

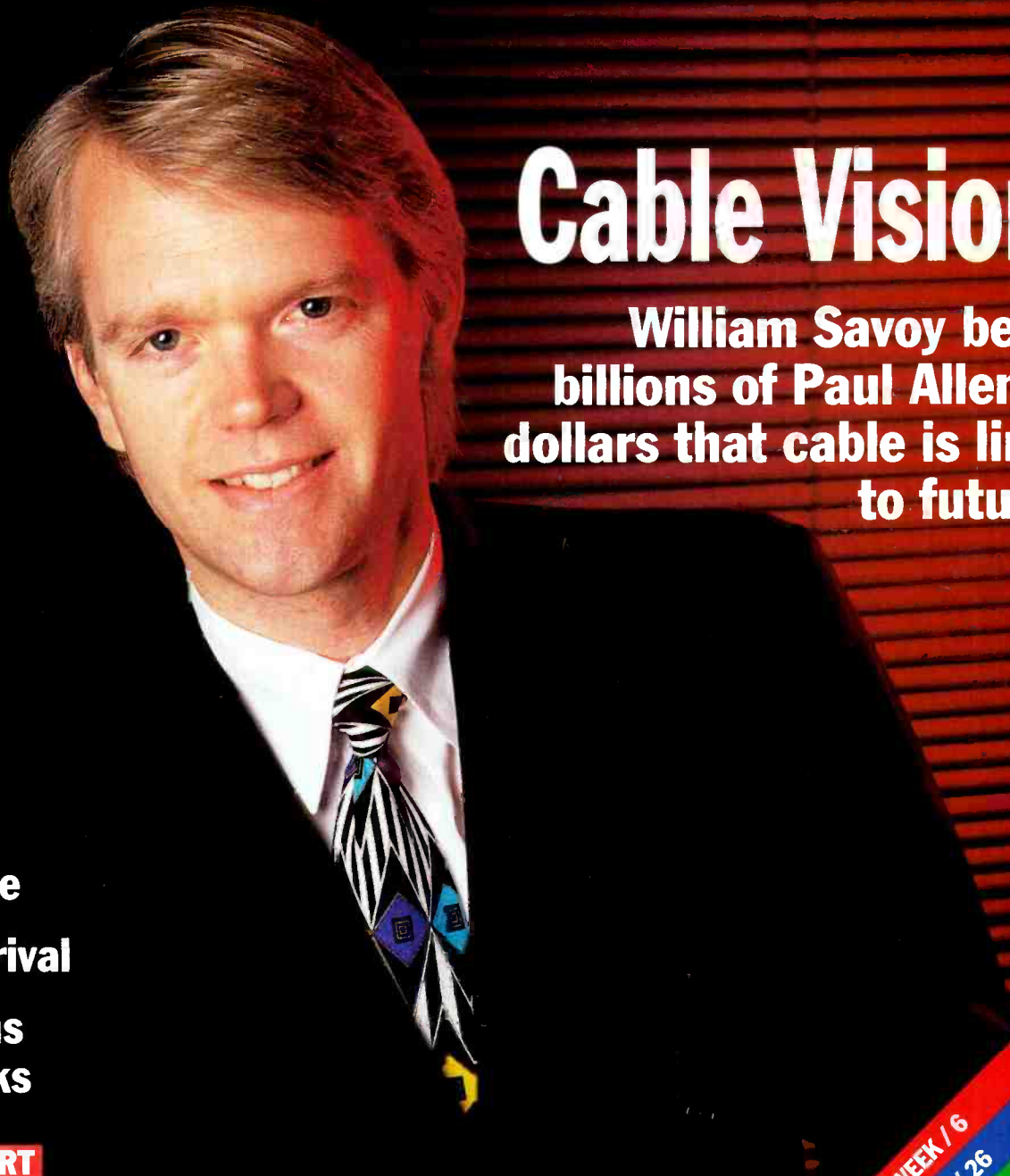
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BROADCASTING / 26
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TOP OF THE WEEK / 6

White House aide seeks FCC seat Little Rock connection comes into play with renomination of Ness uncertain / **10**

Ex-anchor wins \$8.3M bias suit Post-Newsweek chief 'terribly discouraged by this verdict' / **13**

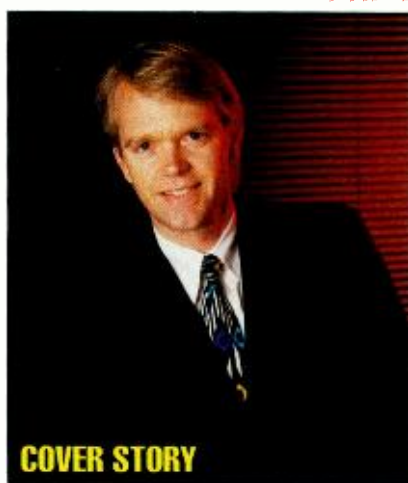
Paxson's second coming Family broadcaster outlines plans for new DTV networks. / **13**

NBC wins increase on daily hires from NABET Contract allows network to hire 45% more day workers. / **14**

For more late-breaking news, see "In Brief" on pages 72-73



Happy NATPE Many syndicators say they got what they came for—station clearances. / **6**



COVER STORY

William Savoy: Wiring Paul Allen's world As president of Paul Allen's investment arm Vulcan Ventures, William Savoy has helped build the company into a major cable player. / **19**

Cover photo by Doug Wilson/Black Star

Howard talks dirty In his address to NATPE attendees, the shock jock says he'll try to keep TV a 'vast wasteland.' / **36**

CABLE / 41

Primestar bondholders make noise In sale of company to Hughes, original Primestar partners get paid first. / **41**

Court TV buys crime movie package 'Crime Time Movies' slotted for weekend prime time. / **42**

TECHNOLOGY / 46



SPECIAL REPORT

Graphics get high-tech look

Affordable new computer-based broadcast graphics are now within reach. / **46**

Photo: Rick Falco / 1999 Black Star

BROADCASTING / 26

Fox bags kids morning block Stations get airtime, Fox gets ad time in weekday afternoons and Saturday mornings. / **26**

'Dilbert' to the rescue Animated sitcom has a strong outing and bolsters UPN's ratings. / **28**

WB affiliates cheer the end of WGN feed The end of competing broadcast this fall expected to give ratings boost. / **29**

Petry on pitches: You're so vague Distributors must produce better presentation tapes for new first-run weekly action shows. / **30**

Hasselhoff stays on Agent says 'Baywatch star has reupped for another season. / **32**

'South Park': Sliding into success The co-creators of the cult hit series say they show kids as the "complete bastards" they are. / **35**

INTERNET / 54

Yahoo inks GeoCities, News Corp. Yahoo made not one but two major alliances last week, which makes the popular Web site an even more attractive partner to major broadcasters. / **54**

Changing Hands.....56	Editorials.....74	In Brief.....72
Classifieds.....59	Fates & Fortunes.....70	Nielsen Ratings.40, 44
Closed Circuit.....18	Fifth Estater.....69	Station Break.....38
Datebook.....87	Get w/the Program..37	Washington Watch..18



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All's well at NATPE

Many syndicators say they got what they came for—station clearances

By Joe Schlosser

As the posters and Smoothie machines were being put away at the end of last week's NATPE convention in New Orleans, many of the top syndication executives were smiling.

They said they had a good convention, even though attendance by TV station managers was down and floor traffic sometimes light (see box, page 7).

Sales were "awesome," said PolyGram's Bob Sanitsky. The company cleared four first-run series for next season, he said. The new late-night series *Blind Date* was given a firm go, with clearances in 80% of the country. *Total Recall 2070* is sold in 72% for a January 2000 debut. And *The Crow: Stairway to Heaven* and *Motown Live* look good for another year, with sales covering 74% and 76% of the country respectively.

A spokesman for Studios USA Domestic Television said he would

love to have seen more GMs in the booth, but it was, nonetheless, a "very productive couple of days."

The company cleared its new reality half-hour *Free Speech* in more than 65% of the country. *Maury*, *Jerry Springer* and *Sally Jessy Raphael* have all been renewed in over 70% of the country through the 2000-2001 season.

Rysher Entertainment's Ira Bernstein said his sales force inked over 100 deals during the three days in New Orleans. The syndicator's new first-run action series *Relic Hunter* cleared 84% of the country with the help of deals with WWOR-TV New York, KCOP-

TV Los Angeles and WLS-TV Chicago. Bernstein also renewed *Judge Mills Lane* in 82% of the country for next fall as well. "It's not a waste of time for us," Bernstein said.

Buena Vista Television executives continued selling *Let's Make a Deal*, raising that show's coverage to over 50% for the fall. Off-net series *Unhappily Ever After* is now sold in over 83%. *Disney's New True Life Adventures* were sold to the ABC-owned stations, bringing the series clearance to more than 50% for the 1999-2000 season.

Columbia TriStar Television Distrib-

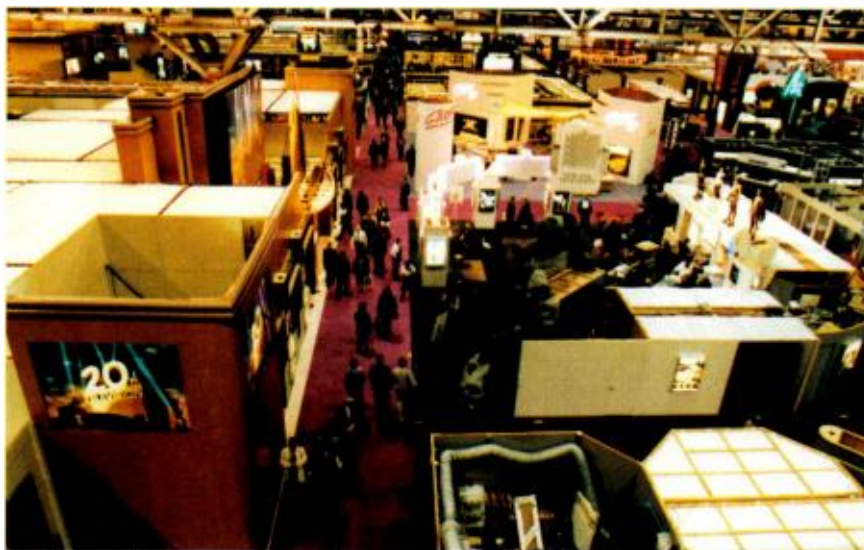
Worldvision President John Ryan was able to kick up his heels by the end of the show, having cleared *Judge Judy* and *Judge Joe Brown* in almost the entire nation for next fall. Ratings champ *Judy* was cleared in over 90% and newcomer *Brown* was in 85% for 1999-2000. Worldvision's new first-run weekly series *Country Home*, *Country Gardens* cleared 60% of the country, while off-net series *Moesha* and *7th Heaven* were licensed in 75% and 83% of the country. "We did a lot of business on the floor," Ryan said. "We're not complaining here."

Warner Bros. and Telepictures execu-

tives kept right on selling *Latifah* and *Judge Greg Mathis* right up until the end of the show. *Latifah* topped out at 80% coverage, while the new court series *Mathis* kept that genre's momentum alive with sales representing 77%. Off-net series for next fall *The Jamie Foxx Show* and *Suddenly Susan* began to wrap up, with *Foxx* topping 80% and *Susan* exceeding 85%.

Tribune Entertainment gave a firm go on both *Richard Simmons' Dream Maker* and action-hour *BeastMaster: The Legend Continues*. Tribune left New Orleans with sales representing over 70% of the nation on *Simmons* and said *BeastMaster* was in the 75% range. Two-year renewals were firmed up for sci-fi series *Gene Roddenberry's Earth: Final Conflict*. The series is sold in over 85% of the nation through the 2000-2001 season. Half-hour weekly series *Malibu, CA* is renewed for another year in 81% of the U.S.

Eyemark executives were busy this year selling a handful of new and return-



At just under 17,000, attendance was down from last year, but most exhibitors reported sales were still healthy.

tion announced its first sales on the new weekly action series *Battle Dome*. By the end of the conference, the show had cleared in over 67% of the nation for the fall and the studio's new movie package *Showcase VI* was at 65%. Talker *Ricki Lake* was over 80% and CTTD execs were close to releasing the first sales on the new *Screen Gems Network*. "We are accomplishing everything we set out to do," said CTTD President Barry Thurston. "We got lots of offers on *The Three Stooges* (CTTD is offering repackaged Stooges episodes for the fall) and the feedback on *Screen Gems* was phenomenal."

ing first-run series, along with a few off-net series. The CBS syndication unit said its new talk show with radio personality Dr. Joy Browne cleared in 100 markets representing 75% of the nation, and the action series *Peter Benchley's Amazon* was near 75% cleared. *Martha Stewart Living's* one-hour format was sold on 110 stations covering 77% of the U.S. market, while *Pensacola: Wings of Gold* had 115 markets renewed for 80% U.S. penetration.

Paramount seems to be successfully making the transition for talker *Leeza* from a network one-hour series into a syndicated product. *Leeza*, which will be heading from NBC to local station sales next fall, is already on 80 stations covering 70% of the nation. Off-net series *Sabrina*, *The Teenage Witch* and *Clueless* were both sold on 65 stations representing 70% of all U.S. households. And off-net series *Spin City* (produced by Dream-

Works) is over 160 stations and 92% of the nation.

King World gave the final green light to a new talk show featuring comedian Martin Short, having cleared it in 60% of the country. The syndicator also said that the lives of *Wheel of Fortune* and *Jeopardy* will extend at least until 2004-2005, having cleared the two shows in 65% of the country through that season. The shows are on in 86% through 2003-2004. ■

You can't please everybody

It wasn't all smiles. The reduced attendance by TV station executives drew complaints from at least three major distributors, including Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution.

"We're not selling shows here at the convention," said WBDTD President Dick Robertson. WBDTD will evaluate whether it's worth spending millions of dollars "to be an anchor store at this convention where we're not doing business."

Robertson said a WBDTD survey showed that 50% fewer of his clients in the top 100 markets attended the convention this year. And last year's attendance was down 20%, he said.

Robertson proposed holding the NATPE conference (or least the domestic portion of it) in the fall, closer to the selling season. He also proposed convening the show each year in Los Angeles, the heart of the syndication community. Robertson said it would make sense to have the smaller syndicators display their wares in hotel suites, while stations could peruse studio product on-site at the studios.

Sensitive to the complaints, NATPE organizers said they are prepared to subsidize the costs of network affiliate meetings customarily held in conjunction with their annual convention.

The GMs were missing for a number of reasons, primarily cost cutting and consolidation of station ownership. Further, many stations already had programming plans in place for next season, making a visit to New Orleans unnecessary.

NATPE President Bruce Johansen acknowledged the syndicators' complaints. "I would be happier if Dick [Robertson] had a broader view about what NATPE now represents," says Johansen. "This is a big conference and it's not going to go away."

According to a NATPE spokesperson, attendance was slightly under 17,000 people, a couple hundred fewer less than last year. There were 715

exhibitors who used up 417,000 square feet of exhibit space. Last year, there were just under 700 exhibitors using about 402,000 square feet.

Further, the NAPTE executive said, there is virtually no chance that NATPE would be moved to Los Angeles or that it would be scheduled for the fall, officials said. NATPE will definitely be held in New Orleans next year before moving to Las Vegas for 2001 and 2002. New Orleans again gets the event in 2003.

Many distributors say the show has become the forum to meet advertisers to discuss the up-front market. "This is a very good meeting for the advertising side of things," said John Ryan, president, Worldvision Enterprises. Ryan said the company's ad sales people had 150 meetings with ad buyers at the show. "We had to actually expand our booth to accommodate all the advertising executives. It gives them an advance look on the up-front. They come down and get to see what we have to offer."

Other distributors agreed that the expense was worthwhile. "It is to us," said Joel Berman, president, Paramount Domestic Television Distribution. The company sold shows and had numerous meetings with advertisers, he said. "The group stations' heads are here and that is increasingly where the buying decisions are being made."

Columbia TriStar Television Distribution and Eyemark Entertainment executives also said NATPE was a must-attend conference. "Next year, we're back, no question," said Eyemark President Ed Wilson. "It's been a great show for us and we've done a lot of business."

CTTD President Barry Thurston echoed those comments. "If you have product you're going to need to be where the customers are," he said. "We brought four projects to NATPE with no sales," he said. And two of them—*Battle Dome* and a feature film package—cleared 60% of the country at the conference, said Thurston.



Susan Grant, the new NATPE chairman, pledged to make the show attractive to all its constituencies. "If we focus on content and programming, which is essentially what this is all about, and we are really clear about getting the buyers here, we'll do well." Grant is CNN Newsource Sales President.

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Tauzin vows support to broadcasters, if...

By Harry A. Jessell

Here's Billy Tauzin's deal: If broadcasters help him rewrite satellite TV rules, he'll help them relax local TV ownership restrictions and force cable operators to carry their digital TV signals.

As chairman of the House Telecommunications Subcommittee, the Louisiana Republican is in a position to deliver on his end of the deal. "I promise that you will have the best champion for your...issues that you have ever had," Tauzin said in detailing his "proposition" at last week's ALTV conference.

Broadcasters say they are ready to deal with Tauzin—although they have concerns about his satellite TV legislation.

That measure, which made some headway last year and is expected to be reintroduced in late March, would permit satellite TV companies such as DirecTV and Echostar to offer local broadcast signals. To the dismay of some broadcasters, however, it would not impose must-carry—the obligation to carry all TV stations in a market—for three years.

Broadcasters not affiliated with the Big Four networks fear that satellite

operators will never carry them, absent federal mandates from the outset. "It should be all or nothing," said Mark Hyman, a lobbyist for Baltimore-based Sinclair Broadcasting.

ALTV President Jim Hedlund agreed, saying his members have yet to be convinced that satellite operators won't balk at carrying all of a market's stations at the end of the three-year grace period.

In his address to the industry before Tauzin's speech, Hedlund spelled out what his association is looking for in satellite-to-satellite legislation. Satellite companies must prove "at the outset that they possess the technology, the capital, launch capabilities and orbital slots needed to comply with full must-carry in 2002, and they must do this before they are licensed to commence selective carriage."

At a congressional hearing last week, Echostar CEO Charlie Ergen said that he would accept must-carry after three

years, but not for all broadcast stations. The requirement should apply "only for those stations that offer local content such as news or sports." He also said broadcast stations should be obliged to grant satellite companies permission to carry their signals.

Another sticking point in the satellite legislation is what to do about the two million satellite subscribers who are now illegally receiving broadcast signals imported from other markets. Current law permits satellite companies to sell distant broadcast signals to their subscribers, but only in "white areas" where they can't receive local signals.

A federal court has ruled that at least two million distant signals subscribers are not in white areas, and ordered

the satellite companies to stop servicing them. An April 30 cutoff date has been set.

Sen. John McCain, (R-Ariz.), chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, is writing companion satellite legislation that would grandfather the illegal subscribers.

Having won their white-area case against the satellite carriers, broadcasters are upset that McCain would permit the illegal subscribers to continue to receive the distant signals permanently. ■



Tauzin: "I promise that you will have the best champion for your...issues that you have ever had."

White House aide seeks FCC seat

Little Rock connection comes into play with renomination of Ness uncertain

By Paige Albinak

White House staffer D. Vanessa Weaver is seeking the FCC seat held by Commissioner Susan Ness, sources confirmed last week.

Weaver is a deputy assistant to the president in the White House Office of Presidential Personnel.

Sources say she is waging an internal campaign for the position. "It's really two friends of the administration vying for the same job," says one source close to the White House.

Although Weaver is lobbying for the seat, the administration has not decided whether to pick a new nominee or renominate Ness, whose term ends in June.

It is unclear what the administration

would stand to gain by floating an alternative to Ness, who has served on the commission since 1994. Naming someone new might provoke Ness to leave before a replacement is confirmed. If that happens, Senate Republicans likely would leave the seat open, taking away the Democrats' 3-to-2 majority. If Ness's term expires and no nominee is named, she can stay at the commission until a new administration takes office in 2001.

Sources say Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.), whose committee must approve FCC nominees, is not inclined to support Ness, although a spokeswoman for McCain says McCain has not begun to consider the issue.

Weaver hires personnel for the

administration's sub-cabinet positions, a source says. She is "very talented, smart and well thought of in the White House," the source says, adding that "the senior jobs in the personnel office tend not to go to strangers."

Weaver comes from a prominent Arkansas family with strong ties to President Clinton. Her father, Vernon Weaver, is ambassador to the European Union in Brussels, although he plans to step down from the post in March.

Vernon Weaver ran the Washington office of Stephens Inc., a Little Rock, Ark., investment firm for 15 years. Before that, he was head of the Small Business Administration for President Jimmy Carter.

—Bill McConnell contributed

FCC proposes microradio plan

Kennard seeks 'new class of voices' for those shut out of broadcasting

By Bill McConnell

The FCC last week proposed to create hundreds of new low-power radio stations that would be available only to new entrants to broadcasting.

Under a plan announced last week, the agency would issue at least two, and perhaps three, new classes of licenses on the FM dial. The commission proposed to license new 1,000-watt and 100-watt stations with service areas of 8.8 miles and 3.5 miles, respectively. The agency also asked for comment on the creation of a smaller class of stations operating at power ranges between 1 and 10 watts. These tiny outlets would have a service radius of only one to two miles.

Ironically, the 1,000-watt outlets would be more powerful than full-power stations, which operate at a minimum of 100 watts.

Broadcasters are livid about the plan, arguing that their current analog signals would face interference. What's more, they say, low-power stations would hinder them from going digital. "This proposal will likely cause devastating interference to existing broadcasters and will challenge the FCC as guardian of the spectrum," says NAB President Edward Fritts.

A new class of "microradio" stations operated by neighborhood and church organizations, small businesses, minorities and women has long been a goal of FCC Chairman William Kennard. Too many Americans are locked out of broadcasting, he says, because of industry consolidation and skyrocketing station prices.

"Many, many people have told me there should be more opportunity for people who want to become broadcasters," he says. "We can create a whole new class of voices who can use the airwaves for their communities."

Still, potential interference problems in big cities appear to be blocking the FCC from creating the thousands of new stations for which microradio advocates hope. Nevertheless, the National Association of Broadcasters, a low-power foe, warns that the FCC plan could create as many as 4,000 new stations.

FCC staffers say they hope to have the proposal ready for final vote this summer, after 90 days for comments and replies.

Commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth was the only panel member to

oppose the plan. He argued that the FCC would have to gut signal-protection rules to create a significant number of low-power stations. "Under existing interference rules, the commission can authorize so few new stations that the results would hardly warrant the effort," he wrote in his dissent.

Indeed, to make room for the new stations, the FCC may eliminate rules requiring the second and third channels adjacent to existing signals to remain clear. But even after dropping those safeguards, few stations would be permitted in major cities. For instance, New York City has no room for any 1,000-watt or 100-watt stations. Los Angeles has space only for one 1,000-watt and six 100-watt outlets.

To make sure that low-power stations are reserved for new entrants, current radio and TV broadcasters would be barred from obtaining the new licenses. The agency also might bar newspaper and cable owners from low-power. And no one would be permitted to own more than one low-power outlet in a single market.



NAB's Edward Fritts: "This proposal will likely cause devastating interference...to broadcasters and will challenge the FCC as guardian of the spectrum."

The licenses would be issued either by auction or on a first-come, first-served basis.

Furchtgott-Roth complained that the licensing process would leave the agency no authority to make sure stations are operated by the groups that Kennard most wants to help. "There is in all likelihood no constitutionally sound way to assure such a result."

Operators of illegal "pirate" stations who have been forcibly shut down by the government

would be barred from running low-power outlets. Licenses might be permitted, however, for former pirate broadcasters who voluntarily left the air after a government request.

Broadcasters say signal conflicts are certain to develop if channel-protection rules are relaxed to squeeze in microradio. The industry favors a digital technology called "in-band-on-channel" (IBOC), which allows the digital and analog signals to be placed on the same frequency; IBOC signals, however, have some bleed into adjacent channels. ■

FCC avoids unbundling debate

The FCC last week put a wrapper on the cable Internet "unbundling" fight.

The commissioners at their Jan. 28 meeting refused to open a formal inquiry that could lead to rules requiring cable companies to open their broadband networks to Internet competitors. America Online and cable's other Internet rivals had been pushing the agency to launch an inquiry at the same time it sent a report to Congress on the status of broadband deployment. The report, approved at last week's meeting, found that broadband development is being deployed "on a reasonable and timely basis," even though few consumers yet have access to high-speed data services.

The commissioners, however, decided that it is premature to impose rules on the nascent broadband industry. "Regulators must resist the temptation to play parent to these infant services," said Commissioner Michael Powell.

Still, Chairman William Kennard vowed bring up the unbundling question again if future broadband reports find that consumers have little choice in high-speed service providers. "If we find that deployment is not reasonable and timely, we must take immediate action to remove barriers to investment and to promote competition," he said.

AOL and public advocacy groups argue that cable companies will eventually dominate the Internet if they have a stranglehold on high-speed broadband services.

—Bill McConnell

Allen strikes again

Microsoft co-founder pays \$1.4B for piece of Intermedia

By John M. Higgins

Microsoft Corp. co-founder Paul Allen's Charter Communications made its third major cable investment, engineering a \$1.4 billion deal that will give him a chunk of Intermedia Partners.

In a three-way transaction among Allen's Charter, Intermedia and Intermedia's 49%-owner Tele-Communications Inc., Allen will wind up with systems serving 260,000 subscribers in the Southeast. Having bought Charter and Marcus Cable last year, that will bring Allen's portfolio up to 2.7 million subscribers and make Charter the sixth-largest MSO.

The entire deal is worth \$2.4 billion, but TCI is keeping a big chunk of Intermedia's systems serving 300,000 subscribers for itself. Charter is buying two of Intermedia's three partnerships.

While institutional investors in the deal will be paid in cash, TCI wants

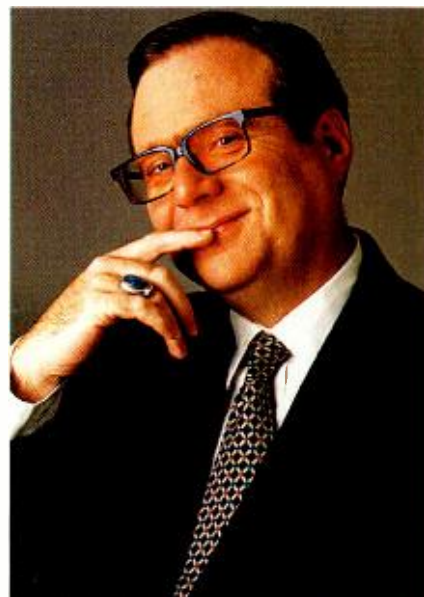
some of Intermedia's systems, notably its core metro Nashville cluster that covers virtually the entire market.

Further, TCI and Charter are pruning holdings that fall outside of their main clusters by trading systems through Intermedia.

So Charter is acquiring 400,000 subscribers by paying \$890 million in cash, plus trading systems serving another 140,000 subscribers. It will wind up with systems in Greenville/Spartanburg, S.C., Athens and Gainesville, Ga., Asheville, N.C. and Kingsport, Tenn.

Charter chairman Jerry Kent said the complicated deal ultimately strengthens his regional operations, which already had a substantial presence in the Southeast. Clustering has become increasingly important for operators developing advanced services, in large part by spreading the technology and marketing costs over a greater subscriber base in a market.

By getting Nashville, TCI, which is



Billionaire Allen has invested \$7 billion in cable to date, earlier purchasing Charter and Marcus Cable.

being taken over by AT&T Corp., will add another cluster that covers an entire U.S. market. Intermedia will continue to run the Nashville system as well as a third partnership that controls 700,000 subscribers in Kentucky. ■

NAB favors EEO rules with teeth

But says license renewal should not be tied to minority/female recruitment efforts

by Paige Albiniaik

The National Association of Broadcasters is backing new minority and female recruitment rules that would include "appropriate sanctions" for broadcasters who don't adhere to them, according to a draft of the proposal the NAB plans to submit to the FCC.

Although the NAB doesn't specify what the penalties should be, it makes clear that renewal of stations' licenses should not be conditioned on their recruitment efforts. In the past, many stations have had their licenses challenged at renewal time for non-compliance with the now-defunct equal employment opportunity rules.

"It's logical that for any FCC rules or policies to have any integrity, there need to be consequences," says Washington attorney and former NAB counsel Erwin Krasnow. "I think the NAB is just trying to give individual broadcasters a great deal of discretion in how

they implement the program. If a broadcaster doesn't do what he says he will do, there need to be sanctions."

Broadcasters have had no obligation to recruit and hire minorities since the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington last April struck down the commission's 27-year-old equal employment opportunity rules. With Chairman William Kennard supplying the impetus, the FCC is rewriting its EEO rules to comply with the court's request for more "narrowly tailored" regulations. Comments are due on the rulemaking on Feb. 18.

The NAB is proposing that broadcasters certify that they are implementing one of several outreach programs designed to find and attract minority and woman employees. They could adhere to the general federal or state EEO programs or implement any of several other initiatives, including sponsoring job fairs, offering scholarships, and establishing mentoring and training programs and internships.

In addition to keeping licenses free of EEO entanglements, the NAB is also proposing that smaller stations not have to file an annual employment report with the FCC. Stations with 100 or more employees still would have to file an annual report with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

"We should do this because it's right and because it can't hurt us, indeed it can only strengthen us," notes Bill O'Shaughnessy, president of Whitney Radio and a director on the NAB Radio Board. "We need to go at this with the same vigor that we are going to properly oppose the FCC's low-power radio proposal."

