

BROADCASTING CABLE

MARCH 5, 2001

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FOX MAKING BIG PLANS FOR UPN

As News Corp. readies to acquire Chris-Craft, it also angles for a powerful piece of a second network

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Federal court decision may affect broadcast ownership limits, too

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TRYING TIMES FOR RUPERT

Murdoch just can't sew up his DirecTV deal

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SYNDIE: DOWN BUT NOT OUT

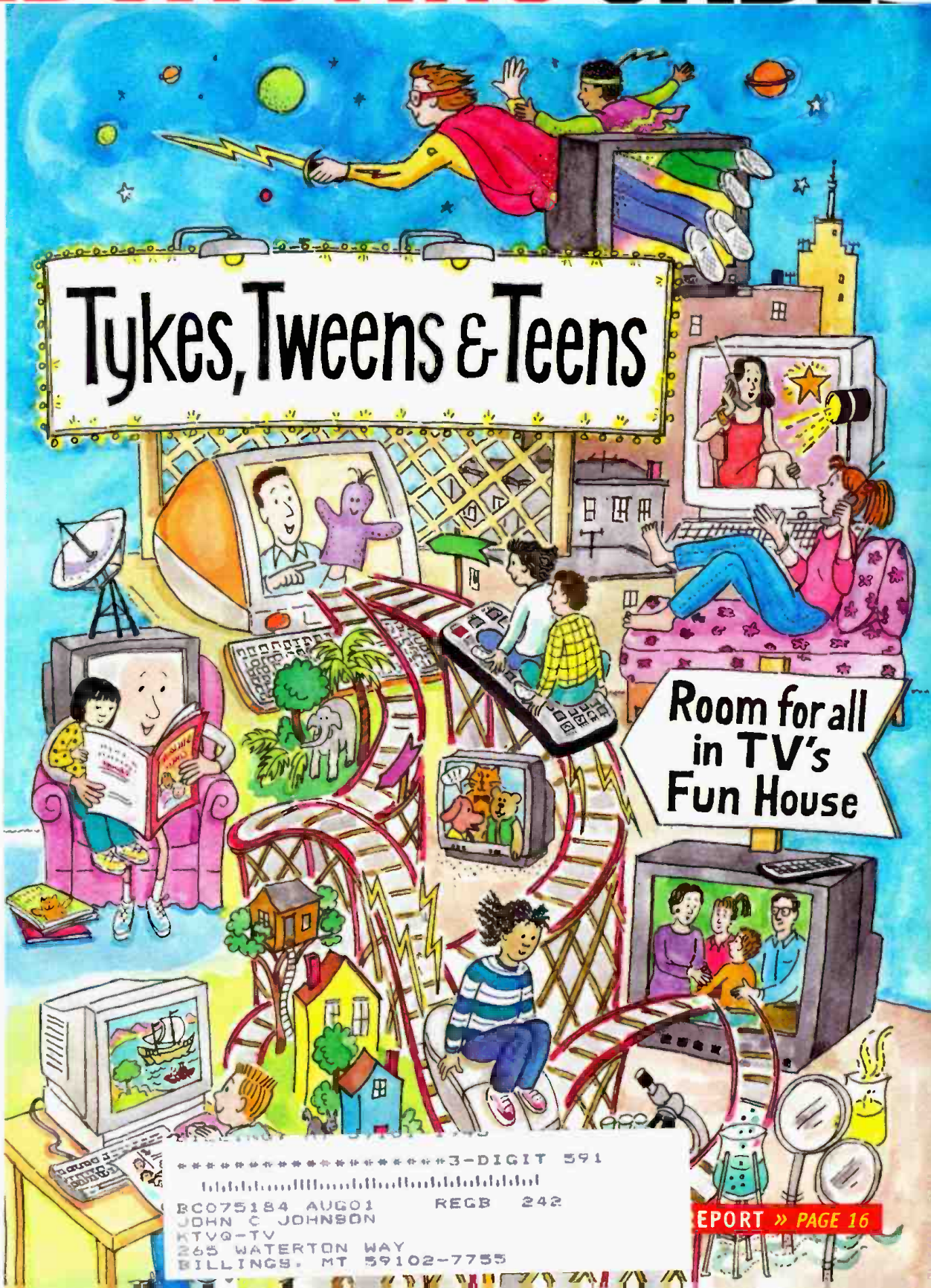
Many low-rated programs still hang on to life

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CLUTTER, BUT BETTER

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ADVERTISING

Dinero for Dora & Co.

