Stevens

NASCAR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Advertiser: Nascar, with corporate sponsors
Agency: Various
Begins: First quarter 1998
Budget: N/A
Media: TV, print



Ramada takes a new tack.

see more Nascar-themed TV programming, promotion and advertising than ever.

Not only has Nascar beefed up its corporate sponsorship group, it has 250 hours of incremental TV programming that will provide a legitimate, all-encompassing marketing platform to its sponsors.

"Our sponsors never really had a marketing platform before," said George Pyne, vp of licensing and consumer products for Nascar. "They all had to do it on their own. Now we've given them a cross-promotional platform, something we hope to do every year."

McDonald's, which may be walking away from its longtime sponsorship of the NFL, will leverage its "official drive-through restaurant of Nascar" affiliation with two dedicated television spots and a Nascar hap-

In its most comprehensive marketing effort to date, Nascar has marshaled some of the country's biggest brands, including Coke, McDonald's, Pontiac, Kellogg, Procter & Gamble and True Value, for its special 50th anniversary effort that will

CMR TOP 50

A Weekly Ranking of the Top 50 Brands' Advertising in Network Prime Time

Week of Nov. 10-16, 1997

Rank	Brand	Class	Spots
1	BURGER KING	V234	45
2	DOMINO'S PIZZA	V234	33
3	JC PENNEY--SALES ANNOUNCEMENTS	V321	26
4	7 UP	F221	21
	RADIO SHACK	V341	21
6	KFC	V234	20
	NEW LINE--MORTAL KOMBAT/ANHLTN MOVIE	V233	20
8	M&Ms	F211	16
	TACO BELL	V234	16
	TARGET--MULTI-PRODUCTS	V324	16
11	BUENA VISTA--FLUBBER MOVIE	V233	15
12	JURASSIC PARK: THE LOST WORLD VIDEO	H330	14
13	DURACELL--ALKALINE BATTERIES	H220	13
	FANNIE MAE FOUNDATION	B189	13
	FORD AUTOS--ESCORT	T111	13
	HYUNDAI AUTOS--VARIOUS MODELS	T112	13
	MASTERCARD--CREDIT CARD	B150	13
	MCI LONG DISTANCE--RESIDENTIAL	B142	13
	NISSAN AUTOS--ALTIMA	T112	13
	OLIVE GARDEN	V234	13
	SEARS--AUTOMOTIVE	V321	13
	SEARS--MULTI-PDTS	V321	13
	VISA--CREDIT CARD	B150	13
24	ADVIL--COLD & SINUS CAPLET	D212	12
	PIZZA HUT	V234	12
	REVLON--COLORSTAY HAIR COLOR	D141	12
	UNIVERSAL--JACKAL MOVIE	V233	12
	WARNER BROS.--MIDNIGHT in GRDN of GD & EVIL	V233	12
29	20TH CENTURY FOX--ALIEN RESURRECTION	V233	11
	ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR	T414	11
	PRIMESTAR--SATELLITE SYSTEM	H320	11
32	1-800-COLLECT	B142	10
	20TH CENTURY FOX--ANASTASIA MOVIE	V233	10
	DISNEY--BEAUTY & THE BEAST VIDEO	H330	10
	BOSTON MARKET	V234	10
	BUENA VISTA--LITTLE MERMAID MOVIE	V233	10
	GENERAL MILLS--CINNAMON GRAHAMS CRL	F122	10
	VISA--CHECK CARD	B150	10
39	CAMPBELLS--SOUP	F121	9
	JC PENNEY--MULTI-PDTS	V321	9
	MCDONALD'S	V234	9
	NISSAN TRUCKS--FRONTIER	T118	9
	ROBITUSSIN COLD LIQ GEL CAPS	D212	9
	SUBWAY	V234	9
	TYLENOL--EXTRA STRENGTH GELTAB	D211	9
46	AETNA U.S. HEALTHCARE--HMO PLAN	B210	8
	BETTY CROCKER--STIR N BK CAKE & FRST MX	F113	8
	COMPAQ--PRESARIO COMPUTER	B311	8
	DIMETAPP ELIXIR COLD MEDICINE	D212	8
	ELECTRASOL TABS--DISHWASHER DETERGENT	H411	8

Ranked in order of total spots. Includes ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, UPN and WB. Regional feeds are counted as whole spots. Source: Competitive Media Reporting

py meal in August.

Coke, having wrested the soft-drink category from Pepsi, is spending a minimum of \$5 million in print and electronic support, including a large buy on Winston Cup telecasts. Coke will also run Nascar spots in movie theaters and sponsor mini Nascar fan fests at state fairs, while using a spate of Winston Cup drivers in ads and promos. Pontiac will be among the most active sponsors, looking to send upwards of \$5 million worth of support. Kellogg's will dedicate three national promos to its Nascar alliance, along with packaging detailing the sports history. Another sponsor that will offer Nascar packaging is Tide, rolling out a 50th anniversary box in the first quarter. True Value Hardware will back a sweeps offering either a 1998 Nascar vehicle or 1940s-era card promo with TV support. —Terry Lefton

ENERGIZER DOUBLEBARREL FLASHLIGHT

Advertiser: Ralston-Purina
Agency: Checkmark, St. Louis (Eveready in-house agency)
Begins: Early December
Budget: \$2 million
Media: TV

Ralston-Purina, looking to expand its Energizer brand equity, will shortly break an estimated \$2 million holiday ad campaign in support of Energizer Double-Barrel, a high-end flashlight launched earlier this year.