O'Shaughnessy also thinks the NAB should hold an "EEO Summit," and include colleges and universities as well as professional broadcast associations.

NAB spokesman Dennis Wharton says the EEO draft was meant for internal purposes only and had no comment. ■

Paxson's second coming

Family broadcaster outlines plans for new DTV networks

By Steve McClellan

Pax TV has something that's in short supply among broadcasters—a plan for multicasting in the digital age.

Pax TV head Bud Paxson confirmed plans last week to launch up to three digital program services in the next 12-18 months. The services include a 24-hour home shopping service and two more family-oriented program channels.

The announcement of the digital plans (made during a NATPE panel) comes just five months after the launch of Pax TV, a broadcast network built on Paxson's own TV stations. It's anchored by prime time strips, including *Touched by an Angel*, *Promised Land* and *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*. The long-term viability of the service is still an open question and the launch of any digital networks will likely hinge on the fortunes of the primary service over the next year.

The FCC has granted every TV station a second channel for digital TV, which can be used for a single channel of high-definition television with a wide screen and high resolution or four or five channels of standard-definition television comparable to the existing analog service. Paxson is

opting for the latter course. He said that 19 of his 70 stations will have their digital signals up and running within a year.

Specifics on the new networks are few, but Paxson's announcement represents the first hint of a plan among over-the-air commercial network broadcasters for exploiting their digital signals.

On the noncommercial side, PBS is planning to launch several digital networks, including a children's service later this year. PBS would preempt the SDTV networks for occasional HDTV broadcasts in prime time.

Paxson's digital network will have a hybrid distribution pipeline, at least at the start. In addition to carriage on his digital TV stations, Paxson said he would try to make digital carriage deals with cable MSOs. Currently, Pax TV, which launched last Aug. 31, has cable carriage agreements with 14 MSOs, Paxson said.

Paxson stressed that the digital family network won't just time-shift Pax TV. There may be some programming overlap, but the second service will be separate and distinct, with a mix of original and off-network programming, he said.

But Paxson noted that the second channel would be family-oriented, with minimal violence and no explicit sex.



Paxson wants two digital family-oriented program channels, among other services.

The digital service will also contain some electronic commerce segments as well. Earlier in the week, Paxson announced the hiring of Gregory Lerman to head its so-called "e-commerce" efforts for the Internet, digital channels and catalogs. Lerman joins Pax from Valuevision, where he was executive vice president and general manager.

Paxson believes e-commerce will be a major revenue stream for broadcasters in the digital age. At the panel session, he said the growing sector will take a huge bite out of the retail business. "Goodbye department stores," he quipped hopefully.

Paxson has been busy wheeling and dealing on the NATPE floor this week. He said he "put the lid on" four new one-hour dramas from various producers at the show, and that he expects to spend up to \$60 million on new shows this year. Many of the shows, he said, will have multiple partners and "three to six levels of investment." ■

Ex-anchor wins \$8.3M bias suit

Post-Newsweek chief 'terribly discouraged by this verdict'

By Dan Trigoboff

TV anchor Janet Peckinpaugh wasn't sure her \$8.3 million discrimination and breach of contract judgment against Post-Newsweek Stations would change gender-based roles on anchor desks, she said a day after the verdict, "but it sends a clear message to our industry."

Peckinpaugh had charged she was demoted from a coveted anchor position at WFSB(TV) Hartford, Conn., in part because she had complained about being groped by co-anchor Al Terzi in 1987, when both worked at WTNH(TV) in New Haven. When Terzi refused to co-anchor with her at WFSB, she said, the station backed him. She also charged

that she had passed on lucrative opportunities in larger markets because she was told she could "grow old" at WFSB.

But, she said, her contract was not renewed at WFSB in 1995 because the station had two younger female anchors to pair with two male anchors.

Peckinpaugh, now 48, did not win on her claim of age discrimination.

But the jury rejected Post-Newsweek's defense that pairing anchors of opposite sexes was an industry practice.

Post-Newsweek, which has since sold WFSB(TV) to Meredith Corp., denied all claims, and said that Peckinpaugh's assignments at WFSB were based on research showing that her appeal had diminished.

Also, the company contends, dis-



Peckinpaugh

crimination laws were intended to apply to hiring, not pairing. Post-Newsweek officials plan an appeal.

Bill Ryan, Post-Newsweek president, was also named a defendant. He said he believes an appeal will be successful. "I am terribly discouraged by this verdict," he said. "Throughout my whole career, diversity in the workplace has always been a priority of mine; it's one of those things I'm most proud of. This is the biggest disappointment of my career, personally and professionally." ■

NBC wins increase on daily hires from NABET

By Richard Tedesco

The National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET) reached a tentative agreement with NBC last week on a three-year pact covering 2,500 union workers.

The contract would give increases ranging from 9%-12% through the life of the contract. It calls for annual wage increases of 3%.

Some 1,800 engineers at the NBC O&Os would also receive an immediate 3.5% wage hike.

In a key union concession, NBC can increase the percent of daily hires to 45% by the final year of the contract. A spokesman for NABET, which is affiliated with the Communication Workers of America, declined to indicate what percentage was allowed under the current pact.

Those daily hires will be paid on a sliding scale based on seniority. NBC gave the union an 11th holiday on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

The tentative contract with NBC awaits approval in a March 5 ratification vote by NABET members. NABET's current pact with NBC expires on March 31.

NABET-CWA President John Clark called the agreement with NBC "a balanced and fair proposal."

Meanwhile, NABET is still locked in a protracted contract dispute in representing its membership with ABC. ■

Broadcasting & Cable ONLINE

At www.broadcastingcable.com, "Top of the Week" is "Top of the Minute." We continuously post breaking industry news each business day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

CLOSED CIRCUIT

BEHIND THE SCENES, BEFORE THE FACT

WASHINGTON

Impeachment niche

ABC is offering affiliates and some regional cable networks the opportunity to boost coverage of the Senate impeachment hearings through a separate satellite feed.

Known internally as "the green network," the free experimental "shadow feed" is simulcast over ABC's ABSAT satellite service for television and radio stations, regional cable networks and ABC's Website.

It is produced by ABC Radio and anchored by Carol Simpson and Bettina Gregory, with ABC's roster of commentators. Called "the green network" in contrast to ABC's yellow-themed regular feed, the satellite service resembles cable news networks.

"This is much easier and much less expensive than three separate operations," said Bob Murphy, ABC senior vice president of news. "Clearly, the way of the future is to provide niche programming and do it in a cost-effective way. This is exactly what you'd see if we go to multicasting."

One challenge is to balance the different media when communicating, Murphy said, so that it's "not too wordy that it crowds the pictures [for TV viewers], and not too dependent on pictures" for radio.

This week the feed will have more graphics—an enhancement for television but an additional challenge for radio, Murphy said.

But the additional effort may not much matter to the public, one affiliate general manager said. Bruce Liljegren, general manager of ABC affiliate KEZI-TV in Eugene, Ore., suggests that the impeachment trial lacks the draw of regularly scheduled soap operas. He said that when his station interrupts regular programming for impeachment news, "our phones ring off the hook with people asking, 'How much more of this do we have to take?'"

DAYTONA BEACH

No sleep for Hindery

In keeping with his pace of grueling

dealmaking, Tele-Communications Inc. President Leo Hindery spent last week prepping to drive in the Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona in Daytona Beach, Fla. Hindery got the middle-age racing bug several years ago, bought a Ferrari and rented powerful race cars, but this is his toughest race. He's one of four drivers scheduled for Jim Bell Motors' team, driving in one hour-and-20-minute shifts. The race was to start at 1 p.m. Saturday. "We actually could win," Hindery said before the race. Hindery, famous for sleeping just a few hours each night, didn't expect to get much of that during four hours of downtime either.

DENVER

Rocky Mountain DTV troubles

Denver TV stations won't be able to meet their Nov. 1 DTV deadline, sources say. Opposition by local groups concerned about the possible effects of electromagnetic radiation has prevented the Lake Cedar Group from building a new super-tower that will support local TV stations' antennae. "We will try to meet the date," says Lake Cedar Group manager Jim MacDermott. "At this stage, we are past the point where we could reasonably meet that date."

On Jan. 13, the Denver Planning Board recommended in a 6-to-1 vote that county commissioners approve the group's proposal for a change of zoning that would allow the group to build. But the county commissioners meeting, scheduled for Feb. 2, was postponed pending the results of a study by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment that will measure the effects of electromagnetic radiation on the area. The results are due in mid-February.

"These people will not be bullied by FCC standards," says Deborah Carney, a local lawyer and president of C.A.R.E., a local group opposed to the tower. This radiation is a form of trespassing and assault and battery."

Venice, 1609 - Midnight Sky



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SONY



WASHINGTON WATCH

By Paige Albiniak

Giving LPTV Class A status

Representatives Charlie Norwood (D-Ga.) and Ron Klink (D-Pa.) soon will introduce legislation that would grant permanent licenses to low-power TV stations that broadcast 18 hours each day and three hours of locally produced programming each week, says John Stone, Norwood's spokesman. All stations that meet the criteria up to 90 days after the legislation is enacted would qualify as Class A stations. Permanent licenses would be granted, but the stations would not be subject to mandatory cable carriage or an increase in power. The bill is nearly identical to legislation that Norwood introduced last year in the House and that Senators Wendell Ford (D-Ky.) and William Frist (R-Tenn.) introduced in the Senate. Senator Conrad Burns (R-Mont.) plans to reintroduce that legislation this year. Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) last year tried to include the Ford/Frist bill in comprehensive spending legislation, but the bill was derailed when the National Association of Broadcasters objected. Stone says a hearing on the bill is likely in the House. Ken Johnson, spokesman for House Telecommunications Subcommittee Chairman Billy Tauzin (R-La.), says, "Billy is committed to resolving the low-power controversy this year. He wants to do something to make sure

that many stations across the country don't go dark."

Red Cross's Martin to join NCTA

After a relatively short search, the National Cable Television Association has hired Josephine Martin as vice president of public affairs, the association said last week. Martin, vice president of communications for the American Red Cross, will begin her new job on Feb. 15. "I'm delighted Josie will be joining NCTA," says NCTA President Decker Anstrom. "She will bring a lot of experience and terrific skills to help us tell cable's story." In a more casual forum, Anstrom also noted that Martin's experience managing "natural disasters" should prove helpful to the cable association. Martin replaces Torie Clarke, who left NCTA to become president of BSMG Worldwide for Bozell Eskew Advertising. Martin's first assignment? Managing cable bigwigs at NCTA's board meeting on Feb. 16 at the Carleton Hotel in Washington.

EchoStar complaint dismissed

The FCC last week dismissed EchoStar Communications Corp.'s program-access complaint against Comcast Corp., Comcast-Spectacor and Philadelphia Sports Media. EchoStar complained to the FCC that Comcast engaged in "discrimination and unfair practices and exercising undue influence over the distribu-

tion of satellite cable programming," according to the FCC order. EchoStar says that Comcast and its subsidiaries purposely shifted regional program offerings from satellite to a terrestrial-based delivery system to avoid program access rules. Those rules require any programmer that delivers content via satellite to make that content available to all distributors. Programmers can, however, transmit content exclusively if it is via microwave or fiber networks, according to FCC rules. The commission dismissed EchoStar's complaint, saying the DBS operator couldn't prove that Comcast was intentionally trying to avoid program access requirements.

International Bureau plays musical chairs

Peter Pappas has been promoted to associate chief from assistant chief of the FCC's International Bureau, where there have been several personnel changes. Pappas had been assistant chief since July 1997. Before joining the commission, Pappas was director of communications for the Department of State and assistant counsel to the President in the White House counsel's office. Adam Krinsky has been hired as acting senior legal adviser to International Bureau Chief Regina Keeney. Krinsky joins the commission from Washington law firm Squire, Sanders & Dempsey. Finally, Linda Dubroof has been named assistant chief of the planning and negotiations divi-

sion in the FCC's International Bureau. She joined the bureau in May 1997 and has been at the FCC since 1987. The International Bureau handles the commission's satellite proceedings, including direct broadcast satellite.

WETA-TV shares digital feeds with retailers

Public station WETA-TV Washington will offer simultaneous broadcasts of standard-definition analog and high-definition digital television for retailers to demonstrate. "The best way to appreciate the wonder of high-definition television is with side-by-side demonstrations," says Sharon Percy Rockefeller, president/CEO of WETA-TV. "The superior sound and picture of HDTV is so evident in comparison." Washington area retailers Myer-Emco and Pro Video will offer side-by-side demonstrations monthly on channels 26 and 27 starting Jan. 27 at 8 p.m. with the broadcast of *The Kennedy Center Presents: A Tribute to Muddy Waters, King of the Blues*. The rest of the schedule: Feb. 16, 10 p.m., *Washington, The Beautiful*; March 29, 10 p.m., *Over Ireland*; April 5, 9 p.m., *The American Experience: Down the Colorado*; May 12, 9 p.m., *Great Performances: A Tribute to Duke Ellington* and June 23, 8 p.m., *Seattle Symphony with Jessye Norman*. WETA-TV also plans to air other HDTV programming on its digital channel 27, including *Legacy of Generations: Pottery by American Indian Women and Woven by the Grandmothers: Navajo Textiles from the 19th Century*. The programs are 30 minutes each and will run from Feb. 3 until Feb. 16.

Contrary to popular belief, Paul Allen's multibillion dollar plunge into cable in 1998 was far from sudden.

As the Microsoft Corp. co-founder has nurtured and invested in his vision of a "wired world" over the past decade, marrying microprocessing power to connectivity in the home, he has always seen cable operators' 'last mile' of coaxial cable into millions of homes as a key element, says William Savoy, president of Allen's investment arm Vulcan Ventures.

Savoy has helped build an immense portfolio of investments and operations aimed toward that vision—entertainment and education software, transaction-oriented operations and other means of distribution. Some have been immensely profitable, some have fizzled and others were sold too early, notably a big stake in America Online.

But cable represents Vulcan's biggest financial commitment. Savoy spent \$7 billion to buy Marcus Cable Corp. and Charter Communications Corp. last year. Just last week, he sealed another deal to buy \$1.4 billion worth of systems from Intermedia Partners and Tele-Communications Inc. That will give him a portfolio of around 2.7 million subscribers, making Allen the sixth-largest MSO after just one year.

For Savoy, whom Allen hired 10 years ago to manage

William Savoy

Wiring Paul Allen's World

his holdings, the job has been intense, sometimes uncertain. Armed with a bachelor's degree in computer science, accounting and finance from Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Mass., Savoy had been an investment banker and chief financial officer for Polar Beverages before taking the president's job at Layered, a small, Boston-based company that made accounting software for the Macintosh platform. Allen, who bought a stake in Layered, hired Savoy, then 24,

shortly after Savoy helped sell Layered.

Savoy's first investment for Allen—a short-lived satellite TV operator called SkyPix—bombed. But Savoy, now 34, kept his job and oversees what's surely one of the more unusual and eclectic high-tech investment portfolios around.

In the following interview with BROADCASTING & CABLE Denver Bureau Chief Price Colman, Savoy talks about his tenure with Allen, Allen's investment philosophy and how cable fits into that vision.

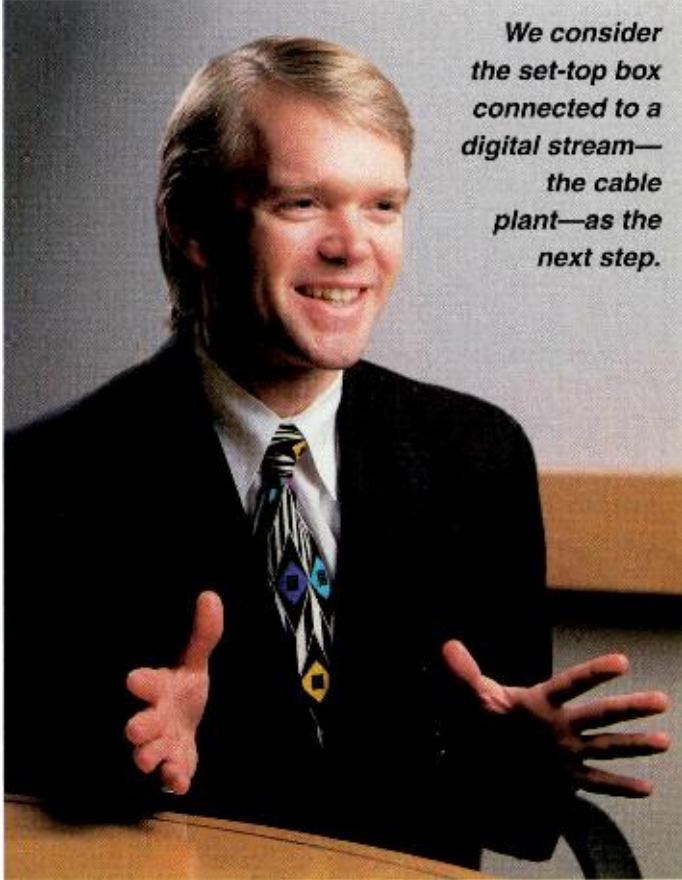
Some institutional investors are skeptical about what you and Paul Allen are doing. There's a sense that you're playing around with Allen's billions and that you don't have the return-on-investment (ROI) expectations held by conventional investors. Do you have an ROI threshold?

When we started to use Vulcan Ventures as a vehicle to make investments in what we described as the wired world, that criticism was constantly lobbed our way. In the last two or three years, people have realized that Paul's vision for the future of computing technology actually came to be, and, lo and behold, our investments were more carefully thought out, and there was more logic than people had presumed.

My best strategy is to listen carefully to Paul and find a way to execute his agenda. That agenda, simply put, is to invest in opportunities that promote proliferation of microprocessors. The origin of Microsoft was the notion that microprocessors or microcomputers—PCs, if you will—when connected to a network, represent a communications paradigm shift. Cable is a logical extension of that, in that cable now is a large pipe into individuals' homes, and set-top boxes more and more look and act like PCs.

The real promise for the wired world is a ubiquitous connection to digital information for everybody. The way to do that is to find a way to push, at a lower price, these devices into con-

sumers' homes. We consider the set-top box connected to a digital stream—the cable plant—as the next step in that process. While our investments in cable are relatively recent, our interest in cable is long-standing. My first day on the job here in Seattle 10 years ago Paul said, 'I want to invest in cable properties. I want to own a piece of that distribution medium.' I convinced him that the time to invest in cable would be when cable operators saw fit to upgrade the plant. To own the pipe in 1993, the last time there was any significant M&A activity in cable space, was premature. It would



We consider the set-top box connected to a digital stream—the cable plant—as the next step.

have been frustrating for Paul, given his investment objectives, to be a long-term holder of plant while all this money was being invested in the ground.

The question partly arises from the way you handled the AOL investment, selling out early and losing out on huge gains later.

The promise of AOL was not to be a proprietary online dial-up service. The promise of AOL should have been to open up the platform that [Chairman] Steve Case was building. The failure of AOL to embrace an open platform is what gave rise to the Internet as we know it today. Had anyone—CompuServe, Prodigy or AOL—created an open platform for people to publish to, no one would have looked around to find the thing called the Internet. What the Internet offered was a free way for people to publish things in an online environment, rather than have to pay for it.

Our reason for selling out of AOL was that we violently disagreed with the tactic that Steve was embracing for building that business. When you have hundreds of millions of dollars invested, large profits, you disagree with the strategy the company is taking and you're a guy like Paul Allen who doesn't need to invest in things just because they might be a good investment, the right thing for us to do was to take our profits and focus on another investment space. We did the same thing everyone else did. We dumped AOL and

embraced the Internet, and we built businesses like Cnet, like Starwave, that were early examples of what the promising new industry of online commerce and entertainment would have been. It was strictly a focus and direction thing. We said, 'Look, we have \$100 million in profit here. Let's grab the loot and head for the train' because we disagreed with where he was going.

Sounds like the open-platform concept is fundamental to you.

It comes from our experience at Microsoft. An open operating system made the industry what it is today. It's always the right thing to do.

Cable operators you've bought—Charter and Marcus—are technology laggards. Why not buy technologically cutting-edge MSOs if your goal is ubiquitous two-way connections to households?

I'm not aware of a cutting-edge MSO that was for sale. The other point is that we understand technology as well as anyone. We don't need to buy a company that has an understanding of technology because we need to learn from them. We needed companies that were solidly operated with reasonably good clusters, with an upgrade strategy that made sense, that were in the middle of the bell curve, not at one extreme or the other. We could just bring our know-how to create value. We don't have to have cutting-edge guys because we think we have that in our own people here in Seattle.

You wanted a work in progress.

I needed something of a work in progress that I could use to demonstrate to the industry or our customers what it would look like if they did it our way.

Do you have a critical-mass of subscribers that you want to reach?

We do, but it's an internal number. More importantly, we think these assets are mispriced in the marketplace. We think they're worth more than what we paid for them, and in

some cases, we think they're worth more than what they trade for today. As long as that imbalance exists, we're motivated to buy these assets undervalued and hold them for the promise of real value. Fortunately, it works for a guy who has economic resources out there, if they were responsibly deployed, to buy a whole lot more than he currently owns.

In the wake of the Marcus and Charter deals, many MSOs put on party dresses for you but no deals were made.

Using the party metaphor, we're care-

through a public process. It would surprise everyone to know some of the people we're having conversations with. It'll happen when it happens.

You spent \$7.3 billion on cable acquisitions last year. What percentage was debt financed?

There are two answers. The companies themselves have debt at the company level so a fair amount of that \$7 billion in value was assumption of debt. At Paul's level—the balance being the required equity he has to contribute to close the purchase of the companies—those are numbers we do not disclose.

What portion of that is debt?

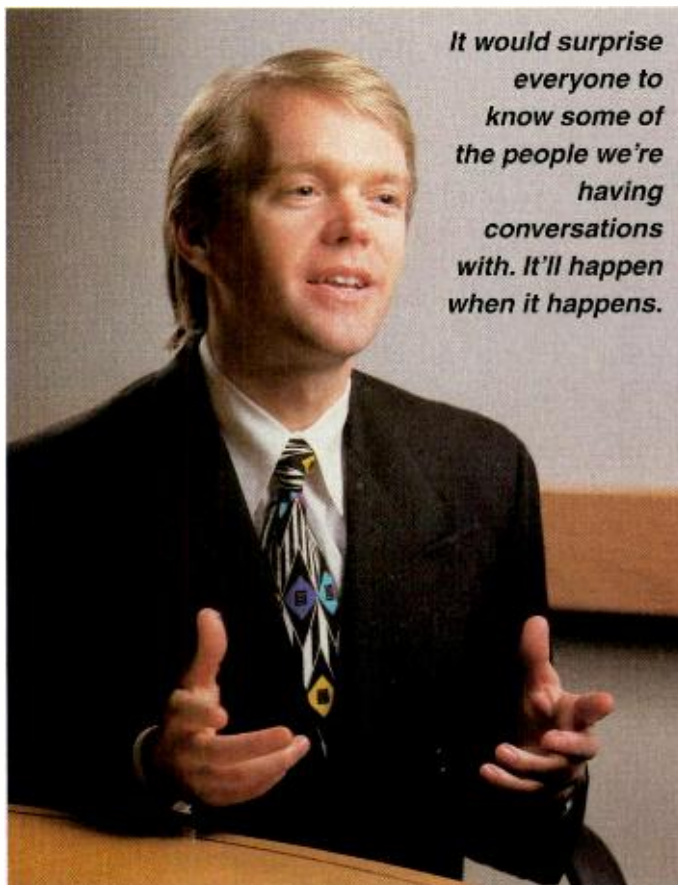
It would be responsible for someone in my place to have an appropriate mix of debt and equity for transactions of this size. We look at cable as a platform, much the way we look at a PC and see inside of it a micro-processor that is the platform on which the whole thing is built. Moore's Law applies to PCs and to cable, too. The speed will increase at dramatic rates, price will decrease at a dramatic rate and people will be motivated to deliver new things to consumers across this platform. I can't tell you that I have X percent of revenue in 2005 coming from services that aren't yet in place. I work for a guy who repeatedly has seen these opportunities and identified the fact that they're mispriced in the marketplace. I've learned to: a) try not to quantify how far mispriced they are, and b) execute against that agenda.

You're counting on those new revenue streams.

Absolutely. I don't mean to imply that I'm not counting on it. I'm just telling you that they're so mispriced that if I'm off by an order of magnitude, we still make a lot of money.

Talk about the wired world. It doesn't sound like much more than what other people have for several years simply called "convergence."

You've seen in the PC space that it's



It would surprise everyone to know some of the people we're having conversations with. It'll happen when it happens.

ful about how much alcohol we consume. We really can dance and the party's going to last a while longer. You don't have to leave early. As we've done for the past 10 years, I'm trying to engage in a responsible, thoughtful, methodical process that will result in the best transactions. If you rush too quickly to dance with the person who asks, you miss other opportunities. A number of people have knocked on the door, and we've knocked on a lot of other doors, quite frankly. Some people have declared that they weren't comfortable with that. They wanted to go

evolutionary technologies, not revolutionary technologies, that tend to accrete value to the platform. The mouse added as much value to the PC as the keyboard, right? Over time, programmers, game developers and publishers are going to ask, 'Where can we put our brand in front of consumers in the most efficient way? Where can we protect and improve our brand? Now that there are tens of thousands of portals for people to go to, where's the place that we can differentiate?' One place that people are going to be able to go is the remote control. I don't think you're going to wake up tomorrow and find that you've thrown your computer out the window and now you use your set-top box connected to a PC. You're going to find that you can do the same thing on both machines. One will just

be easier to use than the other, and so you'll gradually move from one to the other.

Paul says there are basically two screens in everyone's home today: the PC and the TV. No matter what you do, more time will be spent in front of the TV than the PC. I don't think you're going to change that consumer behavior. To think that a few generations later you're going to throw out the TV in favor of the PC is not going to happen. It will go the other way.

I have a high degree of skepticism when I hear people talk about balancing their checkbooks or checking their insurance policies on the television.

It probably took five or six years before you started to use a teller machine after they were available. Eventually, it was

such an easy, convenient thing that you reluctantly adopted it in the beginning, and now you haven't been inside a bank in four years. The same is going to happen [with TV]. Is it home banking? I don't know. Is it e-mailing your kid's teacher? I don't know what the critical application is that is going to make people embrace the subtle shift. But it'll happen, and whatever it is will generate a huge amount of enthusiasm in the household, and it'll catch on.

What are the categories in your portfolio? Content and conduit?

If you go back to the early '90s when we started to do this, we invested in platforms. We invested in the pipe. We invested in [DBS service] SkyPix, a well publicized fiasco, but we invested in it because Paul understood the value

Paul Allen's investments

CABLE/DISTRIBUTION

- Avio Digital
- Charter Communications
- High-Speed Access Corp.
- InterNAP Network Services (provider of Internet packet distribution)
- Marcus Cable
- ShareWave (digital home network distribution)
- USSB
- WaveTrace (wireless access systems)
- Wink Communications

CONTENT (including software and development tools)

- Academic Systems (educational software)
- Asymetrix Learning Systems (online learning tools)
- Cnet (online content)
- Certicom (online stock quotes)
- Liquid Audio (online content)
- MetaCreations (software, software tools)
- Microsoft (content, software, software tools)
- Net Perceptions (software tools)
- NetSchools Corp. (content, educational software, software tools)
- Paraform Inc. (software tools for 3-D modeling)
- PersonaLogic (software tools)
- Purple Moon (content, games, educational software for girls)
- Reel.com (content, film information online)

- Res Rocket (content, online music)
- Storyopolis (content)
- Vision Software (client-server software applications)
- ZDTV (content)

E-COMMERCE/RETAIL

- ARI Network Services (e-commerce)
- Beyond.com (retail)
- Cyber Source (e-commerce)
- Egghead Software (retail)

- Harbinger Corp. (e-commerce)
- N2K (music e-commerce)
- PriceLine (e-commerce)
- Telescan (content, stock quotes/online financial data)
- Trilobyte (retail - CD-ROM games)
- Value America (e-commerce)

HARDWARE

- Colorado Microdisplay (displays)
- Metricom (Ricochet wireless modem)
- Raycer Graphics (graphics hardware)
- Replay Networks (settop/storage hardware)
- Siliscape (displays)
- Televox (IP telephony hardware/software)
- TeraStor (storage hardware)
- TiVo (settop/storage hardware)
- Transmeta (hardware)
- Visionary Design Systems (hardware)

ENTERTAINMENT

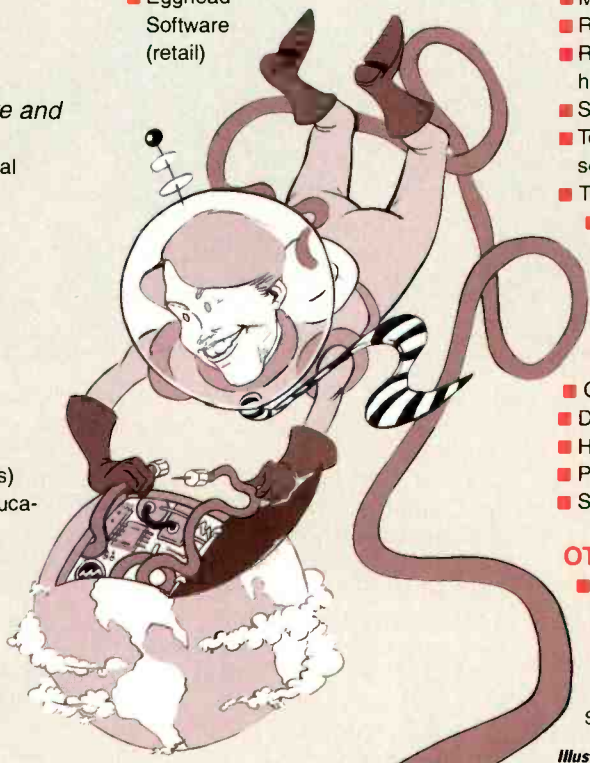
- Clear Blue Sky Productions (films)
- Dreamworks SKG (films)
- HSN Inc. (USA Networks)
- Portland Trailblazers (NBA)
- Seattle Seahawks (NFL)

OTHER

- Interval Research Corp. (research & development)
- Multimedia Asia Pacific (consulting)

Source: Vulcan Ventures

Illustration: Ed Reynolds



of delivering digital streams to individuals. That was one of the first investments I made, believe it or not, and I've still got my job. After that, we invested in Stan Hubbard's company in Minneapolis, USSB, because we believed in it. We then invested in paging companies. We invested in cellular-phone companies. We invested in modem companies—anything that provided consumers with a microprocessor that connected to a network of any type. In the early '90s, everyone was talking about interactive television, and we couldn't figure out how there was a 'there' there. We took a different approach. We said, 'low-cost computing power to consumers connected to networks is the origin of our fortune because it was the origin of Microsoft. Let's get back to basics.' We learned a lot about consumers and the way they adopt these technologies.