Nickelodeon is wooing advertisers to use a piece of their Spanish-language budgets on Nick. The pitch? Most Hispanic kids in the U.S. live either in bilingual or English-language-dominant households. Nick has three shows with Hispanic leads—*Dora the Explorer*, *The Brothers Garcia* and *Taina*. The first advertiser to nibble was Chucky Cheese, from which Nick got its first-ever bilingual ad.

TAKE A LETTER

Broadcasters need as much protection from copyright theft as cable, key lawmakers told FCC chief Michael Powell in a letter.

Their concern is that if manufacturers don't include technology in new TVs and set-top boxes to keep copies of free broadcasts off the Internet, studios will withhold their content. And if studios start backing off on licensing original content to TV networks, both the transition to digital and free over-the-air television in general may suffer, the lawmakers said. Regulation, they said, "will protect localism and free, over-the-air television" and make for a "speedy transition" to DTV.

BC EYE

STATIONS

Soured on Apple

Members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers plan to meet at the NAB convention next month to discuss their concerns about the centralizing of broadcast operations by major TV groups. Already, NBC's selection of New York City as the central hub for seven stations is a bone of contention for IBEW #98 in Philadelphia. The local's Frank Goldstein is building a case against the New York hub, pointing to congested traffic and high operating costs.



WHO'S ON FIRST AT THE FCC?

Here's the latest on the hunt for new FCC commissioners. Former Commerce Department official Michael Copps is said to be the front-runner to replace Democrat Susan Ness. He is backed by Senate Commerce Committee ranking Democrat Ernest Hollings, to whom Chairman John McCain has promised the pick, and has the backing of Senate Minority leader Tom Daschle.

The two GOP seats still appear unsettled. Former NTIA head Janis Obuchowski is the highest-profile candidate for one seat, which apparently is designated for a woman. But Rebecca Armendariz, from President Bush's gubernatorial staff, and Kathleen Abernathy,

former FCC staffer, also have strong shots. Despite opposition from phone companies, Texas Utility regulator Judy Walsh has an outside chance. The other GOP slot seems wide open. Pat Wood, Texas' top utility regulator, appears out of the contest but is the leading candidate to either head NTIA or, if the spot opens up, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. That leaves the FCC spot a toss-up between Bush aide Kevin Martin and Earl Comstock, a former staffer for Sen. Ted Stevens.

Finally, when FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani steps down later this year, leading candidates for her seat are Rep. John Dingell's aide Andy Levin and Belo lobbyist Michael McCarthy.



NETWORKS

You made me take you

You had to wonder about the placement of one of the ads in ABC's Judy Garland bio last week. Coming out of a scene where Garland is popping a handful of pills (the story suggests the studio put her on diet pills to control her weight) and collapsing soon after, the first spot was for a diet pill. An ABC representative defended the placement. "It wasn't a mistake. . . We had no complaints."

And ABC pointed out the ad was rife with disclaimers urging consulting with a doctor.

"They made it clear in the movie that she died of drug abuse. It wasn't about using drugs, it was about abusing them."

UPN, Fox link taking shape

Weblet proceeds with programming plans as media giants determine its future ownership

By Joe Schlosser

UPN is in a curious limbo now. News Corp. is prepared to take a financial stake in the Viacom-owned network, if not outright ownership. And at the same time, executives at UPN are making final programming preparations for the fall that will include the next *Star Trek* series, *Enterprise*, from co-owned Paramount Network TV.

"I think it's probably safe to say that Fox would probably like to take as much of UPN as it can get," said one top executive close to the discussions. "I think they would like to have all of their ducks in a row by the time they get to May." That's when the FCC, they believe, will likely approve News Corp.'s acquisition of Chris-Craft, the station group that owns eight UPN-affiliated stations, including WWOR-TV New York and KCOP-TV Los Angeles.