A 15-second spot for DoubleBarrel, dubbed "Assembly," touts the product's unique two-chamber design and halogen bulb that allows it to "burn brighter for longer than any light in its class." The spot airs primarily on male-oriented programming.

It is Ralston-Purina's first big push for flashlights under the Energizer brand. In the past, the company used the older Eveready brand for flashlights, reserving Energizer for batteries. The current push will continue well into 1998.

"We wanted to save the Energizer name for a product that really excelled," said Larry Hibbard, R-P category manager for flashlights. "We'll continue to be judicious on how we use it. We don't want to use it carte blanche across the line. Eveready is a strong name, not one we want to walk away from."
 —Sean Mehegan

Media Person

BY LEWIS GROSSBERGER



Speaking Frankly

AS LONGTIME READERS KNOW, MEDIA PERSON ALWAYS tries to keep this column light, lilting, frothy and

fanciful, much in the style of a Sigmund Romberg operetta or a Tariq Aziz statement on weapons-inspection compliance, but there are times when it becomes obligatory to delve into the dark side of the media.

This is such a time. The harsh truth is that for months a vast subterranean project has been under way at the world's major news organizations. All without exception have thrown themselves with herculean (or, in the case of *The New Yorker*, Xena-warrior princessean) energy

and mighty expenditure of resources into a full-scale, all-out, forest-killing Frank Sinatra Death Trip.

Now Media Person must confess he has no personal knowledge whatever of the icon's actual medical condition; for all MP knows, Frank could be chasing the serving wench around the swimming pool while shouting "Ring-a-ding-ding!" even as MP writes. Or, alternately, FS' life functions could terminate after deadline but three days before you read this, leaving you wondering why Media Person seems so dated this week. But accurately or inaccurately, the media titans are convinced that the great one will drop at any moment. And they are ready. Oh boy, are they ready.

Already the gossip columnists have been preparing the public for the festivities to come the second respiration ceases, faithfully transmitting all rumors without regard to veracity—that would only be an annoying irrelevance, indeed downright disrespectful—in the case of such a living (if barely) legend. One day, they say, Frank is breathing his last, with loved ones gathered in hushed reverence around the deathbed (reserved-seating only—no one admitted during the last 10 minutes of the performance), poignantly united now, their differences forgotten in deference to the

patriarch. The next day we're told Frank was seen shoveling in a hearty dinner as usual, chasing it down with Jack Daniel's and regaling his tablemates with riotous stories of the days when he and Jilly Rizzo used to beat up photographers. Day after that, he's back on the respirator again, this time the family screaming insults and pelting each other with hors d'oeuvres while unheard, the nearly comatose patient feebly croaks, "Please, somebody turn

The archives have been ransacked for clips and the taped tributes are being spliced together, every one of them featuring "My Way."

up the oxygen."

These gossip items are as dogs barking before the earthquake. The newspaper obits have been written and are waiting patiently, in a decapitated state, each to have a headline and lead paragraph slapped on it and be rammed into page one (continued on pages 4, 5, 8, 12, 26 and 38). The network archives have been ransacked for clips and the taped tributes are being spliced together, every one of them prominently featuring "My Way." The New York tabloids are straining to outdo each other in snappy front-page banners. "Old Closed Eyes," they will blare. Or maybe "Chairman of the Buried." The newspaper cartoonists are all busy depicting Frank approaching the Pearly Gates with St. Peter,

Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and Peter Lawford waiting to greet him, drinks in hand, and Dino chortling, "Hey, *paisano*, this joint ain't half-bad since Sam Giancana took over."

Tina Brown's *New Yorker* is on red alert, of course, and aching to go. Another of her fabulous theme issues is ready to roll off the presses the minute the word comes from California, with several heavyweight British novelists analyzing Sinatra's impact on their psyches, law maven Jeffrey Toobin on the will and Tina herself contributing a chatty yet insightful piece on the time she and Anna Wintour invited Sinatra to lunch and he forgot to show up. Art Spiegelman's witty cover drawing of Sinatra with the women in his life—done as a parody of *Where's Waldo?*—will surely raise some eyebrows.

Vanity Fair has a 260-page Annie Liebovitz pictorial ready to roll featuring a stunning color portrait of every musician who ever backed up Sinatra, plus a brilliant contrarian piece by Christopher Hitchens—unfortunately edited down to only four paragraphs long—pointing out that most of the time Sinatra was a boorish jerk, though surely not as big a jerk as Mother Teresa. *People* is planning to swing into total Frank mode, with eight issues in a row devoted to the life of the crooner, interspersed with a special tribute issue on his collection of vintage swizzle sticks.

Of course the publishing industry is poised to flood the bookstores with paperback bios, including one written in less than 15 minutes by a special team of investigative reporters from the *Weekly World News*, the same ones who broke the news that Janet Reno is considered a sex object in Japan. They reveal that Sinatra once impregnated an alien.

All that's necessary to uncork the entire extravaganza is one tiny event, and the media are growing impatient for it. In fact, they've asked Media Person to pass a message to the beloved superstar: *Hey, Frank, no disrespect, you know we love you, man, you're the greatest and all that, but could you please get a move on? We've got a lot of money tied up in this thing. Do it, already!* ■

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