We realized there wasn't a lot of high-value graphics available to any of these microprocessors. In the next wave, we invested in a lot of off-the-shelf software products. We realized that consumers aren't going to want to look at an amber, blinking cursor in the corner of a screen. They're going to want some graphics.

The next wave was content. We made an investment in DreamWorks, we bought TicketMaster, we started Starwave, we invested in C-net—all very successful investments. And we invested in a lot of CD-ROM companies that were not as successful as everyone had hoped. We invested in computer-game companies, cartridge-game companies—you name it—things that started to tie this stuff together.

And then we've come back around and said, 'Now is the right time to invest in cable.' Broadband is being deployed. You have to remember why you're doing this. It's about increasing the population of microprocessors connected to networks. Here's a network that's being built so let's start buying cable responsibly and start to deploy some of this stuff.

We've invested in a lot of Internet companies and a lot of e-commerce companies. You name it, we've done it. But it's all rational and logical. We don't get caught up in the froth of the moment.

Last year you bought stakes in TiVo and Replay Networks.

The theory with TiVo and Replay is simply that the features of their products are features that ought to be, in our opinion, built into set-top boxes. The DCT-5000s and S-A Explorer 2000s have everything except that hard disk. What TiVo and Replay bring is the ability to essentially program your television. Personal TV. That's a feature that ought to be a part of what is sold

these guys an opportunity to be a success on their own.' If consumersglom onto it and buy these things by the millions, it'll find its way into the set-top box, I'm pretty sure.

That seems to lead to an investment in companies making set-top boxes.

One thing we've been careful about is not to invest in commodity plays. If you look at all the companies in the portfolio, not one delivers a product that's a commodity. That's not to say we never would. TiVo and Replay are not low cost enough to be commodities, and if you invested in the first commodity guy, you're probably OK. We don't add much value to a commodity play. We add a lot of value to a proprietary play.

But it seems like bandwidth is a commodity play.

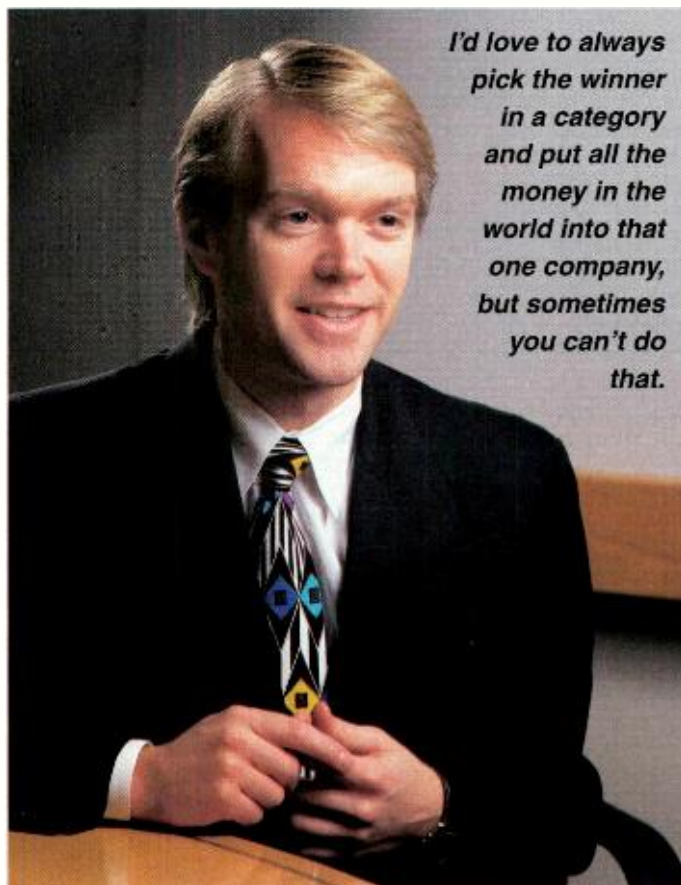
Yes, except that when you get right down to it, bandwidth hasn't yet been delivered. And the thing that makes cable so compelling is that you have things delivered on cable that aren't delivered any other place, so it does have proprietary features. You're bundling a commodity called bandwidth with a product that has limited distribution called video content. You can only get it in one of two or three places. If you want a big pipe as part of your purchase, you have to go with cable.

What has disappointed you about cable?

Rapid escalation in programming costs.

If you could control more content, maybe you could affect that.

It wouldn't hurt to have a few high-quality content plays along the way so that you at least had some leverage. We just put \$54 million into ZDTV. That content category is very important to us because we know it's a place that consumers are going to get educated. We've been clear. We're going to invest in MSOs in a responsible, cost-effective way. We're going to make programming investments when and where it's appropriate.



I'd love to always pick the winner in a category and put all the money in the world into that one company, but sometimes you can't do that.

by the cable company to consumers. The things that you can do with those boxes as a consumer are things that you shouldn't need a second box for. It should be a part of the set-top box. We have to be somewhat agnostic about it. I'd love to always pick the winner in a category and put all the money in the world into that one company, but sometimes you can't do that. I just had to treat it like a portfolio play and say, 'Let's do everything we can to give

Do you have a sense that consumers are reaching a threshold in how much electronic/digital stuff they'll use?

I don't know. Look in the average middle-American family kitchen and tell me if they're tired of buying things to go on

the counter. Probably not, right? We're gadget consumers. If it's neat and cool and everyone else has it, we'll buy it.

Do you want to be more of a player in cable internationally?

We have that debate. I don't know the

answer. What I do know is that sometimes the infrastructure gets built in a way that doesn't make the most sense but it gets inertia and continues to be built out that way. It's in everyone's best interest to continue to promote the use of hard lines being strung into homes because it's the way we've done things. But when you cross the pond, there's no inertia. It's no wonder that cell-phone penetration in the Netherlands is 90-some percent. It's an easier way to deliver things. I worry a little about trying to take a unique American phenomenon, in the form of cable, and going to new markets and trying to do it that way. I worry that there might be another way to do it.

One of our theses is, as it relates to cable, the notion that cable is a broadband platform for distributing more than just video. Internationally, if you adopt some other MMDS or LMDS or other technique, they lose some unique characteristics that we think are interesting for cable.

Part of that being two-way?

Correct. Symmetrical two-way, as opposed to asymmetrical two-way.

A wireless platform isn't necessarily out of the picture if it incorporates that symmetrical two-way capability?

That's one of the reasons Craig McCaw's business is so interesting. He gets Teledesic up and running. It's a two-way satellite system, right? But that's seven or eight years out. That's a lot of runway for existing businesses to do whatever they need to do not to lose the edge.

Talk about the regulatory situation.

Domestic regulation worries me because from time to time elected officials don't always weigh all the facts before they do certain things. I haven't spent a lot of time on the international front for all the reasons I've already articulated.

How active should we look for you to be in continuing your investments?

You have a big portfolio. There will be some churn in and churn out. Sounds like you want to keep the pot stirred well.

Absolutely. We review 4,500 business plans in a year. We make 30 or 40 investments. Last year we invested, not counting cable, some \$300 million in wired-world companies. We're young guys. We're going to keep doing this for a long time. ■

Kent's Attitude Adjustment

Jerry Kent is going through a big adjustment. For 15 years, he ran cable companies on behalf of big institutional investors that were primarily concerned about cash. At Cencom Associates and more recently Charter Communications Inc., his backers wanted operations to be lean. Pump up the subscriber growth. Grind as much cash flow out as possible. Don't get too aggressive on capital spending. Let others invest heavily developing new technology.

Now, as chairman of the St. Louis-based Charter Communications under Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, Kent has to drastically change his approach. Allen has spent \$7 billion buying Marcus Cable and Charter and combining their 2.4 million-subscriber operations to serve as the platform for a host of advanced services he has invested in over the past decade. That means Charter has to spend to develop new technology and invest heavily to speed up system upgrades that would have waited under the operation's previous owners.

One of Kent's tasks is to bulk up. Allen wants scale in cable. Kent took another step toward that last week by agreeing to a complicated \$2.4 billion series of system swaps and outright purchases with Intermedia Partners and its 49% owner Tele-Communications Inc. Two weeks ago, he made a much more modest deal, agreeing to buy American Cable Entertainment systems, serving 68,000 customers in east suburban Los Angeles.

Industry executives said Allen and his top dealmaker Bill Savoy have investigated MediaOne Group and Century Communications Corp.

But Kent's interested in more than sheer bulk. "They're obviously looking for systems that give them good demographics and density," said Waller Capital Corp. investment banker Joe Duggan, who helped sell the ACE systems. He doesn't see Kent with a master acquisition plan—such as concentrating solely on large suburban clusters or only filling holes in existing regions. "They're very, very opportunistic. They're very straightforward and clear in their intentions, which makes them excellent buyers.

Kent is used to rapid dealmaking. But Allen's outlook requires change not only at the top of Charter but throughout the organization, as system managers grow accustomed to being able to invest even if the improvement brings less of an immediate revenue kick. "We have to reorient our thinking, take a longer-term view," Kent said. "I'm working on changing the mindset of the management team and point them three to five years out and where we want to be from a new product perspective."

Many MSO and Wall Street executives view Allen's investments as the toys of an unbelievably wealthy playboy. Just as he's collected sports teams, a personal Boeing jetliner and a gigantic estate, some see him collecting technology companies, and now, paying huge prices for cable companies.

His personal fortune totals \$22 billion, largely from his Microsoft stock. The \$7 billion Charter and Marcus deals were financed primarily with debt. One financier estimated Allen put in \$1.5 billion in equity, big but less than 7% of his wealth.

"You don't want to get caught up in a bidding war with him," said one MSO executive. "He can pay a big price because he doesn't really need to get a return out of it."

Kent disagreed, saying that Allen is simply more willing—and able—to invest for a longer term. While he wouldn't specify Allen's return goals, he noted that he rolled over much of his take from the sale of Charter into the new company. "I have half my net worth invested in this company," Kent said. "Neither of us is involved for charitable purposes." —John M. Higgins

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Fox bags kids morning block

Stations get airtime, Fox gets ad time in weekday afternoons and Saturday mornings

By Steven McClellan

Fox is scrapping its weekday morning-hour kids block and returning the time to affiliates. In exchange, the network will recapture some local advertising inventory to be sold in the Fox Kid's Network weekday afternoon

and Saturday morning time periods.

Under the new arrangement, said Fox affiliate board chairman Murray Green, stations would be able to provide better lead-ins for their daytime lineups. Many Fox stations air news programs in the morning, he said, and those stations may use the time to expand those new shows.

"This effort strengthens us on a local basis and Fox at the national level," Green added.

The move will become effective next fall at the start of the 1999-2000 season. The agreement was announced at the Fox affiliate meeting in New Orleans last week.

In a press briefing after the meeting, Fox Television Chairman Chase Carey said the network would develop some program repurposing tests to try to identify program strategies for digital channels. Carey also said the network was not ruling out the possibility that it would ask affiliates to make additional contributions to network programming beyond the agreement already in place to help pay for National Football League rights.

The kids agreement, which was finalized last weekend at meetings between the network and the Fox affiliate board of advisers, came in response to affiliate complaints that the weekday morning kids block was hurting ratings and sales of stations' daytime lineups. Those lineups consist almost entirely of adult-targeted programs.

Fox affiliates attending the Sunday meeting responded to the announcement with "unanimous applause," said Cullie Tarleton, vice chairman of the Fox affiliate board. Fox officials emphasized that they were still strongly committed to the kids business, noting that 14 hours of Saturday morning and weekday afternoon kidvid remains intact.

Barry Baker, president, Sinclair Broadcast Group, and a Fox affiliate board member, said his group has Fox stations that currently program news in the evening that will now expand to the morning. Baker also said the freed-up time across all the Fox affiliates will probably enable some syndicators to clear new programs that otherwise might not make it to air.

As for inventory that local stations will give back to Fox, Baker said that for the most part "it's inventory the stations couldn't sell anyway.

Currently running in the weekday morning kids' block is the daily half-hour *Magic School Bus*, coupled with a checkerboard half-hour that includes shows such as *Life with Louie*, created

BKN aims to be talk of the playground

The BKN Kids Network is riding a wave of good news into its planned first season in syndication.

Owned and operated by Bohbot Entertainment, BKN's two two-hour daily children's programming blocks have been cleared in over 75% of the country for next season and are facing less and less syndicated children's competition every day.

Last week in New Orleans on the NATPE floor, BKN executives announced the schedules for both of the animated programming services and gave a name to the male-oriented block, Bulldog TV.

The Bulldog block is aimed at boys ages 6-to-11 and will kick off each morning with the animated series *Roswell Conspiracies*. That will be followed by *Starship Troopers*, *Extreme Ghostbusters* and *Mummies Alive*. The second block, tentatively called BKN Classic Cartoons, features *Sonic Underground*, *Jumanji*, *Beakman's World* and *Pocket Dragons*. BKN executives say they will likely rename the Classic block in the spring.

With Fox having given up on its morning-hour kids block last week and previous news that the syndicated series *Pokemon* was going to The WB, BKN CEO and Chairman Rick Ungar was all smiles on the conference floor.

"It's going to be *Bulldog, Bulldog, Bulldog*," Ungar says. "There is a lot of good news out there and it all adds up to a surprising and unexpected number of time periods available in the marketplace. We are kind of the last man standing. We are in fact the only large independent children's distributor."

Ungar says he plans on having the BKN Network cleared in over 90% of the country before next fall. Yesterday BKN executives announced the network had been cleared on KCAL-TV Los Angeles and that it will be carried on 48 Sinclair Broadcasting stations. Ungar says BKN executives will spend upwards of \$50 million in programming and advertising over the first two years. Ungar says he is also planning a 90-minute animated New Year's Eve special with a top-name musical act.

"We are going to be doing a lot of stunting, a lot of advertising and promotion to make this a big success," Ungar says. "If the kids aren't talking about us on the playground, then we won't matter. We don't plan on that being the case."

—Joe Schlosser



BKN sees 'Bulldog' as the favorite pet of 6- to 11-year-old boys.

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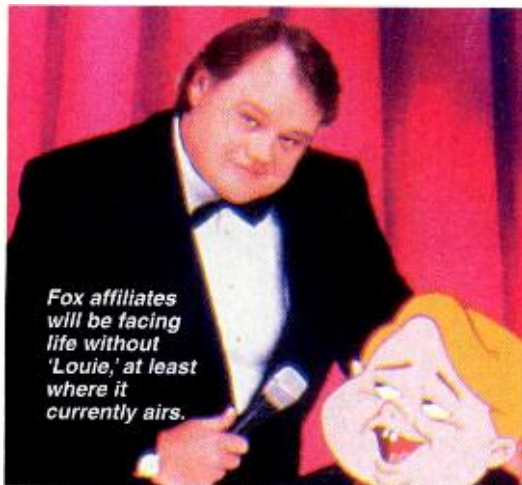
by comedian Louie Anderson.

Carey said scrapping the morning kids block was a good move because it would allow the network to focus on the more lucrative afternoon and Saturday morning time periods.

Haim Saban, who oversees both the Fox Kids Network and the Fox Family channel on cable (which programs to kids throughout the day), said the network remained committed to providing affiliates with three hours of weekly educational programming, as required by the FCC. One of those hours will rerun in pattern during FKN time blocks, while the other two hours can be scheduled at the stations' discretion, he said.

Carey also told affiliates that Fox supported a "broad-based deregulatory agenda" that includes lifting the current 35% national ownership cap.

As for recent reports that Fox had threatened to pull out of the NAB over



the issue, Carey replied: "There are no plans at this point to pull out the NAB." The NAB board recently switched from a neutral position on the issue to support of the current 35% cap.

Fox affiliates remain split on the issue. "I have friends who support the current cap and I have friends who sup-

port lifting the cap," said Tarleton.

And his position: "I support my friends," he quipped.

As to the repurposing tests, Carey declined to provide any details other than that the network was preparing to do such tests. "We need to move forward in a proactive way to determine the best uses of the digital spectrum," he said.

Asked if affiliates might be asked to make further contributions to help pay for network programs, Carey said, "We're dealing in a rapidly changing environment" where the network has to keep all its options open. But he did say that at the present time "there are no plans to announce anything."

Doug Herzog, president of Fox Entertainment, told affiliates that the network would launch at least two mid-season programs in March—*Family Guy* and *Futurama*. Both shows evolved from the network's development process last year. ■

Dilbert to the rescue

Strong outing for animated sitcom bolsters UPN's ratings

By Michael Stroud

The debut of UPN's animated *Dilbert* last week delivered the highest sitcom ratings in the network's four-year history, giving the No. 6-ranked network a badly needed boost to morale.

UPN executives pointed to the Monday prime time show's strong scores among young adults and males as a sign that the network is on the right track with a revised strategy targeting those age groups.

The debut "shows that people will show up to watch our sitcoms if we provide them truly unique and irreverent fare," said Entertainment President Tom Nunan. "When we focus our energies we can launch shows successfully."

Dilbert delivered a Nielsen household rating of 4.2/6 and a 3.3/9 among adults 18-49, an improvement of 133% and 230%, respectively, over the season-to-date performance for the 8 p.m. time slot on UPN. It attracted 6.79 million viewers, a 177% jump.

Those scores were enough to beat WB's popular *7th Heaven* for the evening among adults 18-49, tying for fourth in the time period behind ABC's

celebrity weddings special, CBS's *Cosby*, NBC's *Suddenly Susan* and Fox's *Melrose Place*. Among adults 18-34, the show tied for third with NBC, behind ABC and Fox. Among men 18-34, the show was second for the evening behind *Melrose Place*.

For UPN, the score was the network's third-highest-rated show ever, behind its *Star Trek: Voyager* premiere in January 1995 and its premiere of the drama *Nowhere Man*, which lasted about a season and a half. It also handily beat last season's premiere of *Love Boat: The Next Wave*, which scored a 2.7/8 in adults 18-49.

UPN is hardly out of the woods with its prime time schedule, even assuming the show manages to hold on to most of its strong ratings in coming weeks. *DiResta*, the comedy following *Dilbert*, fell off substantially in ratings, a move that suggests the network will likely move, or even cancel, *DiResta*.

In its place, UPN is considered likely to add another animated midseason show, *Home Movies*, which is also targeted at young men. The show is produced by the same team that produces Comedy Central's popular animated comedy, *Dr. Katz*.

Dilbert joins the swelling ranks of prime time animation, including Fox's *Simpsons*, *King of the Hill* and freshman Claymation offering *The PJs*, and the twisted *Family Guy*, which is set to debut after the Jan. 31 Super Bowl. Later this season, Fox will air *Futurama*, the latest offering from *Simpsons'* creator Matt Groening.

Can the prime time schedule support so many new animated shows?

"We'll just have to wait and see," Nunan said. "I don't think people ever reject a show because of the form it's in."

UPN is also developing another animated show, *Quints*, from Meg Ryan and Heather Thomas, described as *South Park* from a female perspective. ■



WB affils cheer end of WGN feed

End of competing broadcast this fall expected to give ratings boost

By Michael Stroud

Ending a stopgap measure that has helped The WB reach areas lacking an affiliate, the network plans to stop sending its signal over Tribune Co.'s WGN superstation.

WB's decision "is great for affiliates," said Larry Morton, president of WB-affiliate KKYK in Little Rock, Ark. "It means we have no competition" from WGN programming in KKYK's coverage area. Several other affiliates also cheered WB's decision, announced last week, to end the WGN telecasts. They said it's a move that should help boost ratings.

The network has used WGN broadcasts as a way to reach more households as it built viewership in so-called "white areas." But the growing success of the WeB network—a cable service that delivers WB network and syndicated programming—is helping to fill out



WB Chief Executive Jamie Kellner (r) predicts ratings will climb with exclusivity move. With him at NATPE last week was Entertainment President Susanne Daniels.

the approximately 9 million households that don't receive WB broadcast signals. WB Chief Executive Jamie Kellner said the move should become effective by fall.

WeB offers a package of WB programming and Warner Bros. syndicated products such as *Friends* in markets that aren't served by WB affiliates.

Kellner predicted that Nielsen rat-

ings will go up 5%-10% in WB markets that will now have exclusivity. At the same time, it will give a strong incentive for cable operators who carry the WGN signal to switch over to the WeB because they won't have another way to access WB programming.

WB had arranged the WGN broadcasts in a straight barter.

In other news, WB announced that it will begin airing the popular syndicated kids show *Pokemon* on its Kids' WB! network starting in February. The show will begin on Saturdays, and then expand to a Monday-through-Saturday schedule in fall 1999.

Kellner said the show will remain in syndication for the remainder of this season, and then be shown exclusively on The WB starting in the fall.

WB said the station with the strongest ratings for its annual "Froggies" award is its affiliate in Jacksonville, Fla.; followed by Orlando, Fla. and St. Louis. Kellner owns the St. Louis station.

Affiliates were also upbeat about WB's prospects, several days after its freshman show *Felicity* won the network's first Golden Globe.

"I think they're right on target," said Mac Douglas, vice president and general manager for KDBA in Amarillo. ■

NBC News saving on tape costs

Partners to launch news-on-demand system to O&Os and affils

By Michael Stroud

In an effort to dramatically slash the amount of videotape needed for affiliates to capture news feeds, NBC News Channel plans to launch high-speed news-on-demand delivery by year's end. The NOD service will be an available system to all owned and affiliated stations, as well as to MSNBC and CNBC.

Affiliates interviewed at NBC's affiliate meeting in New Orleans last week welcomed the move, saying they expect the new system to save them time and money compared to old satellite delivery systems.

"You sit at your PC, and click, and [the news] comes up."

—Robert J. Hamacher, chief operating officer for Northwest Broadcasting Inc.

The service means "no tape costs anymore" for news feeds, said Robert J. Hamacher, chief operating officer for Northwest Broadcasting Inc., which owns one NBC affiliate and five Fox affils in the Northwest. "You sit at your

PC and click, and [the news] comes up."

The new system is set to roll out in tests in March, and will be fully functional by the end of the year, Hamacher said.

The system loads stories into a video server at each station. Each server is attached to a computer equipped with software that enables producers to see video and text organized by news categories. Costs for the new system, which utilizes both the Internet and digital satellite transmission, will be absorbed by NBC. The network didn't say how much it will cost to deploy.

NBC News Channel is a service from NBC News providing NBC affil-

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programming a network should own or control. Jacobson said in-house programming is essential if networks hope to turn a profit by marketing their products across multiple platforms.

At the same time, too much network control could hurt the quality of the offerings, noted Creative Artists agent

David Tenzer. "If all programming is going to be owned by six Fortune 500 companies, it's not good."

Paxson Communications President Jeff Sagansky argued that most of networks' soaring programming costs are attributable to their overpaying for "so-called established talent," even though

most of the biggest hits in recent years have come from new voices.

The emergence of new networks has meant that "there's a lot of product, but not enough 'A' product," said Mark Schacher, vice president for programming and development for Tribune Entertainment. ■

Television is missing some color

In 'tug of war' for airtime, more creativity to capture urban audiences might help

By Michael Stroud

Urban programming is down but not out.

The genre has taken a hit from the cancellation of syndicated shows like *Keenen* and *Vibe* and declining representation on the broadcast networks. But cable and creative marketing of syndicated fare is picking up some of the slack, a NATPE panel concluded last week.

"To the degree that broadcasters are seeing their profits declining, a lot of producers are coming to cable because cable is willing to take more chances," said Pearlana Igbokwe, Showtime Networks' vice president of original programming, who said that a substantial portion of the network's core audience is black. "Showtime is [airing] much more series programming that speaks to the specific experiences of African Americans," she said.

The glut of programming competing for airtime has made getting urban shows on the schedule all the more difficult.

"You have this tug of war between good products that need to be on the air and time periods that aren't available," said Kathy McCampbell Vance, program director of NBC affiliate WRC-TV Washington. Because of that, even if a program makes sense, "nine out of 10 times we can't take it on," said Ed Baruch, who sells syndicated African American and Hispanic programming.

And the problem has been compounded by the movement of networks, such as UPN, away from the genre as they find more "mainstream" fare to

replace it, panelists said.

Then there is the challenge of how to get primarily white network heads to buy programming that doesn't necessarily mesh with their sensibilities.

To get urban shows on the air, syndicators need to be creative. For example, Byron Allen, executive producer of urban shows *Entertainers*, *American Athletes* and *Kickin' It*, said he sells the three shows as a package, explaining to buyers that, taken together, they score ratings equal to those of a UPN show. "I just tell them, whatever you're paying UPN, pay me half," Allen said.

Vibe's cancellation came partly because its appeal as a vehicle to reach African American audiences wasn't adequately marketed, argued Frank Mercado-Valdes, founder of the African Heritage Network. *Vibe* was

"sold as a general market show at general market CPMs," Mercado-Valdes said. "They were leaving a 10 black rating on the table."

Marketers of urban programming also need to persuade stations and networks to be patient with shows that initially turn out low ratings, especially since with ratings erosion, today's low number could be tomorrow's windfall. "In 10 years, that 1.7 rating that got *Vibe* canceled will have people dancing in the streets," Mercado-Valdes said.

At the same time, successful urban programming can attract a much broader audience than a core ethnic audience, just as *Arsenio* did during its five-year run. "The biggest purchasers of rap music now are young white kids in suburbia," Igbokwe said. ■



Searching for the urban audience (l-r): Debra Lee, Byron Allen, Ed Baruch, Kathy McCampbell Vance, Pearlana Igbokwe and Frank Mercado-Valdes

South Park: Sliding into success

Co-creators of cult hit series say they show kids as the "complete bastards" they are

By Bill McConnell

At Comedy Central, we can get away with anything." That was the *South Park* creative team's explanation of how their wildly successful chronicle of life among foul-mouthed elementary schoolers wound up on the cable channel. "We made a conscious choice to go to Comedy Central," Trey Parker said. "We were worried that a lot of other places would try to 'kid it down' for 13- and 14-year-olds."

Parker and Matt Stone say their own memories of being foul-mouthed elementary schoolers provided the inspi-



South Park co-creator Matt Stone (l) says he is floored by the series' popularity: "We thought we would do six episodes and out." Now he and partner Trey Parker are wrapping up a full-length movie.

ration for the series.

"We remember what we were like as third-graders and we got sick of hearing how magical children are," Parker told

NATPE convention attendees last week. "They're complete bastards."

Kyle, Stan, Cartman and Kenny aren't based on one real-life kid, he said, but are an amalgam of classmates that they knew growing up. Parker's mother, however, has the dubious honor of being the basis for Cartman's junk food-facilitating parent.

"Cartman's mom is basically Trey's mom," Stone says, "Except that Trey's mom is not a hermaphrodite or a crack whore." Stone said he got the idea for Cartman's mom when he first visited

Parker's home and found the refrigerator stocked with Moon Pies and fried chicken.

Stone said the two are bowled over

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by the success of the show, which generated \$300 million in merchandising revenue last year, including a gold-selling album and a home video collection that last year was second only to the home video release of *Titanic*.

"We thought we would do six

episodes and out," Stone said.

Their next project is a full-length *South Park* movie to be issued by Paramount. In jest, Stone said the budget would be "whatever *Titanic* cost, plus one dollar."

The pair met as students at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where

Parker produced the Academy Award-winning spoof *American History*. Their first collaboration, *Frosty vs. Santa Claus*, evolved into the *South Park* precursor *Spirit of Christmas*. In 1995, they were being recruited by several networks to develop a series based on the 8-year-old scams. ■

Howard talks dirty

Stern says he'll try to keep TV a "vast wasteland"

By Joe Schlosser

It was pure Howard.

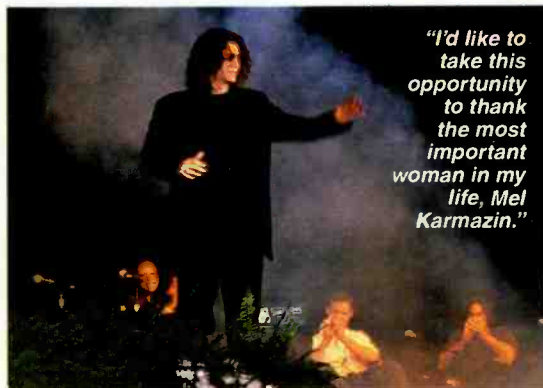
"I'm the guy who put the sin in syndication," the radio/TV personality said at NATPE's general session last week. "I am Mr. Controversy. I am a rebel. So at this point in my speech I'd like to say the following thing: cock.

"The late, great FCC [Chairman] Newton Minow said it best: 'Television is a vast wasteland,' and I'm here to reassure you that I will do all I can to make sure it stays that way."

Despite the language (and his produc-

er cavorting onstage in his underwear), the NATPE audience seemed to enjoy the performance, although a video clip showing Stern kissing the late Phil Hartman's late wife shocked some. She killed her husband and then herself last year.

Stern is in New Orleans selling his freshman late-night syndicated show, *The Howard Stern Radio Program*, which is distributed by CBS's Eyemark Entertainment. Eyemark executives acknowledge that the weekly hour pro-



"I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the most important woman in my life, Mel Karmazin."

gram has not done well in the ratings. With the help of most CBS stations, the program airs in 68% of the country.

Stern simulcast his NATPE address on his nationally syndicated radio program and held a question and answer session with the media from the dais after concluding his remarks.

Stern peppered his comments with profanity and said good television programming is any show that "makes a guy pull down his pants and grab himself.

"Right now I'd like to tell all of you to kiss my ass, but I can't because I've got a show to sell and I'll be kissing your ass later in the booth," Stern said. "And since no one has ever invited me anywhere, I never get awards and I never get to make speeches. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the most important woman in my life, Mel Karmazin."

Stern showed three different five-minute video packages, one of his 1980s syndicated TV program, another with Stern on various talk shows and, finally, clips of his current Eyemark series.

"I'm glad NATPE is open to inviting everyone," said Jim Lewis of Communications Concepts Inc. after hearing Stern's comments. "I enjoyed it."

After mocking his own distribution outfit, Eyemark, Stern concluded no one wants to see a "toned down" Stern program and that he will continue to do what he knows best.

"People want to tune in and have no idea what they are going to see next," Stern said. "That's what I'm going to do." ■

Top teens tell TV: 'Get real'

Teens want TV to reflect "how their lives really are," rather than depicting them as airheads and drug addicts, a group of nine New Orleans high schoolers told NATPE conventioners.

"Everything on TV is a big conflict and there's not a show that doesn't have sex or a girl who isn't showing her body," complained Ebony Gilo, a student at St. Mary's High School.

Favorite shows, the kids said, include *SportsCenter*, *Saved by the Bell*, BET's *Hitlist*, *Ally McBeal* and *Dawson's Creek*. Getting thumbs down were *Clueless* and *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, for portraying kids as, well, clueless.

The students, all honor students, said they generally spend an hour each weeknight watching TV and three hours a day on weekends. After polling students at her school, Gilo found junior-high kids are the most voracious TV viewers, watching five hours on weekdays. "And on weekends, they go berserk," she said.

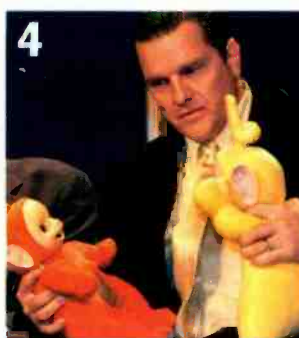
Broadcasters (and advertisers seeking to reach the free-spending age group) will be relieved to learn that teens still choose the tube over the Internet when they want entertainment. The students said they spend 5-10 hours weekly on the Web, but not for fun. "I use the Internet for research and getting basketball tickets, not for entertainment," said Rusty Carrere.

The WB's *Felicity* got a roasting from Chelsea Steiner, who complained the show "sends a negative message" to girls. Steiner criticized *Felicity*'s decision to reject Stanford so she can follow a boy to a second-tier New York City university. "They're telling young girls to follow a man and do whatever he tells you."

Watching characters solve believable dilemmas is preferable to soap-opera-style crises or violence.

Most kids could relate to a fight between *Moesha* and her father when she got a tattoo without his permission. "These are situations everyday teens go through," she said.

—By Bill McConnell



Floor Show

1. Proving that stars of programs from competing syndicators can be friends are Pat O'Brien, of Warner Bros.' "Access Hollywood" and Whoopi Goldberg, of King World's "Hollywood Squares." 2. Lorenzo Lamas and Shauna Sands Lamas, co-stars of Pearson Television's "Air America." The couple is expecting a daughter. 3. Two very important people greeted fans at Columbia TriStar: "V.I.P." stars Natalie Raitano (l) and Pamela Anderson Lee. 4. Kenn Viselman, president of itsy bitsy Entertainment Corp., can't get enough of those Teletubbies. 5. Judge Joe Brown, star of the Worldvision court show by same name, courts Lauren Ong, general manager of Fox's WTTG(TV) Washington. 6. Let's call them the Bayou City Bombers. CBS International is syndicating roller derby originally produced for TNN, CBS-owned cable network.



GET WITH THE PROGRAM

By Joe Schlosser

Moving into the mall

Pearson Television executives announced yesterday that *Christopher and Camilla at the Mall* will be produced out of the Palisades Center in West Nyack, N.Y. Pearson executives say they will spend more than \$1 million to build a state-of-the-art studio inside the shopping center. *Christopher and Camilla* debuts this fall in syndication.

Promark grows Garden shows

Promark Entertainment is distributing a series of specials from producer Film Garden Entertain-

ment. The shows include *Amazing Creations; The Extremists; Bright Lights, Big City; Women of the Cat Walk; The Spellbinders*, and *Histories Revealed and Reopened*.

Kaleidoscope teams with FAO Schwarz

Kaleidoscope Media Group has entered into a worldwide distribution agreement with specialty toy retailer FAO Schwarz and Abrams Gentile Entertainment to syndicate *FAO Schwarz Extraordinary Children*. The weekly half-hour live-action series premieres in January 2000.

The series and a one-

hour Thanksgiving special will recognize the accomplishments and talents of extraordinary children, ages 8 to 14.

"FAO Schwarz has a magical name the world over," said Henry Siegel, chairman/CEO of Kaleidoscope Media Group.

Poindexter heading Fox's programming

Roland Poindexter, VP, programming and development, Fox Kids Network, has been named VP, head of programming, replacing Carol Monroe, senior VP, programming, who has left the network to "pursue other opportunities."

What's shakin' with Shaka

Mini-series *Shaka Zulu: The Citadel*, starring David Hasselhoff, has begun production in Morocco. Kaleidoscope Media was selling the four-hour production at NATPE, along with two other minis, *Mia Mine Forever* and *The Diamond Hunters*.

Off-net opening

Twentieth Television executives announced last week at NATPE that they are opening off-network sales on *Dharma & Greg*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *The Practice*. *The Practice* and *Buffy* are available for fall 2001, while *Dharma & Greg* is being offered for 2002. Many of the stars of the three shows were on hand last week on the NATPE floor, including Jenna Elfman and Camryn Manheim.



STATION BREAK

By Dan Trigoboff

Bad break for Palm Beach cameraman

A break-in to a south Florida TV station van cost the station a \$45,000 camera and the photographer his job. Brent Strange, former news photographer for WPEC(TV) West Palm Beach, says he was fired after men dressed in business attire broke into the van and stole the camera while he and a reporter were having lunch in a Boca Raton restaurant. Station policy developed when numerous thefts made photographers responsible for cameras, Strange says, to discourage lax security. Strange says the van was locked and was equipped with a lock and cable set for the camera which were not in use at the time of the theft. Camera operators on call are encouraged to take cameras into their homes, he said. The van had an alarm, which went off, but that did not deter the thieves.

"I didn't follow the policy, and that's why I was fired," he acknowledges. Area police had warned TV stations and scores of crews flocking to south Florida for the Super Bowl that a South American crime family dealing in stolen TV equipment might be operating in the area. Strange says he was not aware of the warning until after the equipment had been taken. Station management could not be reached for comment.

Salt Lake City shooting victim dies

Anne Sleater, the AT&T employee shot Jan. 14

when an armed woman went on a shooting spree at KSL-TV Salt Lake City, died late last week at Latter Day Saints Hospital. Sleater, 30, had just returned from maternity leave and is survived by her baby and husband. The attacker scattered workers on the lower floors of the Triad Center, but after failing to get into the KSL-TV newsroom moved upstairs and fired in AT&T offices.

De-Kieu Duy, the woman arrested for shooting Sleater, was scheduled to be charged with aggravated murder.

Sports take center court in Detroit

WKBC(TV) Detroit has reworked its 10 p.m. news to feature sports for nearly half of the broadcast. The

station is among the last of Paramount-owned stations to air local evening news. The new "STV"—for Sports Television—will fill the last 25 minutes of the show, nearly twice its former length. The station says the change is intended to improve the program's performance by capitalizing on the station's role as home for the local Pistons, Red Wings and Tigers and is unrelated to news retrenchments at other Paramount stations. News Director Tom Bell says he will hire additional staff.

KING-KONG nudges Oprah

Belo's KING-TV Seattle will provide a 10 p.m. news broadcast for local marketing agreement (LMA) partner KING-TV Everett, Wash.

The time slot lost a potential competitor late last year when Paramount station KSTW(TV) shut down its news department. But KING-TV News Director Dave Lougee says KONG-TV can take advantage of

economies of scale that were not available to KSTW. "The economics are different when you already have a news staff," says Lougee, who joined the station from Washington's WRC-TV last September. KONG-TV's newscast not only will have the resources of KING-TV but also of several other Belo stations and Belo's regional news network, Northwest Cable News. Both KONG-TV and KING-TV will include regional reports.

The timing is good for an earlier broadcast. "As the population has moved outward," says Lougee, "Seattle is second only to Los Angeles as a town with commuting problems. Commutes have gotten longer; people go to bed earlier."

The time slot currently is filled by *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, whose broadcasts are rerun a week after their first airing on KING-TV. *Oprah* will air an hour earlier. The newscast was expected last year but was delayed by the departures of KING-TV News Director Eric Lerner to WLS-TV Chicago and Assistant News Director Valerie Feder to KIRO-TV Seattle.

■ Billings, Mont., television station KTVQ(TV) pleaded innocent to contempt of court charges issued when the station revealed information about a minor who was a sexual-assault victim. The station revealed the victim's age and relationship to a defendant charged with killing another girl, but not her name. (B&C, Jan. 18, page 111).

All news is local. Contact Dan Trigoboff at (301) 260-0923, fax, (202) 429-0651, or e-mail to dtrig@erols.com



Dave Johnson, former executive vice president of the Salt Lake City Olympic Committee, is shown through the lens of a camera carried by Charlie Ehlert, news photographer for KSTU-TV Salt Lake City. Ehlert and reporter Remi Barron (background) tried to question Johnson about his involvement in the Olympic scandal. Johnson took possession of the camera, but his wife Kim, anchor at KTVX(TV), returned it to Ehlert. Even though Johnson attacked the KSTU team, it was the station that took some heat in local editorials and comments. "This is a pretty conservative market," says News Director Geoffrey Roth. "Some people think it's better to be polite than to ask questions."

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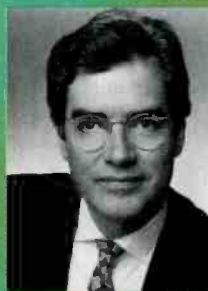
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Broadcast network prime-time ratings according to Nielsen Media Research



PEOPLE'S CHOICE

NBC held the top six slots this week, including its telecast of the Golden Globe Awards, helping the network to an easy Week 18 win.

Week 18	abc	CBS	NBC	FOX	U/PN	WB
	6.7/10	10.7/16	7.1/11	8.7/13	1.9/3	3.9/6
MONDAY	8:00 72. Champions of Magic 3 5.9/9	18. Cosby 10.0/15	46. Suddenly Susan 7.3/11	67. Melrose Place 6.3/10	110. Malcolm & Eddie 2.1/3	77. 7th Heaven 5.5/8
	8:30	15. King of Queens 10.2/15	63. Caroline in/City 6.4/10		113. Guys Like Us 1.7/2	
	9:00 52. ABC Monday Night Movie—What We Did That Night 7.0/11	8. Ev Lvs Raymd 12.5/18	69. Mad About You 6.1/9	10. Ally McBeal 11.1/16	111. The Sentinel 1.9/3	106. Buffy the Vampire Slayer 2.4/4
	9:30	9. Becker 11.2/16	80. Working 4.9/7			
10:00	15. L.A. Doctors 10.2/17	28. Dateline NBC 8.9/15				
10:30						
TUESDAY	8:00 16. Home Imprvmt 9.9/16	7.7/12	7.8/12	6.3/10	2.7/4	4.6/7
	8:30 29. Brother's Keeper 6.7/11	49. JAG 8.1/13	49. 3rd Rock fr/Sun 7.0/11	81. King of the Hill 5.8/9	100. Moesha 2.7/4	93. Buffy the Vampire Slayer 4.6/7
	9:00 President's State of the Union Address	President's State of the Union Address	President's State of the Union Address	President's State of the Union Address	110. Malcolm & Eddie 2.9/4	108. Felicity 4.6/7
	9:30				112. Between Brothers 2.9/4	
10:00	Republican Response	Republican Response	Republican Response	Republican Response		
10:30						
WEDNESDAY	8:00 22. Dharma & Greg 9.7/16	7.7/12	8.0/13	7.2/11	3.0/5	4.3/7
	8:30 46. Brithr's Keeper 7.3/11	73. The Nanny 5.8/9	13. Dateline NBC 10.4/17	50. Beverly Hills 90210 7.1/11	107. 7 Days 2.2/3	85. Dawson's Creek 4.6/7
	9:00 17. Drew Carey 10.1/15	79. Maggie Winters 5.2/8	83. Lateline 4.8/7	46. Party of Five 7.3/11	91. Star Trek: Voyager 3.8/6	90. Charmed 4.0/6
	9:30 32. Whose Line Is It 8.5/13	20. 60 Minutes II 9.9/15	80. Encore! Encore! 4.9/7			
10:00 23. 20/20 9.6/16	41. Chicago Hope 7.7/13	29. Law & Order 8.7/15				
10:30						
THURSDAY	8:00 4.2/7	8.3/13	17.4/28	6.6/10	1.4/2	3.1/5
	8:30 84. Vengeance Unlimited 4.7/7	24. Diagnosis Murder 9.4/15	2. Friends 16.8/26	55. World's Wildest Police Videos 6.9/11	115. UPN Thursday Night Movie—The Cyber-Stalking 1.4/2	94. Wayans Bros. 3.2/5
	9:00 93. Cupid 3.5/5	27. Turks* 9.0/14	5. Jesse 14.4/22	63. Fox Files 6.4/10		96. Jamie Foxx 3.1/5
	9:30		3. Frasier 16.5/25			96. Steve Harvey 3.1/5
10:00 88. ABC News: Crime & Justice 4.4/7	63. 48 Hours 6.4/11	6. Veronica's Clst 14.2/22			96. For Your Love 3.1/5	
10:30		1. ER 21.3/35				
FRIDAY	8:00 8.8/15	7.8/13	9.2/15	4.7/8	1.8/3	
	8:30 43. Two of a Kind 7.4/13	31. Kids/Darndest 8.6/15	11. Providence 10.7/18	92. Brimstone 3.7/6	113. Mariah Carey 1.7/3	
	9:00 29. Sabrina/Witch 8.7/14	55. Magnificent Seven 6.9/11	33. World Professional Figure Skating Championships 8.4/14	73. Millennium 5.8/10	111. Love Boat: The Next Wave 1.9/3	
	9:30 39. Brother's Keeper 7.9/13	38. Nash Bridges 8.0/14				
10:00 12. 20/20 10.5/18						
10:30						
SATURDAY	8:00 4.3/8	7.2/13	6.9/12	6.6/12	KEY: RANKING/SHOW TITLE/PROGRAM RATING/SHARE • TOP TEN SHOWS OF THE WEEK ARE NUMBERED IN RED • TELEVISION UNIVERSE ESTIMATED AT 99.4 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS; ONE RATINGS POINT IS EQUAL TO 994,000 TV HOMES • YELLOW TINT IS WINNER OF TIME SLOT • (NR)=NOT RANKED; RATING/SHARE ESTIMATED FOR PERIOD SHOWN • *PREMIERE • SOURCES: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH, CBS RESEARCH • GRAPHIC BY KENNETH RAY	
	8:30 80. ABC Saturday Night Movie—Hocus Pocus 4.9/9	71. Early Edition 6.0/11	78. The Pretender 5.3/9	69. Cops 6.1/11		
	9:00	46. Martial Law 7.3/12		43. Cops 7.4/13		
	9:30 94. Fantasy Island 3.2/6	35. Walker, Texas Ranger 8.3/15	40. World Professional Figure Skating Championships 7.8/13	61. AMW: America Fights Back 6.5/11		
10:00						
10:30						
SUNDAY	7:00 50. Wonderful World of Disney—A Sainly Switch 7.1/11	11.1/17	13.7/21	6.7/10	2.7/4	
	7:30	7. 60 Minutes 13.5/22	63. Dateline NBC 6.4/10	89. World's Funniest! 4.1/7	101. 7th Heaven Beginnings 2.8/5	
	8:00	18. Touched by an Angel 10.0/15		52. The Simpsons 7.0/11	101. Sister, Sister 2.8/4	
	8:30			59. That '70s Show 6.6/10	101. The Smart Guy 2.8/4	
	9:00 61. 20/20 6.5/9	13. CBS Sunday Movie—Outlaw Justice 10.4/16	4. The 55th Annual Golden Globe Awards 16.1/24	25. The X-Files 9.2/13	101. Zoe Dunc Jk&Jn 2.8/4	
	9:30				107. Unhap Ever After 2.2/3	
10:00 43. The Practice 7.4/12						
10:30						
WEEK AVG	6.8/11	8.8/14	10.4/17	6.7/11	2.1/3	3.6/6
STD AVG	8.4/14	9.2/15	8.9/15	7.1/12	2.0/3	3.2/5

Primestar bondholders make noise

In sale of company to Hughes, original Primestar partners get paid first

By John M. Higgins

Primestar Inc. bondholders are massing forces to compel the struggling satellite company to increase what bondholders receive from the deal to sell Primestar and satellite assets in Tempo to Hughes Electronics-DirecTV.

Hughes-DirecTV is paying \$1.82 billion—\$1.32 billion for Primestar and \$500 million for Tempo's 11 transponders and two satellites. The deal translates into less than \$1 a share for shareholders and roughly 67 cents on the dollar for bondholders.

The sticking point for bondholders is \$465 million going to Primestar's original partners: TCI Satellite Entertainment (TSAT), Time Warner/Advance Newhouse, MediaOne Group, Comcast and Cox. Bondholders contend that paying those partners ahead of bondholders is illegal, sources say.

"It's the allocation, stupid," says one source, intentionally misquoting a Clinton campaign slogan. "That's the bondholders' mantra."

Under different circumstances, DirecTV and Primestar might be able to

complete the deal and cope with any potential legal action later. But the sale hinges on a minimum of 90% of the bonds being tendered. As a result, bond-



holders have considerable leverage. They need simply to reject the tender offer to block the deal.

"Bondholders are somewhat confused as to why they're not getting paid more money here," says a member of the investment community who requested anonymity. "They're seeing \$500 million go out for Tempo assets and they don't understand why they should be taking a haircut. They see \$1.5 billion of debt, roughly, at Primestar and \$500 million leaving the company before they have a chance to get at it."

They also are unhappy about the \$6-\$7 per share Primestar's partners received during last April's restructuring even as they were piling more debt—about \$350 million—onto the company. The bondholders contend that Primestar's original partners have

consistently put their own interests ahead of all others and that divisiveness on Primestar's board thwarted last year's proposed deal that would have permitted Rupert Murdoch and ASkyB to acquire Primestar for \$2-\$4 a share.

Bondholders include First Allmerica Financial Life Insurance Co., Pacific Life CBO 1998-Ltd., Taras Financial Corp., Triton Partners, Canyon Capital Advisors and Magten Asset Management Corp.

The same group of bondholders asked the FCC to block the transfer of Tempo's 11 high-power transponder licenses from TSAT to Primestar until Primestar could achieve the financial stability to launch a high-power service. As a result of the DirecTV-Primestar deal, that issue may be moot. Since the deal was announced, DirecTV filed a request with the FCC to obtain the Tempo licenses.

Bondholders realize it's unlikely they will get a full return on the money they paid for Primestar (originally TSAT) bonds. "If Primestar is willing to work in good faith, then bondholders think a deal can be done pretty quickly," says a source familiar with the situation. "But time is of the essence." ■

Cable gives till it helps

By Paige Albiniak

Facing threats of unwanted legislation, the cable industry gave lawmakers 25% more money during the 1997-1998 mid-term campaign cycle than it did during the 1993-94 cycle, according to a report from Center for Responsive Politics.

Using data from the Federal Election Commission, CRP reports that cable gave \$3.7 million in 1997-98, up from \$3 million during the comparable period four years earlier.

In addition to cable, the CRP report looked at the campaign contributions of several industries actively lobbying Congress, including airlines, financial institutions, gaming, pharmaceuticals,

health care and oil and gas.

"As companies have legislation at stake that affects their bottom line, the more likely they are to make the political investment. As the stakes get higher, so do the campaign contributions," says Jennifer Shecter, the CRP researcher who put together the report.

For the report, CRP counted all political donations over \$200 by individuals, political action committees and corporations to federal campaigns, political parties and leadership committees.

The cable industry has several important battles to wage in Washington this Year. Cable operators' upper programming tiers are due to be deregulated at the end of March. But some

lawmakers are threatening to extend the sunset because they see no end to rate increases.

Cable also is trying to ward off legislation that would require them to carry all new digital TV stations. Cable argues that if Congress imposes digital must carry, systems will have to drop many cable networks—that is, unfairly discriminate against one group of programmers.

The top recipient of cable money in the Senate was Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.), top Democrat on the Senate Commerce Committee. Hollings took in \$137,260 in campaign contributions from cable companies.

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) was second with \$87,050. Senator Conrad Burns (R-Mont.), chairman of the Senate Communications Subcommittee, received \$82,650. ■

Court TV buys crime movie package

'Crime Time Movies' slotted for weekend prime time

By Donna Petrozello

Bouyed by its ratings success with *Homicide: Life on the Street*, Court TV will introduce its first general entertainment movies starting Feb. 6 under its new weekend movie block, Crime Time Movies.

Court TV has acquired a mix of classic and recent movie titles from Tribune Entertainment Company, among other studios. Titles include *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the *In the Line of Duty* movie series. Court TV intends to air movies in late-afternoon slots and primetime runs on Saturdays and Sundays, replacing several original programming specials, says Court TV president and chief executive Henry Schleiff.

Court TV has relatively short broadcast windows on the films, some of which last less than a year. Court TV expects to air two movies each weekend, or about 100 movies this year.

The movies are geared toward general audiences, but revolve around the "crime-and-punishment theme" says Schleiff. Other titles include *Criminal Behavior* and *Vendetta II*.

Adding movies is the latest step in Court's struggle to make its primetime more user-friendly for non-courtroom drama junkies.

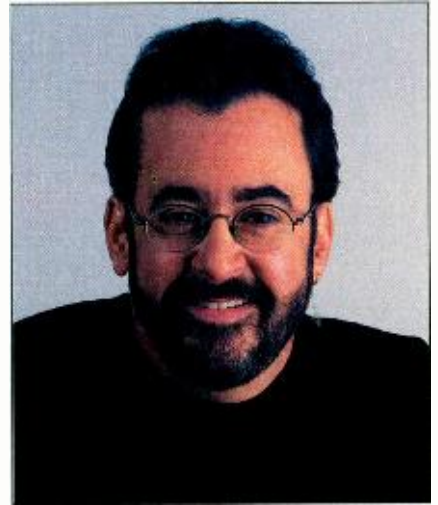
Schleiff, who took over Court TV in October, opened up the channel to

crime-related, general entertainment fare last year by acquiring rights to *Homicide: Life on the Street* from NBC Productions. Court TV debuted the series in a marathon stunt on New Year's Day that netted the network an average .6 household rating for the day, a 500% increase compared to a year ago.

Likewise, *Homicide* has been a ratings boon for Court, averaging a .3 household rating in primetime, a 145% increase over Court's 1998 primetime average, since the series debut in strip form on Jan. 4, according to Court based on Nielsen data. Schleiff adds that, based on Nielsen ratings, *Homicide* ranks fourth in an index of viewers-per-viewing household among adults ages 18-49 in the 9 p.m. slot so far this quarter.

"Coming off our success with *Homicide*, it shows people have embraced the concept of a fictional drama on Court TV," says Schleiff. "The movies will help Court TV own the crime-and-punishment genre and increase the broad appeal of the network."

Court TV plans to surround premieres of feature films on weekends with replays of some of its original primetime weeknight programming "to bring attention to our original fare," says Schleiff. Court TV already surrounds *Homicide* with its original series in an



'Snap Judgment,' an original series on Court TV, gets Lionel, a former on-air host at WABC(AM) in New York.

effort to boost audience share.

However, within the next several weeks, Court TV will begin finessing its weeknight primetime schedule. *Johnnie Cochran Tonight* will move to 7 p.m. to anchor the weeknight news block. Court debuts *Snap Judgment* at 7:30 p.m., rather than at 8 p.m. as Schleiff had planned late last year.

Snap Judgment is a new original series for the network, which follows cases filed in small claims court and stars host Lionel, formerly an on-air host at WABC(AM) New York.

At 8 p.m. leading into *Homicide*, Court debuts a new series *Fatal Attractions*, a crime-based original documentary series. Court will continue its gavel-to-gavel courtroom coverage on weekdays, says Schleiff. With the debut of new weeknight series, Court TV will approach a schedule that is 75% to 85% original programming by March 1, says Schleiff. ■

Unhappy returns for Comcast

Uncharacteristically low profit on sale of cellular unit 'not what we're used to'

By John M. Higgins

After hitting it big with other non-cable investments, Comcast Corp.'s planned sale of its cellular unit is generating a far more mediocre return.

The \$1.7 billion sale of Comcast Cellular to SBC Communications Inc. is expected to yield cash proceeds of \$400 million, with SBC assuming \$1.3 billion

in debt. But Comcast bought most of the operation from Metromedia Corp. in 1992 for \$1.3 billion after paying \$200 million for a smaller slice in 1988. Looking at the key measure for the success of an investment internal rate of return, or IRR, on equity invested, that's not much of a gain.

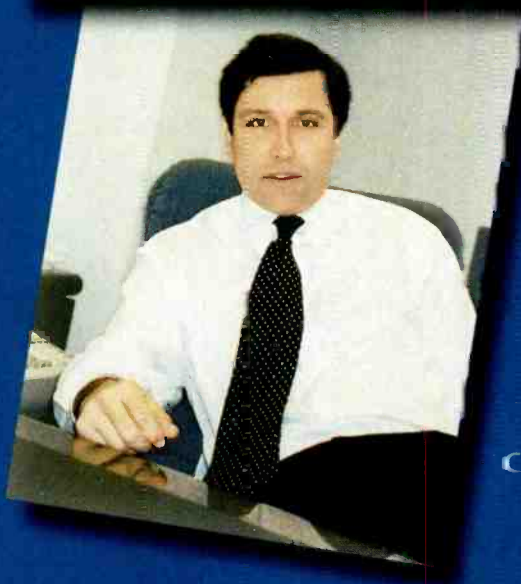
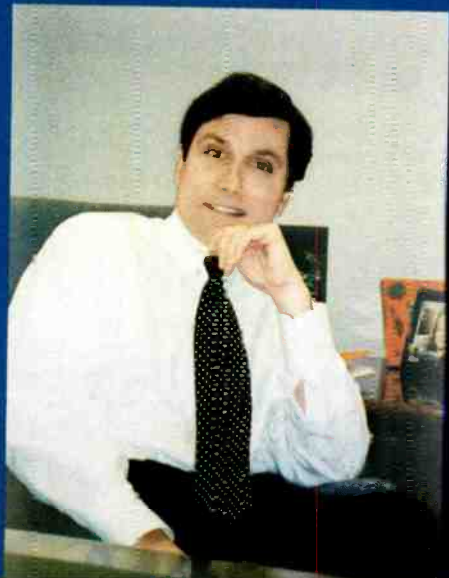
Comcast didn't directly invest equity in the venture, instead borrowing against cable and cellular assets before restructuring Comcast Cellular as a separate entity.

But media analyst Richard Bilotti of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter estimates the IRR of Comcast's cellular operation at roughly 7% annualized.

That's about half of the S&P 500 stock average over the same period and far less than the 30%-35% return that institutional investors expect from such risky ventures.

Comcast Treasurer John Alchin won't disclose the rate of return, but acknowl-

“One of the best parts of my day is reading the morning newspapers. I love keeping up to date on politics, current events and business.”



**Stephen B.
Burke**

President,
Comcast Cable
Communications Inc.

Member,
C-SPAN Board
of Directors

“I am the oldest of four kids. We grew up in the suburbs of New York, but I’ve also lived in Los Angeles and Paris. My father and one of my brothers have also been in the television business. My father taught me by example that you could have a successful career and a good family life. I’ve tried to do that, although I work longer hours than he did. And, we have five children, so I’m one up on him.”

“I met my wife Gretchen at Colgate the first week of freshman year. We both went on to Harvard Business School. This year, she ran the Philadelphia Marathon to celebrate moving to the area; I’ll bet she was the only mother of five who finished the race.”

“I majored in history but always knew I wanted to be in business. I like working with people and creating things. Until recently, I spent most of my career at the Walt Disney Company which was a perfect place to build new businesses. I started The Disney Stores and after five years, was sent to help turn around Euro Disney in Paris. One of my ‘life moments’ was when I was in Paris and Michael Eisner called to say Disney had bought Capital Cities/ABC. After the deal went through, I moved to New York as President of ABC Broadcasting.”

“I heard from a headhunter who said he was calling for Brian Roberts. I don’t usually take those kinds of calls, but I knew about Comcast because of Bill Gates’ investment. I also admired Brian and Ralph Roberts and the way they do business. Cable has such a bright future that it’s hard to imagine a more exciting place to be. Comcast is in great shape and has many capable people, and I look forward to helping the company capitalize on new opportunities.”

“One of the best parts of my day is reading the morning newspapers. I love keeping up with politics, current events and business. Having lived in France, I’m convinced that our form of government is the best in the world, even on a bad day!”

“I serve on C-SPAN’s Board because the cable industry has made an important contribution to the country by providing it. C-SPAN is one of cable’s ways of giving something back to the communities we serve.”

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edges that "it's not what we're used to."

Comcast's cellular operation has long been an afterthought to Wall Street analysts and traders. Over the past three years, the most frequently asked question has been when the company would sell.

Comcast Cellular has 850,000 customers in metro Philadelphia where the MSO also has a strong cable presence. Comcast's only cellular operation was in the market, but competition has made a national footprint critical as competitors AT&T and Sprint PCS offer wireless calls for one price with no long-distance or roaming charges. San Antonio-based SBC serves 6.5 million cellular subscribers in 16 states and Washington. SBC will pay \$400 million in cash and assume \$1.3 billion in debt.

Comcast didn't actually lose money. But the low profit is notable because of the company's tremendous success over the past few years. It was Comcast that triggered the huge rise in cable stocks by luring Microsoft Corp. into investing \$1 billion for a 10% stake in the MSO in June 1997. That ratified cable operators' boasts about high-speed Internet service; the sudden credibility translated into the doubling, then quadrupling, of MSO share prices. Comcast was part of an MSO consortium that acquired control of competitive local phone company Teleport Communications Group, owning 17% of TCG's stock. When they sold to AT&T Corp. last year, Comcast received \$1.8 billion of AT&T stock, a 10-fold gain. As a bonus, AT&T's stock price subsequently has risen 80%.

The company's 14.5 million shares of At Home Corp., acquired as part of an affiliation deal with the company now are worth \$1.5 billion. Cost: about \$8 million.

Even Comcast's slow exit from Sprint PCS generated a better return—about 30%. When Sprint PCS hit the rocks last year, the MSO stepped down to a non-voting position.

Cellular is different. Comcast bought a small operation, Amcell, in 1988 for

some \$200 million. Amcell's license covered 2.5 million "pops," cellular-speak for the number of people living in the coverage area. That's about \$80 per pop, a price that would soon prove a bargain as cellular systems began generating serious revenue. Metrophone, acquired from John Kluge's Metromedia Corp., added another 5 million pops



at \$260 per pop. The operation was financed as a stand-alone entity; Comcast didn't have to pump in new equity as it built the system, and Comcast Cellular spent more than \$500 million over the years.

Cellular had many of the financial characteristics of cable. Initial years require heavy capital for cell sites and phone switches but that tapers off, and improved coverage draws subscribers. As in cable, customer churn is a problem but unlike cable, heavy marketing

costs eat cash.

Comcast executives figured that its big cable concentration in the market would allow them to readily and cheaply cross-promote cellular through local ads and direct-mail pitches to cable subscribers. The sale, Alchin says, "was in some measure at least an acknowledgement that the strategic fit between cable and cellular became less evident." Opening its own chain of retail stores, for example, became important to cellular sales and service.

When it bought the operation, Comcast didn't have much competition. The FCC granted only two licenses per market. But the competitive heat was turned up as licenses for cellular-like PCS services were granted, and Nextel—initially backed by Comcast—employed new technology using existing mobile radio spectrum.

"It used to be a duopoly," Alchin says. "The business changed, and there now are five or six competitors in every market." ■



CABLE'S TOP 25

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

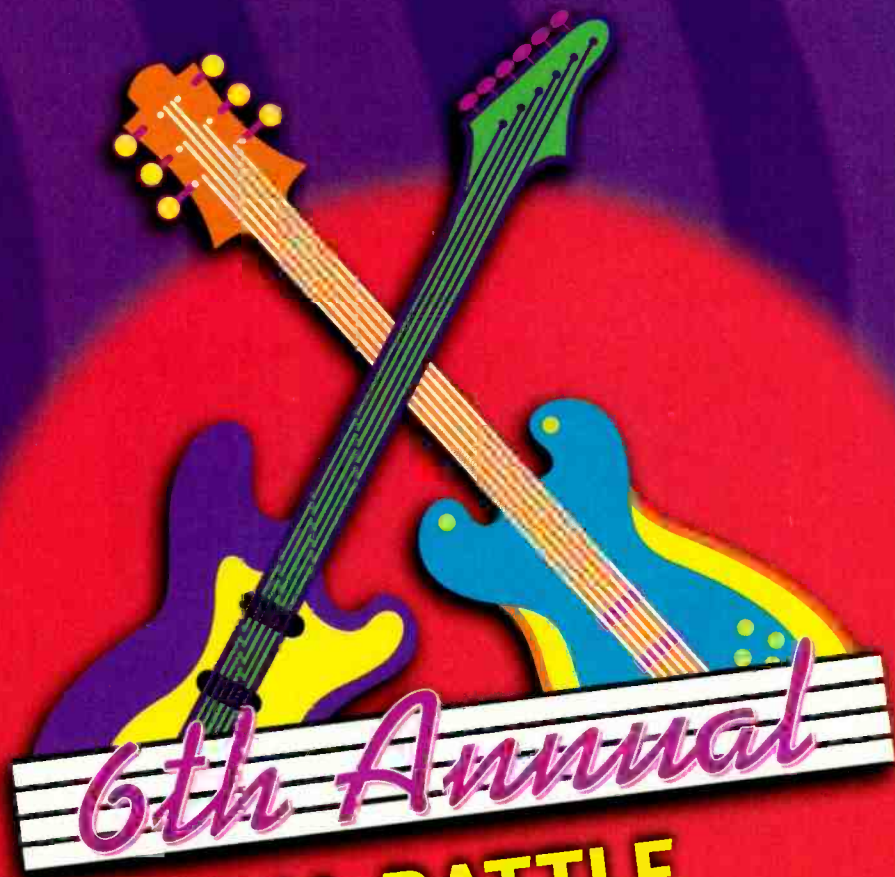
Nickelodeon's popular kiddie series 'Rugrats' drew the top three spots last week. It placed 12 times overall.

Following are the top 25 basic cable programs for the week of Jan. 18-24, ranked by rating. Cable rating is coverage area rating within each basic cable network's universe; U.S. rating is of 98 million TV households. Sources: Nielsen Media Research, Turner Entertainment.

Rank	Program	Network	Day	Time	Duration	Rating	Cable U.S.	HHs (000)	Cable Share
1	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	8:00P	30	6.4	4.8	4770	9.2
1	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	7:30P	30	6.4	4.8	4764	9.6
3	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	7:00P	30	6.2	4.6	4585	9.7
4	WWF Wrestling	USA	Mon	10:00P	65	5.8	4.4	4383	9.2
4	WCW Monday Nitro	TNT	Mon	8:00P	60	5.8	4.4	4339	8.2
6	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	6:30P	30	5.5	4.1	4070	9.1
7	WWF Wrestling	USA	Mon	9:00P	60	5.3	4.0	4010	7.4
8	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	6:00P	30	5.1	3.8	3803	9.1
9	WWF Wrestling	USA	Sun	7:00P	60	4.8	3.6	3588	7.3
9	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	5:30P	30	4.8	3.6	3578	9.2
11	WCW Monday Nitro	TNT	Mon	9:00P	60	4.5	3.4	3400	6.2
11	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	5:00P	30	4.5	3.4	3376	9.4
11	Movie: 'Ultimate Deception'	USA	Tue	9:00P	120	4.4	3.3	3280	6.5
13	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	4:30P	30	4.4	3.3	3279	10.0
13	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	3:30P	30	4.4	3.3	3259	10.8
16	WCW Monday Nitro	TNT	Mon	10:00P	64	4.3	3.3	3262	6.8
16	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	4:00P	30	4.3	3.2	3215	10.3
18	WCW Thunder	TBS	Thu	9:05P	67	4.2	3.3	3242	6.4
18	South Park	CMDY	Wed	10:00P	30	4.2	2.4	2374	6.6
20	Movie: 'Total Recall'	TBS	Sun	5:40P	145	4.1	3.2	3146	7.2
20	WCW Thunder	TBS	Thu	8:05P	60	4.1	3.1	3121	6.3
22	Rugrats	NICK	Mon	3:00P	30	4.0	3.0	2992	10.5
23	Movie: 'Dirty Dancing'	TNT	Sun	7:00P	120	3.9	2.9	2919	5.7
24	Movie: 'Dirty Dancing'	TNT	Sun	9:00P	120	3.7	2.8	2751	5.3
24	Rugrats	NICK	Sat	8:00P	30	3.7	2.8	2746	6.3

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Graphics get high-tech look

Sophisticated new computer-based broadcast systems are now affordable

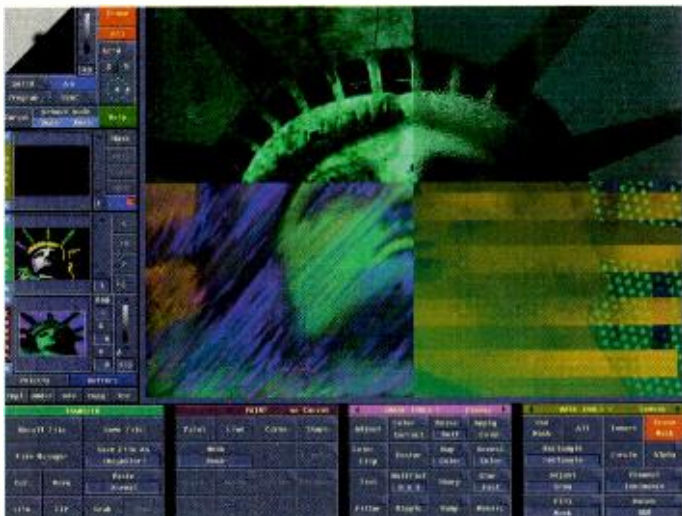
By Margot Suydam

For years broadcast graphics have been generated using dedicated hardware. But more and more, the process of creating the kind of animated graphics seen nowadays is moving toward computer-based systems. This development, first seen in news and sports programming at top-tier networks, is the result of several factors. With broadcasters always looking for new ways to differentiate themselves from the competition, sophisticated 3-D graphics have become a standard element of sports and news broadcasts. And with computer-based graphics already in place at most stations, broadcast design has become a live-to-air reality, now that the equipment can meet the speed requirements of real-time delivery.

Fueling the growth in computer-based broadcast graphics systems is digital television (DTV). With more digital stations, there has been a push for affordable broadcast graphics systems. Some graphics software developers use systems based on lower-cost Silicon Graphics, Inc. (SGI) and Windows NT computers, which have become the entry-level platforms of choice. Others use traditional suppliers of dedicated hardware systems—whose real-time performance has, until now, been hard to beat.

"With the most recent generation of our O2, Octane or Onyx products—which were all introduced in the past year—we're at a point where we can render just about any broadcast graphic in real-time," says Shawn Underwood, marketing manager for broadcast graphics at Silicon Graphics, Inc., in Mountain View, Calif. "This constitutes a new phase for us where we can now actively pursue the broadcast business."

Underwood points to new template-based broadcast graphics products such



Chyron's Liberty Paint and Animation offers the power needed by high-end facilities for cutting-edge video and film and runs on SGI and Windows NT platforms; also available for HDTV.

as Peak System's Everest and Discreet Logic's Frost, both of which have recently made inroads into on-air network news and sports programming.

"Last year's elections were a real turning point," he says. "For the first time, the majority of broadcast graphics in the elections—which are probably the most mission-critical thing a news operation can do—were more 3-D than 2-D. The whole point of a graphic is to give viewers information and to catch their attention. Three-D surpasses 2-D in both those aspects," says Underwood. "And template-based graphics systems allow stations to design a look that is dependent on data."

According to SGI's Underwood, the new template-based graphics systems are resolution-independent and thus provide an upgrade path to DTV.

"Most TV stations not only have to come to grips with putting out HDTV graphics with a different aspect ratio and resolution, but also have to put out a [NTSC] graphic and generate content for their Website," he says. "The beauty of template graphics is that the design element is a template and the playback engine can output any resolution you want."

Last month, SGI launched a line of

Windows NT-based workstations, which Underwood says will give middle- and small-market stations an opportunity to invest in computer-based systems. "There is a convergence of the requirement to do DTV and an understanding and knowledge that 3-D graphics are essential to keep a viewer interested, along with the price performance of NT," he says. "This is driving a change in the look of broadcast graphics."

Starting at a list price of \$3,395, the Silicon Graphics 320 visual workstation will begin shipping this February. The Silicon Graphics 540 visual workstation will begin shipping in the second quarter of 1999, starting at \$5,995.

Peak performance

Andy Johnston, sales and marketing director for Peak Systems, Inc., the Munich, Germany-based developer of Everest, agrees that computer-based systems offer a new level of flexibility. "Clearly DTV is one consideration, since broadcasters will have to output variable DTV formats," he says. "Also, as they get more channels, they'll need to automate the production of graphics. But to grab attention, broadcasters are interested in eye candy on the screen."

CBS News used Everest to generate live-to-air graphics for its 1998 election results. And the network has also used the system for its HDTV NFL coverage.

"Everest has three parts," Johnston says. "The design environment enables broadcast designers to build what they want without techies in between. It plugs into other data sources, offers very good text handling for character generator-type work, and is a full 3-D real-time system. Next is the production environment, where rendering power is important. And the third part is external control, where Sherpa, a PC-based system,

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retrieves and assembles data into on-air templates and controls the on-air playout of Everest." Peak's software graphics package using the SGI O2 platform starts at \$40,000. At the high end, the company's HD graphics package for the Onyx platform is \$120,000.

In like Flint

Discreet Logic has been a leader in bringing computer-based systems to broadcast graphics. Fox Sports recently chose Discreet Logic's Frost to enhance its NFL football graphics for the network's Sunday studio show.

"That Fox selected Frost for such a highly rated program validates our fundamental belief that open computer platforms are ready to replace traditional broadcast character generator and DVE devices," says John Spencer, director of broadcast at Montreal-based Discreet Logic.

With the company's Feb. 5th announcement of a new Flint, Discreet Logic now offers a resolution-independent non-compressed compositing system and design tool for creating video effects for second-tier market broadcasters. At NAB '98, Discreet announced that the original Flint would be retired. With the rise of Windows NT-based systems Effect and Paint, Discreet essentially passed on the mantle to its lower-priced graphics product, Effect Option 3, which uses the SGI O2 platform. Almost a year later, Discreet is relaunching Flint with nearly the full Flame 6.0 toolset at a price of \$125,000. Running on the SGI Octane SE desktop workstation, Flint is a single-CPU workstation. The packaging is turnkey with an aim toward price-performance, reliability, real-time I/O and support.

"By always searching for new looks, post-production has driven broadcast graphics," says Discreet Logic's Mark Nadeau, director of product marketing, advanced systems. "Broadcasters, however, did not take to Effect Option 3, because it didn't have the throughput and

real-time speed they required, so we've come out with Flint, which provides the necessary speed. Frost fits into the broadcast design and promotional departments needs, offering the benefits of open architecture."

Avid targets broadcast design

Industry Specialist Maurice Patel, at Tewksbury, Mass.-based Avid Technology, Inc., agrees that computer-based graphics tools are making inroads into the broadcast market with the availability of more affordable options.

"For several years, we have been trying to woo broadcasters away from dedicated hardware," he says. "Obviously there were performance issues at the beginning, and one had to buy expensive systems. Today, SGI's Octane and O2 are very price-friendly solutions in the uncompressed but open digital environment."

Avid offers a line of graphics products—Illusion, Matador and Marquee—targeted to broadcast design departments. "Matador is a resolution-independent system for video-based paint-like work, but on an open platform," says Patel. "As a result, Matador has been used by many broadcasters. It's like a traditional paint system, but offers a lot more with macros and Photoshop-style effects. Illusion is newer to the broadcast environment because a growing number of broadcasters are doing visual effects work. Digital systems allow them to experiment more." Marquee is a new 3-D logo and text generator, which runs on both Windows NT and SGI workstations.

Hardware dedication

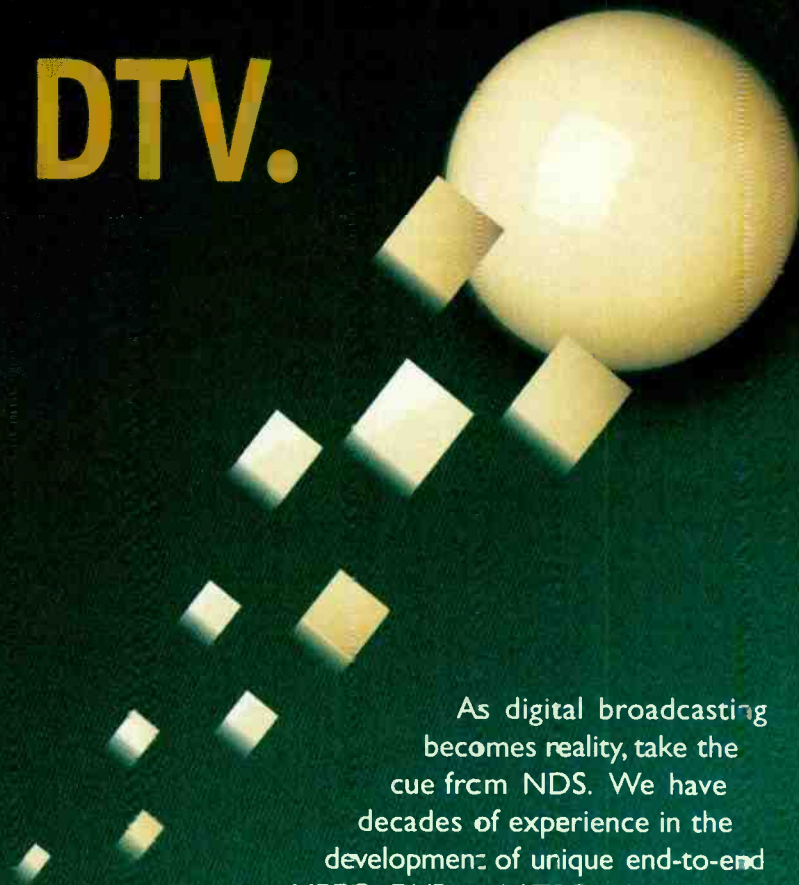
Darien, Conn.-based Quantel, a leading player in the area of dedicated hardware graphics systems, has developed more creative options by incorporating Java software language into its graphics products. With Java, plug-ins from third-party vendors can be used. Recently, Quantel also focused its energies on bringing affordable graphics solutions to middle- and small-market broadcasters.

"We have a huge amount of equipment in markets ranking 1 to 30," says Paul Nicholls, Quantel's marketing manager for graphics. "We're now targeting lower-ranked stations, with Paintbox Esprit, which is an affordable but fully featured Paintbox. For the first time it offers a price point to stations who don't have the same budgets as the big boys." Paintbox Esprit starts at \$45,000, and can cost as much as \$64,000 fully configured.

Quantel also provides affordable 3-D graphics with Paintbox F.A.T., a Paintbox

1. Pinnacle's TypeDeko graphics system offers high-end character generation and is Windows NT-based.
2. Quantel's Paintbox F.A.T. has a full toolset that can create graphic animation over live action.
3. Pinnacle's DVEXTREME offers real-time digital video effects.
4. Peak's Everest software graphics system allows broadcast designers to build without the techies.
5. Inscribe offers a Windows NT-based character generator (CG) that's designed for direct-to-air broadcast.

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with a full toolset to create graphic animation over live action. Paintbox F.A.T. costs \$136,000. "With DTV there will be more and more channels. And stations are going to have to buy into the fact that the millennium is just around the corner and that the Olympics are next year," Nicholls observes. "If they don't have a source graphic machine that can cut it in terms of speed when it goes to air, they'll be left behind."

The best of both worlds

Roi Agneta is executive vice president of strategic planning at Chyron Corp., which manufactures the Infinit character generator, the industry standard dedicated graphics system. But Agneta acknowledges the benefits of computer-based systems. "For years, broadcast graphic design and promo departments have tracked post-production, and have gone to open architecture systems," he says. "More design-oriented [departments] tend to hire a Photoshop operator as opposed to a Chyron or Paintbox operator. Broadcasters tend to not make big changes. But as new ways of doing things came into the broadcast design area, they eventually found their way to the rest of the facility.

"Traditional companies like Chyron and Quantel, however, built single-purpose gear which was highly specialized and developed around broadcast applications, although built around computer technology," he continues. "The good part of that was that you got incredible performance."

Chyron now offers Duet, a 2D-3D video processing engine that combines real-time performance with the Windows NT open computing platform at an affordable price. "We haven't changed our philosophy but technology has allowed us to do this," Agneta says. "Duet offers the best of both worlds where a purpose-built video engine performs in real time, but to the user it looks just like a PC."

Duet can be configured as a standard digital for \$39,900 or high definition workstation for \$69,900. Chyron's new Lyric application running on Duet HD provides the HDTV-CG solution. Resolution-independent, Duet features Chyron Abstraction Layer (CAL), a network interface API that provides hardware

independence and a programming environment for development of third party applications to interact with Chyron hardware platforms.

"We wanted to build a DTV platform," Agneta says. "Duet will handle any of the ATSC [Advanced Television Systems Committee] resolutions simply by changing the video card. Also, Duet has a much richer interface for automation systems, so it's much easier to interface to newsroom, election, or sports reporting systems."

CG does Windows

Another maker of Windows NT-based character generators is Pinnacle Systems Inc., based in Mountain View, Calif. The company's CG FXDeko provides a wide selection of render-free effects, looks, and character animation in 3D space for live on-air broadcasts.

"It's a revolutionary technology that gives the user real-time digital video effects per character on the screen, generating graphics that would have been impractical to complete on traditional CG systems," says Bob Wilson, vice president and general manager of Pinnacle's broadcast products group. "As recently as three years ago, users needed an SGI Onyx-class solution or better to rival the level of sophisticated 3D effects found in FXDeko," says Wilson. "The FXDeko graphics represent a new generation of tools that interact in real time with the user, allowing creativity to play a greater role in newsroom automation and high-pressure production situations."

The FXDeko starts at \$40,000 and goes up to \$50,000 fully configured.

Inscriber Technology Corp., in Waterloo, Canada, also offers a Windows NT-

based character generator, CG/Xtreme. Designed for direct-to-air television broadcast, CG/Xtreme can create multiple-layer animations consisting of text, logos, and drawn objects and play these back in real time, complete with full traveling linear key channel. Recently, Inscriber announced an HDTV version of CG/Xtreme, which will include support for the GG-160 HDTV frame-buffer currently being developed for the NT platform by Astro Design of Japan. The list price for CG/Xtreme is \$3,695 for just the software. The price for the HDTV version, which is scheduled to be released at NAB '99 in April, is not yet available.

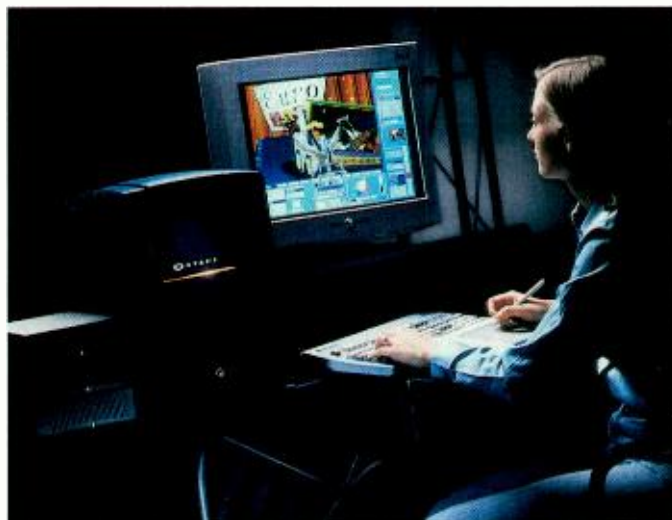
"Our customers have begun to ask for an HDTV-ready CG solution," says Inscriber's Director of Development Bob Nieboer. "By including support for Astro Design's HDTV frame-buffer, Inscriber customers will have the option of using CG/Xtreme for 16:9 output at either 1080i or 720p resolutions."

Creating that HDTV look

Jeff Cavins, executive VP at Jaleo in Atlanta, agrees that broadcast clients are asking for DTV solutions such as the Jaleo line of graphics workstations. "Broadcasters are launching DTV initiatives, and they are creating new kinds of looks with new branding," he says. "We've had success selling our systems to companies that do design work for broadcasters to help them with this new look and feel. The price for the new equipment is not trivial, so many broadcasters will not want to buy in the first round." Graphics systems based on a SGI O2 platform start at \$55,000. There are two packages available for the Octane platform—one is \$129,000 and the second is \$210,000. For Onyx, the graphics package is \$400,000.

Boston Fox affiliate WFXT(TV), however, just bought a Jaleo to do on-air graphics and design.

Cavins attributes Jaleo's success to its ability to output both 601 and HDTV in all formats. "Some broadcasters are very interested in having a look that will be similar to its standard definition (SDTV) and HDTV broadcasts," he explains. "Right now there is no way to do HDTV design graphics with any speed. With our system, one can do HDTV graphic design, and deliver that to a broadcaster along with a 601 version." ■



Avid's Matador operates like a traditional paint system but offers more macros and Photoshop-like effects.

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Super Bowl heats up with Frost

Fox goes to extremes for game coverage with Discreet Logic

SPECIAL REPORT

By Karen Anderson

This year Fox didn't want the Super Bowl just to look good when the Denver Broncos faced the Atlanta Falcons. Since it was in Miami, Fox wanted it to look as hot and colorful as the city itself. That meant pulling out its best equipment long before the broadcast.

To give the broadcast a "Miami flair," Fox graphics producer Eric Shanks says, they decided to incorporate an art deco look, neon and palm trees in its graphics packages. Fox fired up its Discreet Logic Frost 3D graphics and character generator system, which it has been using since the beginning of the season, for pregame and game-time animations and character generation. "[Frost] adds a lot of dimension," says Fox Vice President of Graphic Design Gary Hartley.

The Frost complements the Chyron Infinit character generator and Max graphics system, which have become staples of the Fox network. "Our Chyron was designed to look three-dimensional so that as technology like Frost develops over the next few years, we can actually implement these 3D animations," says Shank. Fox accomplishes the 3D Chyron look by building packages on Kinetix 3D Studio Max software and transferring them to the Infinit.

For the broadcast, Frost worked in tandem with a Stone FS disk array with

162 MB of storage for moving 3D animations. Frost also allowed Fox to expand its "Fox Box," the graphic score card that appears in the upper left corner



Digital Dimension of Los Angeles animated this year's Super Bowl opening.

of the screen, by transforming it into larger graphic elements. A Tektronix Profile was linked to an Infinit for moving Chyron graphics. This permitted Fox to create elaborate pregame graphics packages with special effects, such as those in its opening, designed by Fox senior designer Carlos Aguero.

The package incorporates a huge blimp carrying the Vince Lombardi trophy to the stadium. "Everything is way out of scale. You start at this 'CIA-looking' platform out in the ocean, over the hotels to the stadium," Hartley explains. "Our goal was to make the event seem even bigger, like we were attacking Miami."

Los Angeles-based post-production house Digital Dimension animated the

package with Kinetix 3D Studio Max and Eyeon Digital Fusion. SeaScape, a software plug-in by Thinktank for Driftwood, helped create a realistic-looking animation that opens the segment.

Fox also decided to do something completely different and ground-breaking—literally—for the starting lineup. Using live-action special effects that incorporate video and graphics similar to virtual advertising insertion technology, Aguero designed a package in which a hydraulic door appears to lift out of the end zone and the players shoot up from the door.

"If the starting lineup looks the way it always looked during the game, then it didn't work," Shanks notes, describing what he hopes will be the lineup introductions, a week before the game.

During the game, Frost handled the "Fox Box" update information. "Graphics that we used to do as lower-third keyables off Chyron we now do as a matter of business in the 'Fox Box,' things like down and distance, length of a drive, [and] time-outs," Hartley says.

While graphics are an integral part of the game, they shouldn't get in the way of the game itself, Shanks stresses. "We work really hard with the producer and director of the game to make sure that the implementation of these graphics is very comfortable for them, so they don't really have to think about getting them in," he explains. "It has to add to the game, not detract from the game because the game is the whole reason that we're there." ■

Image consultants

Creating name 'brand' recognition with graphics systems

By Karen Anderson

Ideas may be the biggest force behind creating an identifiable network image, but they can't transform that image onto the screen without the Henrys, Flames and After Effects of a graphics system. To do that, the industry's top branding design firms use graphics tools to create logos, promotional spots and campaigns for networks, stations, and even television shows.

"The tools are getting much easier,

cheaper, faster, and better," says Pittard-Sullivan CEO and founder Billy Pittard. "We like that."

Quantel's Henry effects editor is a powerhouse for difficult projects, he says. "It's our No. 1 technological tool. It's got tremendous power. And the things that we do often, it does real well."

The company is upgrading its two Henry-effects editors to the "Quantel Infinity" package with new editing, archiving and audio capabilities.

According to Pittard, not only is it



Pittard-Sullivan used Flame to give this spot for Turkish TV a "magical" look.

important to have the right tools, but to match those tools to the right project. "We look at every project on an individual basis. We are not married to any technique," he says.

The firm has just completed a pack-

SPECIAL REPORT

age for a Turkish network, TGRT, using Discreet Logic Flame. "There is a very magical look to it," says Pittard. "There are a lot of special effects in it, and that's what Flame excels in," he says.

But it's not just the super-powered SGI-based effects platforms that carry the load. "We're big users of Macintosh [G3]. We have hundreds of the little suckers," Pittard says.

He says he loves working with Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and After Effects software running on Macs. The firm used After Effects on ABC's latest ad campaign, "We Love TV."

New York-based TZ—a graphics post-production firm formerly named Telegen—is looking ahead to HDTV as an even more dynamic medium. The com-

pany credits resolution-independent systems with making HDTV graphics creation possible. TZ uses a number of SGI-based resolution-independent systems including Discreet Logic's Flame and Inferno and Alias/Wavefront's Maya software. "The open architecture and the resolution-independence means we don't have to worry about designing for the millennium," says creative director Iain Greenway.

TZ last year bought an SGI InfiniteReality workstation "loaded with extra memory" to handle HDTV graphics creation, says TZ technical director Joe Shingelo.

The company has already used it for several HDTV projects including an HBO campaign created in 16:9 wide-screen format with 2000 lines of resolution. HBO's HDTV channel is sched-

uled to begin March 6. The spot will also run in NTSC format with the sides shaved down for 4:3 use.

Los Angeles-based Novocom has just completed work on a new station logo for NBC's Dallas O&O, KXAS-TV. Novocom used SGI Octane-based Alias/Wavefront Maya software and a Mac G3 with Photoshop and Illustrator for animation. Discreet Logic Flame added organic lighting and Quantel Henry handled compositing.

"We choose the equipment based upon how we are trying to define the station," says Novocom art director Gilbert Haslam. "We created special effects that accented and dressed up the 3D we did for KXAS-TV." ■

Small market, F.A.T. graphics

KPSB-TV buys lower-priced Paintbox system

By Karen Anderson

When Paducah, Ky., NBC affiliate KPSB-TV began looking at new graphics systems two years ago, it didn't even consider Quantel, which was known for its Henry and Hal systems and had always catered to broadcasters and production facilities with high-end graphics needs and generous budgets.

But then a Quantel representative told them about the Paintbox F.A.T. animation system. Now with its newly packaged lower-priced system, the company—along with KPSB-TV—is trying to show that a smaller-market station can afford big-time graphics systems by installing its own Paintbox F.A.T.

The station had been using an Ampex AVA graphics system for 12 years. And while the old equipment had served them well, Ampex stopped supporting the product about nine years ago. Also, the software is slow, says station production manager Chuck Voss. "It takes cigarette breaks."

KPSB-TV Senior Art Director Janice Crosno and assistant Grant Hughes will use the Paintbox mainly for graphics on its four daily newscasts. Crosno and Hughes do a lot of local commercial and promotional production for the "hyphenated" market, which also serves the Cape Girardeau, Mo. and Harrisburg-Mount Vernon, Ill. areas.

"The two are generating dozens of graphics a day. But they have been held



KPSB-TV Art Director Janice Crosno tests the new Quantel Paintbox F.A.T. system.

back by the limitations of the equipment coupled with the news deadlines, and commercial production had suffered for it," he says. "Faster equipment is going to mean more graphics per hour, and the Quantel is going to mean better graphics per hour too," says Voss, noting that the station is in the process of changing over to Paintbox.

Before learning about the newly packaged F.A.T. system, the station considered buying a Silicon Graphics O2-based Avid Matador or Chyron Liberty. It even considered moving to a Mac-based desktop publishing system, says Voss. But he felt the desktop publishing system had too many uncertainties, while Crosno felt the Avid and Chyron systems did not have enough of the same features and functionality as the Ampex AVA.

"We're excited," says Crosno, who just began testing the new system. "The resolution and the speed of the work we're getting out of it is great so far," she says.

"It will give me more versatility than I've had, so it will allow us to do things we could not do before. My main concern is how it looks and it looks great."

The station has also ordered a Pictureframe still-store system to work with the Paintbox. It will replace an Ampex ESS electronic still-store the station has been using since 1985. "[The EES] has been a great piece of equipment so we were hesitant. We didn't want to unplug it until we could find something to replace it with completely."

The Pictureframe is a single-user, multi-output still-store unit based on Quantel's higher-end Picturebox. It offers the station a higher-resolution output for graphics packages than its old Ampex system.

"It made sense to upgrade both ends," Voss notes. "Viewers hopefully will visibly notice a difference in quality. The detail will be much more sharp and crisp than what we are now delivering."

The station spent a quarter of a million dollars for both pieces—\$140,000 for the F.A.T. and the \$110,000 for the Pictureframe.

While KPSB-TV has no immediate plans to begin broadcasting HDTV, Voss says he is looking forward to it and believes the Quantel gear will eventually help make the transition. "That is one of reasons we were still living with 1985 and 1987 technology," he explains. "Since I got here in 1987, they've been saying that in five years we'll be broadcasting in high definition. The Quantel covers all of our bases." ■

Yahoo inks GeoCities, News Corp.

By Richard Tedesco

Yahoo struck two major alliances last week, acquiring GeoCities and partnering with News Corp. in a cross-promotion deal that could be the first of several non-exclusive TV agreements Yahoo will seek.

Yahoo committed to buying GeoCities for \$3.56 billion with shares of Yahoo, aligning itself with one of the most popular personal publishing communities on the Internet. The two companies expect the union to give them nearly 60% of all Web traffic when they consummate the pact during the second quarter of this year.

The News Corp. deal, valued by sources familiar with the terms at \$15 million, gives Yahoo exposure on all Fox media outlets. It kicked off during the Super Bowl with several Yahoo plugs and ad spots. It marks the beginning of what is expected to evolve into cross-fertilizing of content, as interactive elements are incorporated into Fox shows.

"Leveraging the strengths of Yahoo and News Corp., we expect to reach new audiences through an innovative

YAHOO!

combination of media, marketing, and programming initiatives," says Peter Chernin, president and COO of News Corp.

With ABC parked on Disney's Go portal and NBC part of Snap with CNet, the field of prospective broadcast partners was limited.

"It's not clear that a deal with CBS is as valuable here. So Fox is a good place to start," says Josh Bernoff, principal analyst for Cambridge, Mass.-based Forrester Research, who adds that CBS just doesn't attract the younger, Web-savvy viewers that Fox draws.

Deals with Viacom or Time Warner station groups offer promising possibilities, according to Bernoff, who thinks deals with cable channels such as CNN and particularly Discovery Channel, given its sophisticated audience and Web presence, could enable Yahoo to capitalize on its runaway popularity as the No. 1 search engine. "This is just a first step for Yahoo," says

Bernoff, "and Yahoo is the most valuable search engine, so they may just be waiting for a better deal."

Yahoo chief honcho Jeffrey Mallett lauds the "strong brand fit" with News Corp. in "a multidimensional program that maximizes the strengths of their diverse media resources."

Yahoo is a sponsor of Fox TV's new *Family Guy*, a situation comedy which debuted following the Super Bowl, and included an online chat with the series' creator and executive producer immediately after.

Some integration of Yahoo content will occur on Fox cable outlets, starting with a segment during cyber-journalist Matt Drudge's weekly Fox News Channel show featuring live questions sent to Drudge via Yahoo. Other, similar elements will be developed for other Fox programming, according to Nancy White, Yahoo's marketing manager.

The deal runs through 1999. Yahoo's acquisition of GeoCities, which hosts 3.5 million user sites, makes it an even more potent partner for Fox—and other potential TV partners.

At Home's \$6.7 billion Excite deal is the biggest TV/Net deal to date. ■

ESPN fantasies sell

Online sports powerhouse ESPN Internet Ventures is bolstering the bottom line by feeding sports fanatics' dreams with its fantasy leagues, which are projected to produce 10% of overall online revenues this year. ESPN declined to give any sales figures for its total projected online revenues, and wouldn't say whether its online operations are even profitable yet.

Company officials are optimistic, according to Geoff Reese, senior vice president of programming and production for ESPN Internet Ventures, which expects to sign up wanna-be NBA general managers for its second season of pro basketball fantasy for \$24.95 each—lower than the going rate of \$29.95 because of the strike-shortened season.

Based on fan response thus far on both ESPN.com and NBA.com, ESPN

expects to match the 100,000 takers it had last season, when the fantasy league was free. ESPN.com drew nearly 70,000 players in its NFL fantasy league this season, its most popular vicarious online pay experience. "We've created a new demand here," says Reese.

ESPN says it's getting repeat business from sports addicts who want to try to beat the same opponents they faced online the previous season. Initially, many groupings are random, but veteran players can choose their opponents. "The community-building aspect of these things are incredible," Reese notes.

ESPN believes interest in the NFL largely fueled a 58% increase in site traffic between August and December, when it recorded 4.4 million at-home PC users that tuned in to ESPN.com.



ESPN has created a multi-layered pricing scheme: The standard rate is \$29.95; players already in a fantasy league pay \$19.95; ESPN.com premium subs pay for \$14.95, and a three-sport package price is available for \$39.95.

Meanwhile, CNN/SI.com has drawn 750,000—primarily in football and baseball—for its pay and free games. ■

—Richard Tedesco

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BREAKING NEWS

TOP OF THE NEWS

With the cancellation of the NBA All-Star game, NBC becomes yet another casualty in the basketball lockout. NBC planned to air the game during the key Feb. sweeps.

CENTURY UP

The New Canaan, Conn.-based Century Communications Corp., expects cash flow to increase 12.5%.

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THIS WEEK'S MAGAZINE



UPN may reduce programming. Sinclair Broadcasting President, Barry Baker says that UPN has privately admitted its error in going to five nights this season before getting its first three nights firing on all cylinders. Baker told a gathering yesterday at the Paine Webber Media Conference in New York that he wouldn't be surprised if the network - which is down 30%-40% in the ratings this season - cut back by a night or two to shore up its schedule. Sinclair operates seven UPN affiliates.



Speaker-elect speaks out on LMA. House Speaker-elect Bob Livingston (R-Va.) has signed a letter telling the FCC to drop a proposal that would eliminate local TV marketing agreements (LMAs) because it is contrary to the 1996 telecommunications Act. "Most broadcasters who invested the time, money and resources in LMAs will face financial hardship if forced to walk away from their investments," the letter says. "This is a harsh message to send to broadcasters who now face the multi billion dollar challenge of absorbing the infrastructure costs in the transition to digital television."



AT&T waits on Time Warner. Cable operators being wooed by AT&T to cut telephone joint ventures are waiting for Time Warner Cable to do its deal first. At least that's what cable executives were saying in the hallways of the Paine Webber, Inc. annual media investment conference in New York, Tuesday. Even after buying Tele-Communications Inc., AT&T needs to line up other MSOs as telephone affiliates to fully execute its strategy of finding a way around the Baby Bells' monopoly of funneling long distance calls to the home.

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CHANGING HANDS

The week's tabulation of station sales

TVS

Swap of KCOY-TV Santa Maria/Santa Barbara, Calif., for KKTV(TV) Colorado Springs, Colo.

Value: \$29 million (\$9 million from swapper of KCOY-TV; KCOY-TV valued at \$24 million) plus assumption of liabilities

Swapper, KCOY-TV: Benedek Broadcasting Corp., Rockford, Ill. (A. Richard Benedek, chairman; also owns/is buying 23 TVs and four satellites

Swapper, KKTV: Ackerley Group Inc., Seattle (Barry Ackerley, CEO); owns/is buying 11 TVs and two satellites, three AMs and three FMs

Facilities: KCOY-TV: ch. 12, 115 kw, ant. 1,940 ft.; KKTV: ch. 11, 234 kw, ant. 2,380 ft.

Affiliations: Both CBS

KCIT(TV) Amarillo and KJTL(TV) Wichita Falls, Texas

Price: \$28.5 million (\$15.5 million for KJTL; \$13 million for KCIT)

Buyer: Mission Broadcasting of Amarillo Inc., Bexley, Ohio (David Smith, president). Smith also owns four TVs

Seller: Wicks Broadcast Group LP, New York (WBG Management Inc., general partner; Edgar R. Berner, 41.7% owner); owns six AMs and 10 FMs

Facilities: KCIT: ch. 14, 1,280 kw, ant. 1,521 ft.; KJTL: ch. 18, 2,820 kw, 1,079 ft.

Affiliations: Both Fox

WAGM-TV Presque Isle, Maine

Price: \$16.5 million

Buyer: Max Media LLC, Virginia Beach, Va. (A. E. Loving Jr., CEO); also owns four TVs

Seller: NEPSK Inc., Presque Isle (Peter Kozloski, president); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: Ch. 8, 58.9 kw, ant. 350 ft.
Affiliation: CBS, ABC and NBC

Construction permit for KAGR(TV)

Bemidji, Minn.

Price: \$40,000

Buyer: Clear Channel Communications Inc., San Antonio, Texas (L. Lowry Mays, president); also owns/is buying 18 TVs, 157 AMs and 284 FMs

Seller: Media Properties Inc., Tucson, Ariz. (William Yde III, president); owns three TVs

Facilities: Ch. 26, 5,000 kw, ant. 324 ft.

Affiliation: Dark

PROPOSED STATION TRADES

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

THIS WEEK

TVs ■ \$74,040,000 ■ 4
Combos ■ \$3,820,527 ■ 3
FMs ■ \$27,135,000 ■ 5
AMs ■ \$2,535,000 ■ 5
Total ■ \$107,530,527 ■ 17

SO FAR IN 1999

TVs ■ \$163,040,000 ■ 9
Combos ■ \$56,787,527 ■ 12
FMs ■ \$39,897,000 ■ 14
AMs ■ \$8,002,000 ■ 13
Total ■ \$267,726,527 ■ 48

SAME PERIOD IN 1998

TVs ■ \$594,500,000 ■ 6
Combos ■ \$380,237,000 ■ 25
FMs ■ \$56,758,950 ■ 33
AMs ■ \$71,620,942 ■ 19
Total ■ \$1,103,116,892 ■ 83

Source: Broadcasting & Cable

COMBOS

WMID(AM) Atlantic City and WSAX(FM) Pleasantville, N.J.

Price: \$2.92 million

Buyer: Margate Communications LP, Atlantic City (Cleo Brooks, general partner); no other broadcast interests

Seller: AMCOM Inc., Atlantic City (John Mullen, president); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: AM: 1340 khz, 1 kw; FM: 99.3 mhz, 3 kw, ant. 328 ft.

Formats: AM: Music of the '40s, '50s and '60s; FM: classic rock

KNCY-AM-FM Nebraska City, Neb.

Price: \$710,000

Buyer: Radio 2000 NC Inc., Kansas City, Kan. (Frank Copsidas, principal); also owns KHOT(FM) Mount Vernon and KZRQ(FM) Ash Grove, Mo.

Seller: Sunrise Broadcasting, Newburgh, N.Y. (Joerg Klebe, principal); owns one AM and four FMs

Facilities: AM: 1600 khz, 500 w day, 31 w night; FM: 105.5 mhz, 3 kw, ant. 154 ft.

Formats: Both country

Broker: Bergner & Co.

KQIK(AM)-FM Lakeview, Ore.

Price: \$190,527

Buyer: Clause Charitable Remainder Trust, Lakeview (Donald Clause, trustee); no other broadcast interests

Seller: New Start Enterprises Inc., Lakeview (Arthur Collins, president); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: AM: 1230 khz, 1 kw; FM: 93.5 mhz, 285 w, ant. 1,000 ft.

Formats: Both C&W

FMS

KHOT-FM (formerly KBUQ(FM)) Paradise Valley/Phoenix, Ariz.

Price: \$18.3 million

Buyer: Heftel Broadcasting Corp. (McHenry Tichenor Jr., CEO); owns/is buying 16 AMs and 23 FMs

Seller: New Century Arizona LLC, Seattle (George Kriste, president); principals own two FMs and one AM, all Ariz. Note: New Century bought then-KBUQ for \$6.8 million in September 1997

Facilities: 105.9 mhz, 11 kw, ant. 492 ft.

Format: Country

WAKT(FM), WLHR(FM), WMXP(FM) and WRBA(FM) Panama City, Fla.

Price: \$6.5 million

Buyer: Waitt Broadcasting Inc., Omaha, Neb. (Norman Waitt Jr., chairman); also owns/is buying five TVs, one AM and two FMs

Seller: Root Communications LTD, Daytona Beach, Fla. (James Devis, president); owns eight AMs and 16 FMs

Facilities: WAKT: 105.1 mhz, 50 kw, ant. 335 ft.; WLHR: 107.9 mhz, 100 kw, ant. 781 ft.; WMXP: 103.5 mhz, 100 kw, ant. 475 ft.; WRBA: 95.9 mhz, 50 kw, ant. 300 ft.

Format: WAKT: country; WLHR: CHR; WMXP: pure rock 'n' roll; WRBA: classic rock

Broker: Kalil & Co. Inc.

WJSX(FM) Cape May, N.J.

Price: \$1 million

Buyer: Margate Communications LP, Atlantic City, N.J. (Cleo Brooks, general partner); no other broadcast interests

Seller: Mullen Group Inc., Newton Square, Pa. (Jeffrey Mullen, president); no other broadcast interests

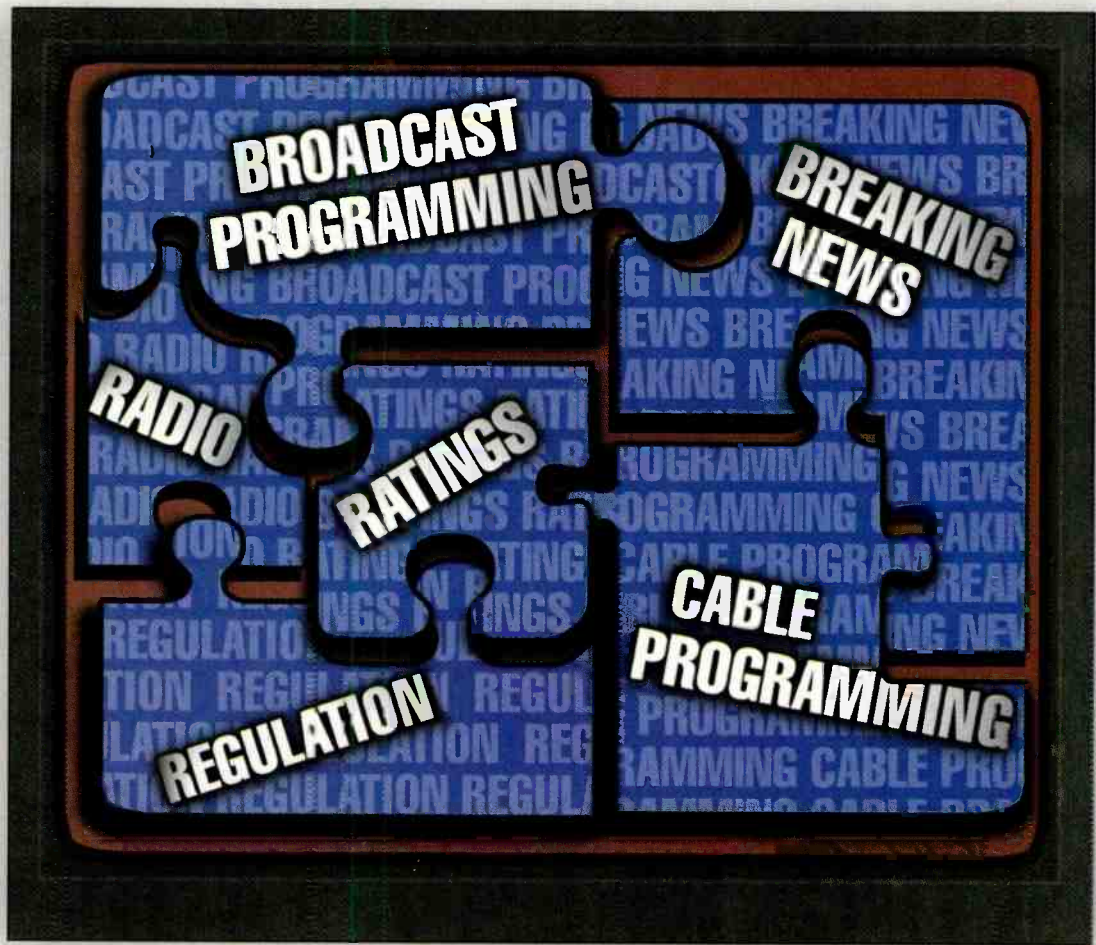
Facilities: 102.3 mhz, 3.2 kw, ant. 292 ft.

Format: Classic rock

WNPL(FM) Belle Meade, Tenn.

Price: \$893,000

Buyer: DBBC LLC, Atlanta (Lewis W. Dickey, president); also owns one



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AM, two FMs and is an attributable stockholder in Cumulus Media Inc, which owns/is buying 66 AMs and 147 FMs

Seller: Jamal Broadcasting LP, Nashville, Tenn. (Michael Grant, managing partner); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: 106.7 mhz, 1.1 kw, ant. 774 ft.

Format: Dark

KVCQ(FM) Cuero, Texas

Price: \$ 442,000

Buyer: Sonoma Media Corp., Houston (Roy Henderson, president); also owns one AM and three FMs

Seller: Gulfwest Broadcasting Co., Portland, Texas (Rob Dean, president); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: 97.7 mhz, 25 kw, ant. 302 ft.

Format: Oldies

AMS

KRHT(AM) Concord, Calif.

Price: \$1.2 million

Buyer: Immaculate Heart Radio, Tahoe City, Calif. (Douglas Sherman, president). Sherman also is president of KIHM(AM) Sun Valley, Nev.

Seller: Concord Area Broadcasters

Inc., Concord (Chester Coleman, chairman); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: 1480 khz, 500 w day, 5 kw night

Format: Religion

WLYN(AM) Lynn, Mass.

Price: \$1.06 million

Buyer: ADD Radio Group Inc., East Greenwich, R.I. (Peter J. Arpin, president); also owns/is buying WRCA(AM) Waltham and WJYT(AM) Attleboro, Mass.

Seller: Paul Feinstein, Marblehead, Mass.; no other broadcast interests

Facilities: 1360 khz, 700 w day, 76 w night

Format: Ethnic

KKAL(AM) Arroyo Grande, Calif.

Price: \$150,000

Buyer: F&L Broadcast Development Corp., Arroyo Grande (Jerry Collins, president); no other broadcast interests

Seller: American General Media, Bakersfield, Calif. (Anthony Brandon, president). Brandon and his brother, L. Rodgers Brandon (voting member of seller), own eight AMs and 19 FMs

Facilities: 1280 khz, 5 kw day, 2.5 kw night

Format: Sports

WVLR(AM) Moneta, Va.

Price: \$75,000

Buyer: Perception Media Group Inc., Roanoke, Va. (Ben Peyton, president); also owns wwwr(AM) Roanoke, Va.

Seller: JLR Communications Inc., Moneta (Diane Newman, president); owns WLQE-FM Bedford, Va.

Facilities: 880 khz, 1 kw day

Format: Big band

WODZ(AM) Rome, N.Y.

Price: \$50,000

Buyer: Bible Broadcasting Network Inc., Charlotte, N.C. (Lowell Davey, president/director); also owns three AMs and 27 FMs

Seller: Forever of New York LLC, Hollidaysburg, Pa. (Kerby Confer, managing member); owns two AMs and two FMs. Confer owns 10 AMs and 16 FMs

Facilities: 1450 khz, 1 kw

Format: Oldies

Broker: Force Communications

—Compiled by Alisa Holmes

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Service	Total
Commercial AM	4,724
Commercial FM	5,591
Educational FM	1,961
Total Radio	12,276
VHF LPTV	559
UHF LPTV	1,515
Total LPTV	2,074
FM translators & boosters	2,928
VHF translators	2,248
UHF translators	2,752
Total Translators	7,928
Commercial VHF TV	558
Commercial UHF TV	651
Educational VHF TV	125
Educational UHF TV	242
Total TV	1,576

CABLE

Total systems	11,600
Basic subscribers	64,800,000
Homes passed	93,790,000
Basic penetration*	66.1%

*Based on TV household universe of 98 million
Sources: FCC, Nielsen, Paul Kagan Associates
GRAPHIC BY BROADCASTING & CABLE

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WQXR Production Assistant. New York's classical radio station seeks a Production Assistant to work in our state-of-the-art studios and on remote events. Send resume, cover letter, and demo tape (DAT only, up to 10 minutes) to: Production Assistant Search, WQXR-FM, Box BC, 122 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10011. No calls, please. EEO.

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Traffic Assistant for Chicago WJYS-TV who is detail oriented, organized, has computer skills and 2 years experience in television traffic functions. VCI experience is a plus. Responsibilities will include creating daily broadcast log, input of program timings, building program formats, cataloging and inserting promos/psas. Must be able to meet deadlines, communicate with syndicators and work closely with programming, master control and sales staff. Please send resume to 708-633-0040.

Senior Sales Account Executive. WDJT-TV, a CBS affiliate in the 31st market, has an immediate opening for a Senior Sales Account Executive. Candidates must have 3+ years media sales experience with proven ability to service existing clients and agencies, and develop new business. Must also demonstrate the ability to sell promotions and use qualitative research effectively. If you are interested in advancing your career, *no phone calls please*, send resume to: Director of Human Resources, WDJT-TV (CBS-58), 809 S. 60th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53214. EOE.

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General Sales Manager. The Rio Grand Valley is one of the fastest growing areas in the US and CBS affiliate KGBT-TV is looking for a General Sales Manager with the experience to tap that growth. Successful candidate will have 3 to 5 years sales management experience, the ability to establish realistic revenue goals, set rates and manage resources and inventory to achieve those goals. Strong leadership and communication skills necessary. Must have experience with developing and implementing sales promotions. Hispanic market experience a plus. Send resume to Coby Cooper, GM, KGBT-TV, 9201 W. Expressway 83, Harlingen, TX 78552-9395. EOE. No phone calls please. KGBT is a Cosmos Broadcasting station.

Account Executive. WKMG, the CBS Post-Newsweek station in Orlando, FL seeks an AE with 3+ years prior media sales experience preferred. Must be computer literate. Working knowledge of Nielsen ratings, TVScan and Scarborough a plus. Excellent written and verbal skills a must. Send resume to Local Sales Manager (no phone calls please) WKMG-TV, 4466 John Young Parkway, Orlando, FL 32804. EOE.

Account Executive. Independent station in the 3rd largest market is looking for an aggressive, experienced account executive. Must have a minimum of 2 years television sales experience including agency and new business development as well as an understanding of Nielsen. Resume to: Human Resources, 26 N. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60661. Fax: 312-705-2656. EOE. No phone calls.

ABC affiliate WTVO in Rockford, Illinois is looking for a General Sales Manager with strong development know-how, demonstrated inventory control skills, and the ability to lead a team of champions. Experience with qualitative research and promotion as tools for market growth is a plus. Resumes to: Human Resources, c/o WTVO-TV, PO Box 470, 1917 N. Meridian Road, Rockford, IL 61105.

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website: keystoneint.com

We respond to all Employee & Employer
Inquiries: Alan Cornish / Mark Kelly 12/98

Manager of Broadcast Operations WBTV, Charlotte seeks Manager of Broadcast Operations. Requires strong knowledge of broadcast television engineering, including DTV, and of information technology. Ideal candidate must have open, consensual communication style and strong budgetary skills including capitol planning and procurement. Great staff, great city and superb technical facility awaits at one of the nation's premiere CBS affiliates. Send resume to: Cathy L. Cloud, Human Resources Department, Jefferson-Pilot Communications, One Julian Price Place, Charlotte, NC 28208. Jefferson-Pilot Communications is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

UPN 45, KUVI in Bakersfield, California has an immediate opening for a "hands-on" Chief Engineer. Applicants should possess strong working knowledge of routing and production switchers, high power UHF transmitters (klystron or IOT), new studio and control room design and construction, the maintenance of Sony Betacam and one-inch video tape formats and must be familiar with current FCC Rules and Regulations. For consideration, fax a confidential resume including salary requirements to: 310-348-3659, Attention: Bakersfield Chief Engineer Position. EOE.

Technical Director (Vacation Relief): Position requires a working knowledge of television master control operations, including Sony Beta and Flexi Cart, television transmitter remote control systems, and Grass Valley 1600 Switchers. Experience at an ABC affiliate master control and/or Columbine MCAS III helpful. Experience as a news technical director on Grass 300 with K-Scope a definite plus. Position requires overnight and weekend shifts. Completion of accredited college or technical school desirable. Professional experience required. Please send resumes only to: Bill Kirkpatrick, WABC-TV, 7 Lincoln Square, New York, NY 10023. No telephone calls or faxes please. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Studio Engineer (Vacation Relief) (2): Position requires experience as an audio operator or iN-FiNiT operator in a live production environment. A thorough knowledge of television studio operations and standards is required. Completion of accredited college or technical school desirable. Professional experience required. Please send resumes only to: Bill Kirkpatrick, WABC-TV, 7 Lincoln Square, New York, NY 10023. No telephone calls or faxes please. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Media Center (Video Tape) Engineer (Vacation Relief): Position requires a working knowledge of AMPEX VPR 2'S, Sony Beta Cam. Knowledge of studio and tape library helpful. Ability to operate all associated equipment to operating standards required. Completion of accredited college or technical school desirable. Professional experience required. Please send resumes only to: Bill Kirkpatrick, WABC-TV, 7 Lincoln Square, New York, NY 10023. No telephone calls or faxes please. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Maintenance Engineer. Forum Network is seeking an experienced Maintenance Engineer. Applicants must be well versed in the digital domain as well as analog and capable of tracing problems down to the component level. Ability to maintain ENG gear as well as oversee T.O.C. area. Must be a self-starter and capable of taking a leadership role in this new operation. Windows NT LAN experience a plus. Send resumes to Victor Murphy at: FORUM Network, 1101 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia 22209. 703-284-2822.

Engineer. WLNY-TV, a Long Island, NY independent TV station has an immediate opening for a qualified television Engineer. Three (3) years of component level repair experience of audio/video equipment. Qualified applicant must have an ability to maintain satellite downlinks, and studio equipment including Betacam SP. Ability to read schematics a must. Computer and UHF transmitter skills a plus. Competitive salary and benefits. Send resume and salary required to: WLNY-TV, 270 S. Service Road, Melville, NY 11747, Attn: Mark D'Acampora. EOE.

Chief Engineer: Progressive VHF network affiliate in Lafayette, Louisiana has an immediate opening for a Chief Engineer. Successful candidate will have strong people skills and combined experience in current technology Studio and RF systems. FCC General class license or SBE certification desired. Send resume to: General Manager, KATC Television, 1103 Eraste Landry Road, Lafayette, Louisiana 70506. EOE.

Broadcast Maintenance Engineers (Vacation Relief): Excellent opportunity for an experienced Broadcast Engineer at the ABC O&O in New York. Responsibilities include the installation/maintenance of studio and transmission equipment, including video switchers, routers, VTR, audio consoles, SS, cameras and DVE. Must be able to do component level repair, work well under pressure and with little supervision. Must possess knowledge of analog/digital systems and minimum of three years broadcast television experience. Candidates should have an engineering degree or equivalent technical training. SBE/FCC certification a plus. Please send resumes only to: Kurt Hanson, WABC-TV, 7 Lincoln Square, New York, NY 10023. No telephone calls or faxes please. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Assistant Chief Engineer. UNIVISION's Sacramento owned and operated station is seeking an Assistant Chief Engineer for our new all digital TV studio in Sacramento. Candidate must have GROL or SBE TV Cert. and 5-7 years TV broadcast engineering experience. Hands-on experience with studio cameras, VTR's, Switching and Routing Systems a must. Computer systems with Windows NT and UHF transmitter experience desired. Bilingual English/Spanish A+. Interested parties should call (916) 927-1900 for an application. EEO.

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Assistant Chief Engineer. Weigel Broadcasting Co. seeks an Assistant Chief Engineer for Chicago facility. Strong UHF transmitter experience, studio maintenance background, FCC compliance as well as exceptional component level troubleshooting skills required. Digital television knowledge and computer/LAN experience a plus. SBE certification preferred. Resumes or fax to Human Resources, 26 N. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60661. Fax: 312-705-2656. EOE. No phone calls.

HELP WANTED NEWS

SPORTS PRODUCER/WRITER

ABC7 Los Angeles is seeking an experienced Sports Producer/Writer. The successful candidate will have a minimum three years experience line producing sports segments or programs. Comprehensive sports knowledge is required. Story development and feature production experience a plus.

Please send a non-returnable videotape with your resume to:

ABC7
Attn: Kimberly Castillo
Dept. SPW/BC
4151 Prospect Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90027.



No phone calls please.
Equal Opportunity Employer.

SENIOR WRITER

Leading trade publication in advanced television technical market is seeking a senior writer. Previous experience writing about TV technology for a business magazine preferred. Great opportunity with expanding publication. Please send resume with salary requirements and two writing samples to:

Cahners Business Information
HR Dept. - DTV
245 West 17th Street
New York, NY 10011
Fax: 212-463-6455

Writer/Producer. NBC O&O WRC-TV in Washington, D.C. is seeking a Writer/Producer to write and produce daily topical news promos. Send resume to NBC/WRC-TV, Employee Relations, Dept. WP, 4001 Nebraska Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20016. AA/EOE.

Weekend Anchor/Reporter: Great opportunity at a station with a great tradition. WHO-TV, the New York Times NBC affiliate in Des Moines is looking for a weekend evening anchor who will report three weeknights. Must be self-starter, strong writer and great live reporter. 3-4 years anchor experience. Join the news department selected as state's best the past four years. Send VHS and resume to Al Setka, News Director, WHO-TV, 1801 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50309. EOE.

WFMJ-TV has an opening for a Reporter/Morning News Anchor. Candidates must have previous anchoring/reporting experience, morning anchoring a plus. Our morning show is lively and high energy, but we take news seriously. Send tape and resume to Mona Alexander, News Director, WFMJ-TV, 101 W. Boardman Street, Youngstown, Ohio 44503. EOE.

TV Photojournalist: WESH-TV, the NBC affiliate in Orlando, is looking for a top-notch photojournalist. Thorough technical knowledge of ENG is just the beginning. You must be able to combine your personal style, excellent lighting and composition, and high NPPA standards to tell a compelling story. You will be expected to operate a microwave truck on a regular basis. Commitment to teamwork is a must, along with a love of news. 5 years experience required, college degree preferred. If this sounds like your kind of challenge, rush your BETA tape and resume to: Pat Gribbin, Chief Photojournalist, WESH-TV, PO Box 547697, Orlando, FL 32854. No phone calls! An Equal Opportunity Employer.

TV News Photographer. WKMG, the CBS Post-Newsweek station in Orlando, FL seeks a TV News Photographer with 2+ years of experience in full-time photography and editing. Ability to operate television news equipment including live microwave. Willing to work flexible hours and travel on short notice. Send resume to Director of News Operations (no phone calls please) WKMG-TV, 4466 John Young Parkway, Orlando, FL 32804. EOE.

Sports Reporter/Photographer. We need a creative Sports Reporter/Photographer with a superior ability to tell a story and appeal to the non-jock viewer. A real "out of the box" thinker. We want neat stuff not just scores and highlights. Anchoring ability a plus. Respond with resume and tape to Personnel Administrator-116, WTOL-TV, PO Box 1111, Toledo, Ohio 43699-1111. No phone calls. EOE.

Reporter/Videographer/Anchor. Applicant must be able to shoot, write and edit news material. Must be familiar with Betacam camera and editing equipment. Must be knowledgeable in broadcast writing style and on-air delivery techniques. Spanish speaking ability and knowledge of Southeastern New Mexico current affairs are a plus. Apply to Ron Madison, News Director, KOBQ-TV, 124 East 4th Street, Roswell, NM 88201. EOE/M-F.

Sports Photographer: WAAY-TV has sports photog opening in four person department. This is the premiere sports department in the southeast. Resources are second to none. News department eagerly helps the sports effort. We dominate the sports scene in The Tennessee Valley and plan to keep it that way. Don't consider this opportunity unless you are ready to work. Whiners and clock watchers should not apply. Applicant should have initiative and ambition. The goal is to stay out of the sports office...and in the community working contacts and enterprising stories. Ability to anchor and report is a plus, but not a requirement. Effort and solid work ethic will overcome rough edges and inexperience. Send your tape to Greg Screws, WAAY-TV, 1000 Monte Sano Blvd., Huntsville, AL 35801. Unlike many ads in the business, you can call. (256) 533-3131 ext. 232. Just don't call after 2:30pm central time.

Reporter, Producer: WLKY-TV, a CBS affiliate in Louisville, is seeking qualified candidates for 3 positions. **Reporter:** Enterprising, solid writing and highly motivated person wanted for this demanding job. This is not an entry-level job. Minimum 2 years experience. **Producer:** We're looking for a highly motivated leader to take over our Monday-Friday 6pm Newscast. It was recently judged as one of the best in the country. What can you do to take it to the next level? Minimum 2 years experience producing a main newscast. **Reporter/Photographer:** We are looking for an enterprising person to cover one of our bureau's. You need to be well organized, able to shoot, edit and deliver compelling stories with little supervision. Minimum 1 year experience. Send resume and tape (VHS or BETA) and letter explaining your news philosophy and why you should be considered for the job to: Michael Sipes, News Director, WLKY-TV, 1918 Mellwood Ave., Louisville, KY, 40206. EEO

Producers. WDAF-TV, Kansas City's leading news source, is seeking experienced producers for weekday and weekend newscasts. This FOX O&O needs creative and energetic individuals who thrive on working in a fast paced environment as we produce 7.5 hours of news each day! The qualified applicant will have a minimum of two (2) years experience producing a television newscast. Must be a proven leader with a positive collaborative news philosophy. Working knowledge of Newstar or a comparable newsroom system is essential. College degree required. Please send resume and non-returnable tape to: WDAF-TV, Human Resources Dept., 3030 Summit, Kansas City, MO 64108. EOE M/F/V/D.

Producer. Are you a creative thinker who puts the needs of the viewer first? Channel 2 News, the NBC affiliate in Buffalo, New York is looking for a producer with a minimum of 3 years experience to take a growing product to the next level. We are not interested in show stackers or followers. If you are a leader with excellent writing skills, a good manager of both time and people and want to be part of a winning team, send a resume, writing samples (including teases) and non-returnable tape of a recent newscast to: Stacy Roeder, News Director, WGRZ-TV, 259 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14202 EOE.

Photojournalist: The shop that won the Emmy for Collaborative Photography (the best team) is looking for its newest member. If you live for great photojournalism, come join the shop where great pix rule! You must bring at least one year of experience with you. A college degree is preferred. Send resume/tape WYFF-TV, Human Resources Manager, 505 Rutherford Street, Greenville, SC 29609. EOE.

Photographer/Editor. Washington D.C. bureau seeks N.P.P.A. oriented photojournalist for 6 month contract, possibly longer. Looking for self-starter to work with award winning reporter producing daily capitol-based news packages for Alaska's largest T.V. station. Beta SP gear provided. Further information and our initial screening process will be done by calling Barry Johnson (907) 762-9237 between 1PM and 11PM Eastern Time. EOE.

Photographer. CBS-58 News has immediate openings for news photographers. Ideal candidates will have experience in shooting Betacam and in non-linear editing. We are a state-of-the-art shop with an all AVID environment. Our photojournalists are an important part of our news team. If you have a minimum of three years experience, please rush your resume and non-returnable tape to, *no phone calls please*, Director of Human Resources, WDJT-TV, 809 S. 60th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53214. EOE.

Opportunity! How would you like to get an early start on the day? Seven At Your Service KPLC has a Producer opening for their number one-rated morning newscast in America. Applicant must have solid news judgement and writing skills. We have state-of-the-art computer editing equipment and a top-notch staff. Send resume and tape to Veronica Bilbo, EEO Officer, KPLC-TV, PO Box 1490, Lake Charles, LA 70602. EOE.

Newscast Producer. Organize and write daily newscast. Supervise production of broadcast from story selection to on-line producing. College degree required. Must have 3 or more years experience producing daily newscasts. Send resume to Rick Willis, Executive Producer, WTVD NewsChannel 11, ABC, 411 Liberty Street, Durham, NC 27701. EOE.

News Executive Producer: WFSB, a Meredith Broadcasting Group station, and #1 news station in Connecticut, is seeking candidates with excellent people skills and news judgement to supervise producers, edit news copy and reporter packages and to help make us an even stronger #1 news station. Send resume to: Deborah Johnson, News Director, 3 Constitution Plaza, Hartford, CT 06103-1821. EOE.

Assistant News Director. Degree required. Strong journalistic and people skills; previous news supervisory and on-air anchor experience essential. Please send tape and resume to Personnel Director, KLST-TV, 2800 Armstrong, San Angelo, TX 76903. EOE.

News Director. Build a better news department, from the ground up. FOX 18/WCCB-TV in Charlotte, NC (Mkt. 28) is starting a news department to produce a nightly 10pm newscast with a FOX attitude. We're seeking an energetic, creative leader with vision, solid news judgement, strong people skills, and the ability to train, motivate and inspire people. Candidates must have a minimum of 3-5 years experience in news management with a background in all facets of television news. Send resumes/tapes to Marcia Lowe, Administrative Assistant, FOX 18/WCCB-TV, One Television Place, Charlotte, NC 28205. No phone calls please. EOE.

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Meteorologist: This isn't another stand-up, sit-down, point and read kind of job. We want a creative and versatile Weatherperson who can inform and entertain our viewers. This is a unique opportunity to launch and develop a new and proven concept in a beautiful Southern 50+ market. Create and present full-contained "FastCasts" as well as other on and off-air functions to broaden local market identity. March '99 on-air. Send tapes and resumes to Box 01488 EOE.

KFDX-TV is seeking a qualified Reporter to cover the Dallas Cowboys during training camp this summer. This temporary position is a great opportunity to beef-up your tape with real sports. If you are interested and can take the heat in Wichita Falls for approximately four weeks, send VHS tape and resume to: Scott Coppenbarger, News Director, KFDX-TV, 4500 Seymour Highway, Wichita Falls, TX 76309. No telephone calls. KFDX-TV is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Freelance Reporter/Producers wanted in Detroit and Atlantic City to provide periodic reports on gambling and the gaming industry for a Nevada PBS magazine format business show. Fee per package for writing and voicing packages is \$250-\$500. Send resume and tape to LeeAnn Green, KLVX-TV, 4210 Channel 10 Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89119.

Desk Assistant (2): Entry level position for an energetic, self starting, highly organized individual. Responsibilities include script organization, file tape distribution and other general newsroom functions. Previous newsroom experience a plus. Please send resumes to: Ken Jobe, Assistant News Manager, WABC-TV, 7 Lincoln Square, New York, NY 10023. No telephone calls or faxes please. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Big market station in Texas looking for male and female anchors for its evening newscasts. Must have successful journalism track record, professional appearance, enjoy being an integral part of your community, and possess the passion to excel every day you come to work. If you want to join a team on the move, as well as advance your own career, send your resume tapes and salary requirements to Box 01486 EOE.

Assistant News Director. Midwest news powerhouse is looking for a strong newsroom leader to run the day-to-day operations of the best news station in the country. Great opportunity for major market executive producer or producer. We offer an excellent benefit package, ESOP and 401(k) savings plan. Please send your tape and resume to Personnel Coordinator, KCRG, PO Box 816, Cedar Rapids, IA 52406. EOE.

HELP WANTED PROMOTION

TV Promotion Writer/Producer. Local TV station wants a highly creative, motivated team player with strong video and film production. Must have strong writing skills and at least two years experience writing and producing TV promos for news, delivering solid ads within budget. Send a reel and a resume to: Dan Weig, Audience Promotion Manager, WCCO-TV, 90 South 11 St., Minneapolis, MN 55403. EOE M/F/H/V. No phone calls please!

Telemundo Network Group, LLC, owned by SONY Pictures Entertainment and Liberty Media, seeks bilingual (Span/Eng) *Associate Sales Promotions Manager* for its New York office. Ideal candidate will possess min 5yrs experience. Expertise in development and execution of client-driven marketing initiatives. Requirements include excellent presentation-writing skills, the ability to creatively address clients' needs using network resources, and copywriting skills. US Hispanic market experience a plus. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer and offer a competitive compensation and benefits package in an exciting entertainment environment. For consideration, please forward your resume and salary requirements to: Telemundo Network Group, LLC, 2290 West 8th Avenue, Hialeah, FL 33010, Attn: Human Resources, Job Code: SPM1. Fax: (305) 889-7079.

Promotion Producer. WMC-TV (NBC), Memphis seeks creative and motivated news image/series promo producer. Responsibilities include writing, producing and AVID editing news series and strategic image promos. Rush tape and resume to: Promotion Manager, WMC Stations, 1960 Union Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104. 901-726-0523.

Promotion Art Director. The NBC33 promotion department is expanding! We're looking for fresh, energetic ideas and the ability to execute complete multi-media promotional graphic campaigns. We've got the latest tools and a new attitude. This job is more than just x's and o's. You'll be an integral part of the creative decision-making process! B.A. in Graphic Arts or related field is required. Send resume to Personnel, NBC33, 2633 W. State Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46808. EOE. No phone calls please.

HELP WANTED ADMINISTRATION

ADVERTISING SALES SERVICES COORDINATOR

Leading International television magazine group has an immediate opening for an energetic, organized, self-starter.

Position provides sales support to international sales team. Administrative duties include faxes and correspondence, preparing and distributing media kits and maintaining sales database. Heavy client contact. Handles customer inquiries concerning ad rates and material requirements. Serves as liaison to offices in London and Singapore regarding circulation, production, marketing and trade show arrangements.

Ideal candidate should have excellent communication skills, good follow through, be detail-oriented and thrive in a fast-paced deadline driven environment. Previous experience in sales or publishing a plus. Excellent growth opportunity. Terrific pay and benefits.

Please send resume to:

**Human Resources
Cahners Business Information
245 West 17th Street
NY, NY 10011
Job #BCINTL**

HELP WANTED PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public Relations. Director of Communications- Major TV Network. Our NYC based TV network has an excellent career opportunity for a dynamic, hands-on professional. Primary responsibilities include managing the daily operations of public and media relations, and public affairs. Successful candidate will have a BA and 7-10 years proven exp within a television network. Superior written and verbal communication skills required. Computer proficiency a must. We offer a comprehensive benefits package. Salary commensurate with experience. Mail resume to: P.O. Box 9052, Dept. RAG, Bethpage, NY 11714. Equal Opportunity Employer M/F/D/V.

HELP WANTED CREATIVE SERVICES

Broadcast Designer. Major market CBS owned television station is in search of an experienced graphic designer. The Designer must be able to work in a fast paced quick turnaround environment, and be available for varying work schedules. He or she must possess a working knowledge of the following: Hal, Harriet or Express, Adobe After Effects, Photoshop and Illustrator, Chyron Infiniti! And Newsmaker a plus! Send letter, resume and tape of work to: Karen Dahlquist, Art Director, WCCO-TV, 90 S. 11th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55403. No phone calls please.

HELP WANTED PRODUCTION

Production Assistant. WOOD TV8 has an opportunity for a full-time Production Assistant. Live studio experience with cameras, lighting and teleprompter a big plus. Broadcast degree preferred. Computer skills, schedule flexibility and reliable transportation a must. Send resume to: Patrick Linehan, Production Manager, WOOD TV8, 120 College Avenue, SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. No phone calls, please. WOOD TV8 is an EOE.

Assistant Production Manager. KCEN-TV, Temple-Waco, Texas is seeking an Assistant Production Manager to supervise department. 3-5 years production experience, with background in News and experience in directing newscast a must. Applications accepted through February 9, 1999. Submit resume to: KCEN-TV, Personnel Dept. 24, PO Box 6103, Temple, TX 76503. Equal Opportunity Employer.

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Be part of the future at America's fastest growing news network, MSNBC, the 24 hour news cable network from NBC News and Microsoft. Currently we seek talented broadcast professionals to join our innovative team.

PROMOTION WRITER/PRODUCER

Responsibilities will include producing image campaigns, topical promos, and corporate presentations. Excellent writing skills and knowledge of the Internet is required. Experience with film, non-linear editing, and state of the art graphics is preferred.

LINE PRODUCER

As you supervise editorial and production elements of our broadcasts, you will coordinate live and taped reports, interviews, interactive content, and other segments. Additionally, you will write and edit news copy, work with hosts and news anchors, and oversee writers, associate producers, and assistants. To qualify, you must be a deadline-oriented professional with significant experience in producing news broadcasts, including a proven ability to supervise in a control room during live coverage of breaking news. The ability to develop ideas from concept to broadcast is critical.

NEWS WRITER

Writing both news and feature copy, you will work with talent to revise scripts under on air deadlines, provide text for ongoing coverage, act as a live producer when necessary and contribute to the editorial process. To qualify, you must be a proven broadcast journalist with the ability to conduct in-depth research interviews, supervise video editing, and write for picture. Style, accuracy, and creativity are expected. Familiarity with E.J. equipment and procedures is required.

Flexibility with respect to hours necessary. Schedules will rotate, but must be able to work all shifts, including weekends and overnights. Must be able to work additional hours beyond scheduled shift with little or no notice if needed.

This is a once-in-a-career opportunity to be part of the future of news. Send your reel and resume to:

MSNBC Employee Relations-Ad Response,
One MSNBC Plaza, Secaucus, NJ 07094
e-mail: employment@msnbc.com
Fax: (201) 533-5879. MSNBC is an equal opportunity employer M/F

**HELP WANTED PRODUCTION**

Production Assistant/Font Coordinator for remote and studio telecasts. Duties include assisting producers in formatting weekly telecasts, building and preparing graphic presentations, music selection and research of prior telecasts. Qualifications include a minimum of two years experience in a sports related field with excellent writing skills and knowledge of sports, especially baseball and basketball. At least one year remote production experience essential. College degree is preferred. Candidate must have the ability to think on one's feet quickly and clearly and work well under pressure. Send resumes and writing sample. Contact: Turner Sports, 1 CNN Center, 13 South, Atlanta, GA 30303, Attention: Bill Callen. No Calls Please.

HELP WANTED PROMOTION

New England Cable News seeks a highly motivated On-Air Promotion Manager to develop and manage NECN's image campaign as well as help with market research projects and focus group studies. Day-to-day activities include the production of all on-air promotion spots- writing, hiring, directing and editing. Must be able to oversee outside film crews as well as production/animation facilities. Ability to manage production budget is necessary. Send resume and cover letter to Director of Marketing, NECN, 160 Wells Avenue, Newton, MA 02459. Fax: (617) 630-5057, email: kmnecn@aol.com

HELP WANTED SALES

Director of Sales. A.H. Belo Corporation is seeking a Director of Sales for Texas Cable News, a 24-hour local/regional news operation. Successful candidate should have experience in media sales/sales management, conceptual selling, sales training and audience research data. Candidates should also possess strong computer, math and writing skills. Send cover letter and resume to TXCN, Sales Director Search, 570 Young Street, Dallas, TX 75202. Fax: 214-977-4610. Email: jobs@TXCN.com.EEO.

CREATIVE SERVICES

Graphic Designer to design and produce graphic elements in various media for Turner Sports. Qualifications include a minimum of two to four years experience in graphic design, preferably broadcast. Must have a college degree in design/mass communication. Must have working knowledge of: Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe After Effects, Quantel Paintbox, Descreet Logic Flame, and general television production hardware and software. Experience in theater a plus. Must be creative, have good taste, high energy. Candidate must have the ability to think on one's feet quickly and clearly and work well under pressure on multiple creative problems. Must know and love sports. Send resumes and reel/portfolio pieces. Contact: Turner Sports, 1 CNN Center, 13 South Atlanta, GA 30303, Attention: Kelley Courington. No phone calls please.

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**Send resume/tape to:
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New York, New York 10011**

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HELP WANTED TECHNICAL

WEATHER SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

The forecast looks great at Weather Services International. We know. We develop high-end computer systems and services for customers with mission-critical requirements for real-time weather information, as well as for consumer products on the Internet. As the world's leading source for weather services, you know us as the source behind the following:

- Weather broadcasts shown by networks and cable TV stations
- Airline carriers servicing you safely and efficiently
- Daily weather updates @ www.Intellicast.com
- Utility companies providing power without interruption

Now we'd like you to know us as the source of your next exciting career.

APPLICATIONS ENGINEER

Utilize your technical or meteorological background to provide system installation and user training to our TV, airline and other customer sites across the country. You will also act as a user representative to the Software Development staff. Requires a Bachelor's degree in meteorology or a computer/technical discipline and 3+ years of experience with successful customer interaction. Excellent problem solving and interpersonal skills required. Based in Massachusetts, 50% travel. Weather systems experience preferred. Weather Producer experience a big plus.

Please send resume to: WSI Corporation, Human Resources, 900 Technology Park Drive, Billerica, MA 01821. FAX: (978) 262-0700, E-mail: rooney@wsicorp.com (ASCII text only)

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HELP WANTED SALES

Sales Rep Wanted. For top NYC based composers group. High profile music company, extremely strong in Cable and Network/TV (themes scoring and promos), as well as in advertising and corporate music, seeks local rep. Exclusivity not necessary, but full time position is possible commensurate with experience/ sales contacts Fax Resume to 212-629-5976.

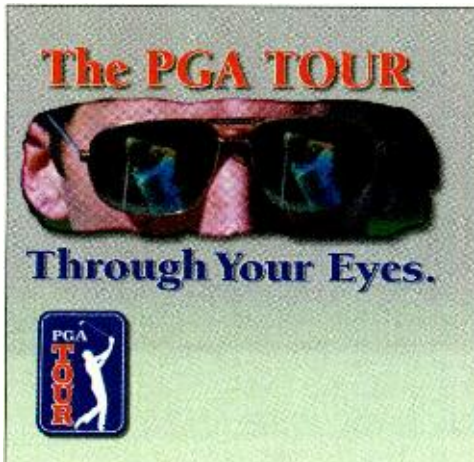
HELP WANTED NEWS

Broadcast News Writer, Washington, D.C. Fast growing Internet newswire is seeking a broadcast news writer for its flash news section. www.ConservativeNews.org is an aggressive news team that is seeking an experienced, energetic, creative, conservative writer for our 100,000+ daily website. Must be able to write quickly, handle deadline, identify top stories and juggle tasks. Competitive salary, excellent benefits. Apply to: Dorothea Cooke, Managing Editor, 113 South West St., Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22192, 1-877-CNS-NEWS or e-mail dcooke@cnsnews.org.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Meetings of the Public Broadcasting Service Board of Directors and its committees will be held at the Marriott Rancho Las Palmas, Rancho Mirage, California, on February 5-7, 1999. Schedule and tentative agenda for each meeting follows.

Membership Committee, 9 a.m., February 5, common carriage exemptions; enhanced underwriting research; admission of new members in served areas; role of the committee; and other business.

Finance, Budget and Audit Committee will meet in executive session, 1:30 p.m., February 5, appointment of auditors; station assessment/formula; FY 2000 budget; DTV interconnection; stations on deferred payment schedules; internal audit report; and other business.

Board of Directors will meet in executive session on February 6 and in general session at 9 a.m., February 7, reports from PBS officers, board committees on programming policy, interconnection, new technologies, membership, and finance; 1998 membership petitions; and other business.

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TAMPA DIVISION

EAGLEVIEW TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

a Florida corporation, and

DAVID R. ANDERSON,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

Case No: 94-82-CIV-T-21C

MDS ASSOCIATES, et al.,

Defendants.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO SELL ASSETS FREE AND CLEAR

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that::

Pursuant to the Order of this Court dated **January 6, 1999** (the "Order"), William A. Brandt, Jr. the Receiver of MDS Associates ("the Receiver"), will sell all of his right, title and interest in substantially all of the assets of MDS Associates to James A. Dwyer or his nominee ("Purchaser"); for a purchase price of \$301,000.00 as more fully set forth in the Asset Purchase Agreement dated October 19, 1998, ("Purchase Agreement") approved by the Order.

As Receiver for MDS Associates, the Receiver holds the FCC License for station WMI 355 in San Diego, California (the "License"). The FCC has exclusive jurisdiction over the license and must approve the assignment or transfer of the License to the successful bidder. The assets to be sold (the "Assets") include the License, fixed assets, interest in a judgment, and claims, but exclude the cash of MDS Associates, as more fully set forth in the Purchase Agreement.

The Receiver will accept other bids on the same or better terms as those set forth in the Purchase Agreement. All other bids must be for an amount equal to at least \$316,000.00 and shall be accompanied by a cash deposit of ten percent of the bid amount, in the form of a cashiers check, made payable to the Receiver, or funds wired to the Receiver, and received at least three business days prior to the hearing. In the event that any bona fide and qualified other bids shall be received by the Receiver, then the Purchaser and all such other bidders shall have an opportunity to bid in open Court to purchase the Assets. The open Court bidding shall be made in increments of not less than \$7,500.00 or more than the highest preceding bid. The Receiver may accept the highest and best bid, as determined by the Court in light of all pertinent factors, including, without limitation, the amount of the bid and any terms and conditions of the bid. The Court may set other terms and conditions to the sale at the hearing.

All bids must be submitted in writing to the Receiver along with the deposit for any bid by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on February 16, 1999, Further information may be obtained upon request from the following:

William A. Brandt, Receiver
c/o Development Specialists, Inc.
200 South Biscayne Blvd.,
Suite 900
Miami, FL 33131
Phone: 305/374-2717
Attn: Joseph J. Luzinski

Counsel for the Receiver
Morris Silberman
1230 Myrtle Ave., S.
Suite 101
Clearwater, FL 33756
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Loesch redefines family TV

Now that she's captain of cable's Odyssey Channel, Margaret Loesch has set the compass for a return to her roots.

"Some of the best hours I ever spent were watching TV with my dad," Loesch says. "I spent a lot of time watching *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *General Electric Theater*, *Kraft Television Theater*. [A lot of it] wasn't that relevant to me as a child, but my parents didn't have to ask me to leave. I enjoyed being there with them even though some of it was over my head."

TV viewers today are missing that family bonding experience, she says. Supported by the formidable partnership of Hallmark Entertainment, the Jim Henson Co., Liberty Media Corp. and the National Interfaith Cable Coalition, Loesch wants to return it to TV through a transformed Odyssey Channel.

"We are delighted to have Margaret on board as Odyssey CEO," says Robert Halmi Jr., president of Hallmark Entertainment. "Her programming sensibilities and experience make Margaret a natural choice to helm the channel."

Loesch was named president and chief executive officer of the 30-million-subscriber Odyssey cable network last November. Since then, she's been preparing Odyssey for a spring relaunch. Her game plan is to distill the qualities that distinguished top-shelf network programming in the 1950s and '60s, update them with today's technology and target 18- to 55-year-olds with shows that are socially, spiritually and family relevant. That's the contemporary family, mind you, not some *Pleasantville* throwback. Working moms, stay-at-home dads, day-care kids, full-nesters, empty-nesters, extended families, even same-sex partners.

Loesch envisions a blend of "big-event" programming coupled with half-hour and hour dramas and children's and religious programming. Hallmark and Henson will be particularly important contributors, not only via their vast libraries, but with original productions.

Her short-term goal: Get Odyssey from its current 30-million-subscriber mark to 35 million by the end of next year. Longer term—three to five years—Loesch is setting Odyssey's sights on 50 million subscribers. Over the next three years, Loesch figures Odyssey will spend about \$100 million for original and library product.



Margaret Ann Loesch

President/chief executive officer, Odyssey Channel, Los Angeles; b. March 28, 1947, Texas; BA, political science, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, 1968; attended graduate school, government and international relations, Louisiana State University, New Orleans, 1968-69; production assistant, ABC Television Network, Los Angeles, 1971-74; director, children's programming, NBC Television Network, Burbank, Calif., 1975-79; Hanna-Barbera Productions, Los Angeles: vice president, children's programming, 1979-82, and executive vice president, 1982-84; Los Angeles: president/CEO, Marvel Productions Inc., 1984-90; president, Fox Kids Network, 1990-95; chairman/CEO, Fox Kids Networks Worldwide, January 1996-August 1997; vice chairman, Fox Kids Worldwide, August-November 1997; president, Jim Henson Television Worldwide, February-November 1998; current position since November 1998; children: one son, 10

"My friends and colleagues say cable is a niche business. I say, how do you explain the numbers that *Moby Dick* got, or any cable event that gets a broad audience," she says, referring to the USA Network-Hallmark miniseries last March that attracted the largest audience in cable history for an original entertainment program. "I still believe the audience goes where the programming is. Clearly, Fox carved out success going after a large audience. Advertisers are very happy with us delivering on that [18-55] audience."

"I would love nothing more than to redefine family TV," she says. "I am talking about family TV, but I'm talking about today's family and I'm talking about TV that's 'relatable.' Very often, family TV today is either programming that frankly seems to be directed toward an 8-year-old—something in sitcom form that's very banal—or something inappropriate for the whole family."

Not surprisingly, the family-values theme is at the core of Loesch's personal, as well as professional, life. Her father, who died when she was 18, was the key inspirational force in her life. Her mother, whom Loesch describes as her biggest cheerleader and biggest thorn, was the motivational "locomotive" who instilled in her daughter a take-no-prisoners, accept-no-excuses attitude.

On the professional side, Loesch counts among her key mentors and supporters Joe Barbera, Jim Galton and Walter Lantz of Hanna-Barbera Productions and WB Network Chief Jamie Kellner.

Inhabiting TV's top executive ranks doesn't immunize Loesch from the challenges of being a working mother. The family homestead is a small ranch near Durango, Colo., and in her rare off-time, Loesch has been teaching her 10-year-old son to ski.

Though faith-and-values programming, which is how Odyssey defines its fare, has become somewhat trendy in the TV world, it's still a tough sell in many quarters. That's just the kind of challenge that whets Loesch's appetite.

"When they said we wouldn't succeed with Fox Kids, I was motivated more," she says. "While I'm not hearing that we won't succeed with Odyssey, I am hearing fairly regularly a kind of dismissiveness that it's just another channel that's never going to amount to very much."

"I find that incredibly exhilarating."

—Price Colman

BROADCAST TV



Poindexter

Roland Poindexter, VP, programming and development, Fox Kids Network, Los Angeles, named VP, head of programming.

Appointments, Paxson Communications, West Palm Beach, Fla.:

Gregory Lerman, Executive VP/general manager, Valuevision Television, Minneapolis, joins as president, electronics commerce division; **Stacey Nagel**, manager, sales planning, Warner Bros., New York, joins as VP, acquisitions and program planning, Pax TV.

Appointments, Fox Broadcasting Co., New York: **Audrey Steele**, senior VP, research and marketing, Zenith Media, New York, named VP, sales research and marketing; **Andrea Scott**, training coordinator, national software products, Nielsen Media Research, New York, joins as director, audience research.



Muscari

David Muscari, director, creative services, WFAA-TV Dallas named creative director to parent company A.H. Belo Corp. and WFAA-TV.

Appointments, WXYZ-TV Detroit:

Kim Belz, news producer, WJBK-TV Detroit, joins in same capacity; **Adam Benson**, news producer WDAF-TV Kansas City, joins in same capacity; **Sandy Vedro**, account executive, WWJ-TV, Detroit joins in same capacity.

Jeff Guilbert, general sales manager, WKBW-TV Buffalo, N.Y., joins WDWB-TV Detroit as station manager/VP, sales.

Karen Heric, account executive, KING(TV) Seattle, named local sales manager.

Ed Staton, regional sales manager, WDBD-TV Jackson, Miss., named national sales manager.

Thomas Watson Brown Jr., account executive, WJBF-TV Augusta, Ga., named

assistant VP/corporate planning and development for parent company Spartan Communications, Spartanburg, S.C.

Noreen Olsen, account executive, KGUN-TV Tucson, Ariz., joins KNXV-TV Phoenix in same capacity.

Jack Dunkle, airborne/studio traffic reporter, Metro Networks, Wilmington, Del., named director of operations, Allentown, Pa.

Thomas Youngblood Jr., account representative, WDSI-TV Chattanooga, Tenn., named national sales manager.

Edward Hart, account representative, WOLF(TV) Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, Pa., named national sales manager, WOLF(TV) and WSWB(TV) Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.

PROGRAMMING



Rosenbaum



Weiser

Mark Rosenbaum, VP, Twentieth Century Fox International Television, Los Angeles, named senior VP.

John Weiser, VP, Western region, Columbia Tristar Television Distribution, Culver City, Calif., named senior VP, sales.

JOURNALISM

Rebecca Kolls, host, *Rebecca's Garden*, Home & Garden Television, Minneapolis, named gardening and lifestyle contributor, *Good Morning America*, ABC, New York.

Linda Levy, news director, KOCO-TV Oklahoma City, joins KTVT-TV Dallas in same capacity.

Julie Bauer, producer/reporter, Berks County News, Reading, Pa., joins WGAL(TV), Lancaster, Pa., as reporter/producer, *12:30 LIVE*.

Appointments, WRGB-TV Albany, N.Y.: **Donna Evans**, senior producer, named executive producer; **Diane Ward**, producer, named senior producer; **Michelle Nicoll-Duffy**, producer,

WTEN(TV) Albany, N.Y., joins as senior producer; **Adam Wohlman**, producer, WSET(TV) Lynchburg, Va., joins in same capacity.

RADIO

Jonathan Schwartz, artistic director, American Songbook Series, Lincoln Center, New York, joins WNYC(AM) there as weekend radio host.



Hollander

Les Hollander, local sales manager, WKTU(FM) New York, joins co-owned WHTZ(FM) there as general sales manager.

David Burke, VP/general manager KSTE(AM) and KRCX(AM) San Jose, Calif., joins

KXKL(FM), KIMN(FM) and KRRF(AM) Denver in same capacity.

Mark Silverstein, local sales manager, KFOG(FM) San Francisco, named general sales manager.

CABLE

Robert Levi, executive VP, worldwide program planning & acquisitions, Turner Entertainment Group, Atlanta, named president.

Tony Barbon, director, studio production, Turner Classic Movies, Atlanta, named VP.

Appointments, CNN Financial News, New York: **David Bohrman**, VP/executive in charge, *Moneyline with Lou Dobbs*, named executive VP, CNNfn; **Debra Kocher**, VP, editorial/production, CNNfn and CNN Financial News, named VP, special projects, CNN Financial News.

Mike Evans, chief financial officer, Food Network, New York, named assistant general manager.

Appointments, Bravo Networks, Bethpage, N.Y.: **Joseph Cantwell**, executive VP, media distribution and development, named executive VP, new media; **Gregg Hill**, senior VP, Western division, named executive VP, affiliate sales and marketing.

Jim Gordon, director, special projects, Comcast Cable, Baltimore, named area director, government and public affairs.

TECHNOLOGY



Raymond Cavanagh, VP, marketing, Newpoint Technologies, Salem, N.H., named VP, worldwide sales and marketing.

Todd Miller, mixer, *Photomag*, New York, joins audio post-production

company East Side Audio there as mixer/sound designer/editor.

Appointments, Post Perfect, New York: **Rob Padva**, editor/compositor/designer, PrinczCo Productions, New York, joins as editor; **Jason Mayo**, scheduler/assistant manager, front office, Charlex, New York, rejoins as commercial producer; **Larry Shore**, manager, night operations, Charlex, New York, joins as commercial producer.

Appointments, NextNext Entertainment, New York: **Kate Hillis**, director of production, CityKids Foundation, New York, named senior VP, production; **Marian Davis**, partner, media entertainment and communications, Johnson, Smith & Knisely, New York, named managing director, television.

ASSOCIATIONS/LAW FIRMS

Josephine Martin, VP, communications, American Red Cross, Washington, joins the National Cable Television Association there as VP, public affairs.

ALLIED FIELDS

Larry Grunewald, general manager, business unit, Scientific-Atlanta, Atlanta, joins Libit Signal Processing, Los Altos, Calif., as VP, corporate development.

Appointments, Wink Communications, Alameda, Calif.: **Reed Spiegel**, director, marketing and product development, new media, Thomson Consumer Electronics, Indianapolis, joins as VP, consumer electronics business development; **Mike Gannon**, VP, network sales, Pax TV, New York, joins as VP, advertising sales.

Appointments, Deluxe Entertainment Services, Los Angeles: **Ken Biggins**, managing director, Deluxe Laborato-

ries Limited, named managing director, film and video services, Europe; **Luis Urbano**, general manager, Deluxe Video Services Limited, Iberia, Spain, named managing director, Deluxe Video Services Limited.

Jeff Kinder, free-lance music composer, Atlanta, rejoins RKM Studios there as director, creative services.

DEATHS

John Case, 76, broadcaster and writer, died Jan. 22 during open-heart surgery. For 10 years, Case's radio show, *Sportmans' Case*, ran on WBBM(AM) Chicago. In addition to his radio work, he wrote a weekly outdoors column for the *News Sun* in Waukegan and edited the *Illinois Hunter* magazine. Case also was an adviser to several Illinois governors and served for 12 years on the Illinois Conservation Advisory Board, with seven years at board chairman. He is survived by his wife, June, a daughter, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Jack Cresse, 77, former general manager, KVOO(AM) Tulsa, Okla., died Dec. 22 of causes unknown. Cresse served as president of the Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters and national director of both the Academy of Country Music and the Country Music Association. He also co-founded the Tulsa Broadcasters Association and served as president. Cresse held the rank of first lieutenant while fighting in World War II as a U.S. Army Air Corps bombardier and navigator in the South Pacific. He moved to Oklahoma in 1950 and worked in the insurance business before starting his radio career. He began working at KVOO as a sales manager in 1968. One month later, he was named VP/general manager of the station—a position that he held for 19 years before retiring in 1987. He is survived by his wife, Eileen, a daughter and two grandchildren.

Beverly Keene, 70, former senior VP, creative services, Television Bureau of Advertising, died Dec. 20 of natural causes. Prior to her retirement in 1990, Keene was employed at TVB for 33 years. She was responsible for all creative services, including video production, sales-related product development and convention planning. She also worked with numerous general sales managers. Immediate survivors are unknown.

Joseph Migala, 85, co-founder and

president, WCEV(AM) Chicago, died Jan. 18. In 1950, after serving in the 20th division of the Polish Infantry in World War II, Migala and his wife returned to Chicago and created the "Voice of Polonia" radio program. The program, which aired on several stations, presented extensive Polish language newscasts, sports reports, as well as radio dramatizations of Polish literary masterworks and famous Polish novels. Migala founded WCEV in 1979 and received the first license from the FCC to specifically air ethnic-language programming. Migala also produced and aired radio programs for individual Polish organizations, and founded and managed several small businesses in Chicago. After Migala retired from radio in 1980, he earned a doctorate in history from the University of Warsaw in Poland. He is survived by his wife, five children, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Susan Strasberg, 60, actress, died Jan. 21 of cancer. Strasberg, the daughter of acting coach Lee Strasberg and a close friend of Marilyn Monroe, appeared in at least 23 film and television productions. Most notable were *Frankenstein*, a 1973 television version of the classic horror story, and 1988's *Prime Suspect* with Frank Stallone. She also appeared in *Picnic*, *Time Remembered* and *Stage Struck* with Henry Fonda. Strasberg made her debut playing Anne Frank on Broadway in 1955. She is survived by a brother, a stepmother and two half-brothers.

Myles Tierney, 34, Associated Press television producer, was killed Jan. 10 while covering the Sierra Leone civil war. Tierney, a Kenya-based APTN producer, was shot by an armed rebel while he and two other AP journalists were being escorted in a car. Tierney joined the AP's television operation in 1996 as a freelance producer and organized coverage of a military coup in Burundi, Africa. Later that year, he set up the agency's first TV bureau in New York. Tierney's name will be added to a memorial in Washington that honors journalists killed while covering stories. Tierney is survived by his parents and a sister.

—Compiled by Mara Reinstein
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Frank Biondi, fired several months ago from his job as head of Universal Studios, may be joining King World Productions as a consultant. King World sources confirmed that they are talking, but that no deal has been signed. Biondi left Universal in November in a general restructuring of the entertainment unit.

CNN late last week launched an initiative to try and reverse the Senate's decision to put some of its impeachment hearings behind closed doors. In full page ads in major newspapers and in a motion filed with the Senate, the network cited "the First Amendment values of open government" and said that deliberations behind closed doors

regarding the treatment of witnesses and dismissal of the charges against President Clinton "denies people throughout the world the opportunity to judge the fairness of the proceedings and excludes firsthand information from being made available to the millions of voters who have a vital stake in the trial's outcome." The national apathy may be the ultimate determinant of public awareness. "The public says 'not more but less,'" according to the brief, drafted for CNN by well-known media lawyer Floyd Abrams. The ad also asks the Senate to determine that the closure of Senate proceedings violated the First Amendment. While the Senate has closed doors for deliberations, it remained unclear

just how much light would be shed by witnesses called. Democrats and Republicans were battling late last week over live witnesses vs. videotape and whether the videotape would be made public. The issue of open hearings was first raised by C-SPAN Chairman Brian Lamb, who discovered that rules adopted by the Senate for the 1868 impeachment of President Andrew Johnson required closed deliberations. Other cable and broadcast networks have joined C-SPAN in seeking fully open proceedings.

ABC is flying in 40 general managers from its owned-and-operated and affiliated stations on Feb. 10 to talk to members of Congress about satellite TV legis-

lation, a broadcast source says. The GMs will talk to House and Senate leadership, members of the Commerce and Judiciary Committees and representatives from the GMs' hometowns. The ABC executives plan to tell members that they support legislation that will allow satellite TV companies to be able to offer their local signals, but that in return, they do not want Congress or the FCC to shrink their signal areas.

In its most ambitious company-wide multiplatform, Discovery Communications will introduce viewers worldwide to the fabled history and real-life remains of Cleopatra. The royal quarters of Cleopatra, which for nearly 2,000 years lay undiscovered in the murky harbor of the modern-day city of Alexandria, Egypt, will be shown in the March 14 telecast of *Cleopatra's Palace: In Search of a Legend*. In all, 23 language-customized versions will air in 142 countries in the same 9-10 p.m. prime time slot on various Discovery Channel feeds around the globe. The initiative also includes themed merchandise in more than 120 Discovery retail stores and other branding efforts.

COPS, the reality police series, has been renewed by Fox Television Stations in all 22 of its markets for the 1999-2000 season. After six seasons, *COPS* has maintained its position as the top reality program in key adult demographics. It has also established itself as the longest running reality show in syndication (1993-98). Produced by Barbour/Langley Productions, the series is distributed by Twentieth Television.

Noggin heads to airwaves

On Feb. 2, Nickelodeon switches on Noggin, its commercial-free children's network, a joint venture with the Children's Television Workshop. Noggin's inaugural show will be the first episode of CTW's *Sesame Street*. Along with vintage CTW shows, Noggin will air original Nickelodeon strips and original interstitial programming exclusive to Noggin. Noggin General Manager Tom Ascheim says the lack of commercials leaves the channel a total of four hours of gaps between shows to fill with strands of short segments. Noggin is hoping to spin off some of those segments into stand-alone series next year.

Those strands include *Unpacking the World*, a feature that helps kids make sense of complex subjects; *Presidents of Infinity*, which asks kids to submit their solutions to world problems; and, *Out of Your Mind*, which features short films by kids. Ascheim previewed the first episode of *Out of Your Mind* and *Sam Digital*, a short film about a girl who rescues computer systems from viruses. Ascheim says Noggin's "role in kids' lives is to take fun shows and make them educational. Our mission is to serve kids' natural urge to learn."

Nickelodeon and CTW created Noggin last year primarily for digital distribution. However, the channel will be available via satellite this week on EchoStar's DISH Network, SNET Americast and GTE Americast services. Noggin's companion Web site will also launch Feb. 2.

—Donna Petrozzello



Noggin will air the first episode of 'Sesame Street,' which features an orange Oscar the Grouch.

Stamford, Conn.-based Cable Ready is pitching a fall 1999 offering, *Letitia & Mary on Manners*, featuring etiquette divas Letitia Baldrige and Mary Mitchell. The show is targeted for fall 1999.

In an unabashed attempt to lure a young male audience, USA Network previewed *Happy Hour*, a new original series starring Frank Zappa's sons Dweezil and Ahmet Zappa in a riotous version of a traditional variety show. *Happy Hour* boasts sing-a-longs, nearly naked female dancer/cheerleaders, musical guests and a psychedelic-style set. The series will air in prime time on Saturdays. USA Networks president of programming Steven Chao says he wants to introduce a show on Saturday nights that "isn't either some dark drama and isn't too cynical."

FX has tapped Tom Snyder Productions to create FX's first-ever animated comedy series, *The Dick and Paula Celebrity Special*, which will premiere in prime time this spring. Snyder Productions' credits include *Dr. Katz: Professional Therapist* for Comedy Central, which is drawn in Snyder's trademark SquiggleVision technique that will also be used for *Dick and Paula*. Snyder's animated series for FX features a husband-and-wife talk show team who interview celebrities and historical figures. FX also has on tap the new series, *The X Show*, an hour of talk that FX bills as "a fast-paced,

humorous daily hour of relaxed topical banter by likeable young every-guys." Also this spring, FX will introduce *Fast Food Films*, a half-hour series that presents short-form parodies of movies, infomercials and various TV shows.

FCC Chairman William Kennard appointed Kathleen Wallman to chair the commission's Public Safety National Coordination Committee. "[Wallman] brings with her a wealth of telecommunications expertise that will be essential as the NCC develops a national structure for what is the largest allocation ever of public-safety spectrum," Kennard says. The committee will advise the commission on use of 24 MHz of spectrum that was put aside for public safety purposes, develop a plan to help regions and communities make sure that their public safety systems are interoperable and recommend standards. Wallman runs her own consulting firm, Wallman Strategic Consulting. Prior to that, she worked in the Clinton administration and at the FCC.

David Zucker, managing director of ESPN International, is joining Diva Systems, Menlo Park, Calif., as president and CEO. Zucker has been with Disney/ABC for 11 years, the past eight with ESPN. He joins the cable video-on-demand company Feb. 22.

Kathleen Hricik has been named executive VP, international program enterprises, MTV

Networks. Based in New York, Hricik will be responsible for all international program sales and licensing and merchandising activities for MTV, VH1 and Nickelodeon, the company says. Previously, Hricik was senior VP, program enterprises, for Nickelodeon International, where she was responsible for international sales and distribution, among other duties.

Hearst New Media and Women.com formed Women.com Networks last week, a 50/50 joint venture that will cull content from Hearst's HomeArts.com network and Women.com. The companies expect the new Women.com to draw 11% of all female Web traffic, according to Marleen McDaniel, CEO of Women.com, who said the deal is a prelude to a planned IPO for the venture in the "near future." Women.com claims 4 million visitors to its site monthly.

Three owned and operated ABC affiliates started streaming newscasts live online via Broadcast.com this quarter. WPVI-TV, ABC's Philadelphia affiliate, began webcasting last week, with WABC-TV in New York and KTRK-TV in Houston slated to start streaming by March. Broadcast.com will archive each station's newscasts for one week after they initially air. Late last week, Broadcast.com reported a net loss of \$14.9 million in 1998 on revenues of \$22.4 million.

Intertainer, the online on-demand video serv-

ice, struck content licensing deals last week with Columbia TriStar Television Group, Warner Bros. and CINAR Corp. That gives Intertainer rights to video titles including *Godzilla*, *City of Angels* and *The Busy World of Richard Scarry*. Intertainer's strategic partners include Sony, Intel, NBC, Comcast and US West.

PanAmSat has introduced a new digital video distribution service, GALAXY 3D. The new digital service may save broadcasters and syndicators 50% and adds more flexibility in channel capacity, says PanAmSat's Michael Antonovich. Broadcast signals are digitized at PanAmSat's newly upgraded teleport using Scientific Atlanta's PowerVu MPEG-2 encoding system and transmitted via PanAmSat's Galaxy VI or SBS 5 satellites. Feeds are received and encoded using the PowerVu integrated receiver decoder (IRD). PanAmSat is working with Scientific Atlanta to formulate a purchase or lease arrangement for syndicators and station groups.

Correction: The affiliation of 12 of USA Broadcasting's 13 TV stations was reported incorrectly in the Jan. 25 list of the nation's top 25 TV groups. Eleven of the stations are HSN affiliates, while WNGM-TV Atlanta is affiliated with The Box. WAMI-TV Miami's affiliation with City Vision was reported correctly.

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COMMITTED TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND THE FIFTH ESTATE

A newsroom warning

Commentators are already waxing prolific about the far-ranging impact of TV anchor Janet Peckinpaugh's victory over former employer Post-Newsweek Stations. But beyond the benefit to the plaintiff and detriment to the defendant, we're not sure what it means.

Some say the decision will make it easier for women to age along with their audiences—and their male TV counterparts. A quick glance at daily newscasts would seem to confirm conventional wisdom that older men are more welcome than older women. But, in fact, amid her near total victory at trial, Peckinpaugh lost her age discrimination claim and the significance of her victory on aging may be limited to those who are promised—as she says she was—that they can “grow old” with their stations.

While the decision, if upheld, would appear to prevent stations from pigeonholing male and female anchors, logic would suggest that this is no guarantee of greater access for women to coveted spots any more than it is for men who have been unable to compete for the recognized female anchor positions.

One thing we can say: The judgment is a warning to news directors who base decisions about on-air talent on anything but quality of reporting and communication skills. Those who choose beauty over brains or who are guided solely by audience research, rating points and consultant formulas will likely not only produce bad journalism, but lawsuits as well.

Getting there

For a medium that seems to be standing still, there's a lot of movement in HDTV. For the broadcasting industry, it's a matter of a lot of good news adding up to less than a critical mass.

The first good news is the rate at which new digital stations are going on air. At last count there were almost 50, covering a remarkable 37.4% of U.S. TV homes.

Less impressive is the number of digital TV sets facing those signals. The total so far is 13,500, still far short of the 150,000 projected to be sold by the end of this year. But the prices for those new sets look certain to plummet. After starting out in the \$7,000-\$10,000 range, there now is evidence that the low end of the spectrum—that is, HDTV sets in the 34-inch to 38-inch range—will be available for \$3,000 by Christmas 1999. That's roughly a year ahead of the previous best estimates for price attrition.

Still another good-news element will be the debut in March of HBO's high-definition channel on DirecTV (and on some terrestrial cable where channel capacity is available).

That will put hours of quality HDTV within reach every day, and further help satisfy the programming side of the chicken-and-egg conundrum that attends the introduction of this new medium. ABC is continuing its weekly schedule of high-def movies. PBS is offering an occasional special. And coming on line this spring: NBC's introduction of HD on the *The Tonight Show*, which won't do much for dealer showroom traffic but will provide five late-night hours each week for insomniacs.

Beyond that, the silence is thunderous regarding broadcaster plans to get ahead of the curve with high definition. CBS, the one-time champion of HDTV, has become the laggard. Now that football season is over, it has virtually abandoned the service. Admittedly, the broadcasters are getting no encouragement from Madison Avenue. One advertising consultant at the NATPE convention last week said that agencies and advertisers are concerned about broadcasters' lack of a business model and programming. Broadcasters should be worried too.

Progress lurches before it leaps.

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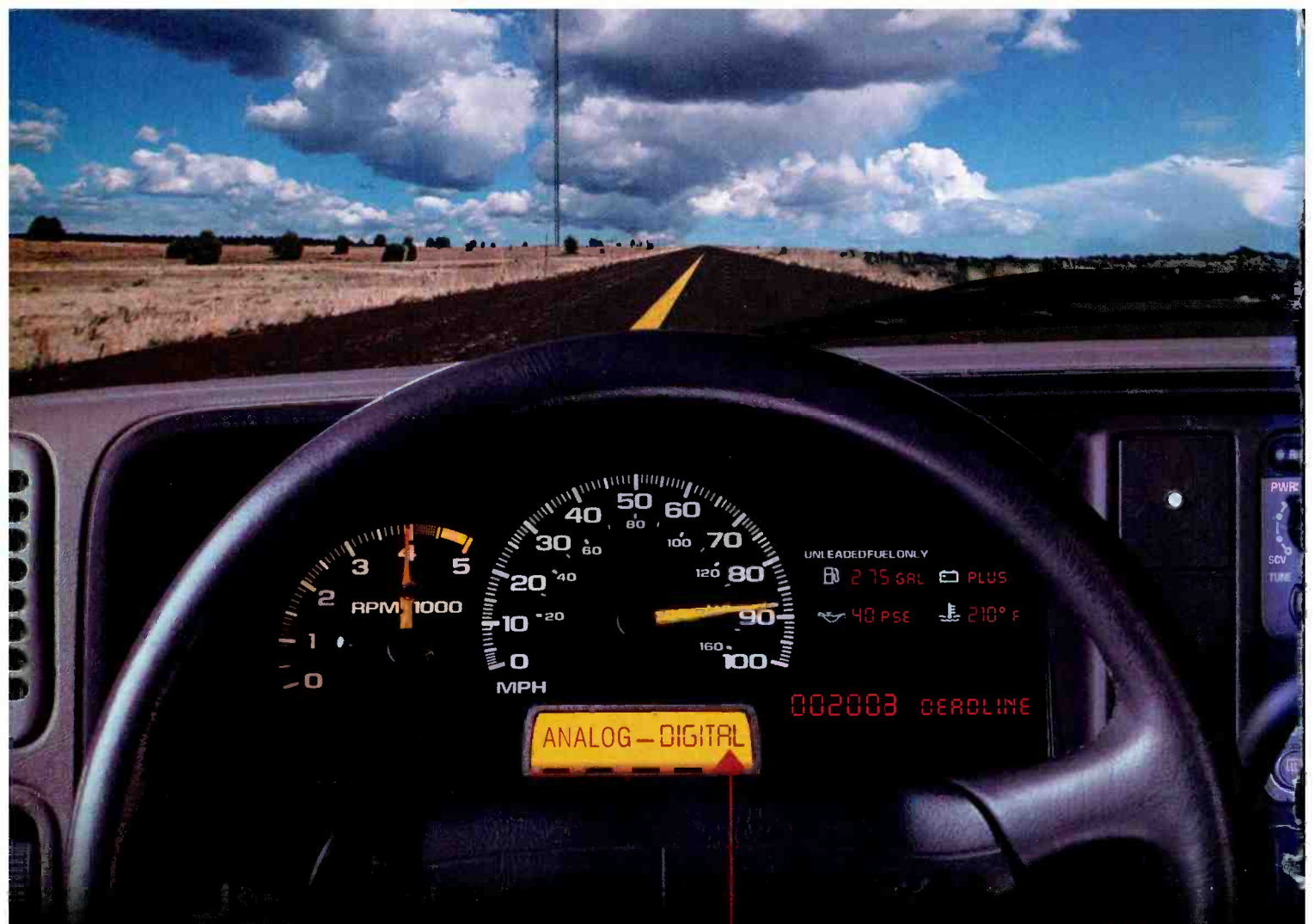
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