News Corp. head Peter Chernin and Viacom President and COO Mel Karmazin have been discussing various ownership scenarios, including one that would have News Corp.'s Fox division taking over UPN altogether, according to well-placed sources. Several sources close to the discussions say any deal for UPN will involve the exchange of News Corp. and Viacom-owned local TV stations in major and medium-sized markets.

"We are in discussions with people at Fox,



Star Trek, Voyager wraps up its seven-year run on UPN this season. The network expects to replace it with another Star Trek series, Enterprise, this fall.

and we would like them to continue with us as affiliates at least and potentially more," Karmazin said, "but at least an affiliation for the next four or five years."

The struggling UPN has lost more than a billion dollars since its 1995 launch and stands to lose well over \$100 million this year alone, insiders say. Projections for UPN to be profitable by 2001 have now been pushed back to the 2002-2003 season at the earliest.

"The deal has a potential for a lot of swapping of television stations that will create duopolies for both parties," said one studio executive. "I think that's what's [creating] an opportunity to put UPN on the table. If Karmazin can get Chernin to step [in] and pick up half of the losses, which I think is his number-one objective, that will improve the financial results of Viacom."

Said another executive: "If Fox buys a 50% interest, obviously it could be co-run [by] News Corp. and Viacom. But we saw what happened the last time there was partnership at UPN." (Paramount squeezed out Chris-Craft, its former partner, last year.)

One scenario—if UPN were run jointly by Fox and Viacom—is for Fox to supply

programs for two nights and Viacom's Paramount to supply the other two nights.

UPN is coming off its first negative sweeps results in more than a year. UPN was hit hard by rival-reality series *Temptation Island* and *Survivor* during the February sweeps; the network lost a quarter of its 12- to 17-year-old viewers. It dropped 11% in households and 13% in total viewers for the month. But UPN did hold steady in adults 18-49 and 25-54. And season-to-date, they are up in both categories.

UPN President Dean Valentine is staying focused on programming. He says that he has "never been more excited" about the network's batch of midseason shows (which includes reality project *Chains of Love*) and that development for the fall is right on track.

Valentine shot down rumors that UPN's development is in a holding pattern because of the ownership uncertainty. He said the network will have ordered eight to 10 pilots by the end of the week—the same as last year.

The network has officially picked up four pilots, and sources say UPN and Paramount Network TV are in final discussions for the next *Star Trek* series, *Enterprise*. The network's current series, *Star Trek: Voyager*, is in its final season.

Insiders say *Voyager* producer Rick Berman will work on *Enterprise*.

UPN also has another deal with reality producers Endemol Entertainment, *Rebuild Your Life*, in which two families compete for a new home. ■

'If Karmazin can get Chernin to step [in] and pick up half of the losses...that will improve the financial results of Viacom.'

—A studio executive

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IN BRIEF

**BUSH PROPOSES
AUCTION DELAY**

President George W. Bush's first budget suggests delaying spectrum auctions until 2004 to increase the spectrum's value and fetch more money for the Treasury. The Office of Management and Budget estimates the delay will pull in \$7.5 billion. And like his father and President Bill Clinton before him, Bush proposes charging broadcasters \$200 million a year in spectrum "squatting" fees in 2002-06, decreasing the fees each year through 2010, when, the assumption appears to be, all the analog broadcast spectrum will have been reclaimed. That would mean nearly \$1.5 billion in spectrum fees over eight years. The proposal has often been made but has never gotten far in Congress.

A FRIEND INDEED

Responding to reporters after his remarks at a *Variety* media conference last week, former President Bill Clinton declined to comment on reports that he interceded in a dispute between CBS and his friend, TV producer Harry Thomason, with a phone call to CBS TV CEO and President Les Moonves. In a prepared statement, Moonves said he'd had "numerous chats" with Clinton in the past, including one in which the former president said, "Hey, Harry is our friend, be nice."

Credit Suisse First Boston tried hard to hide its sponsorship of the annual *Variety* Front Row conference, now embarrassed about the \$100,000 fee Clinton received. The investment banker's name disappeared from materials at the New York confab.

Court scraps cap

FCC will have to justify cable limits; broadcast limits in doubt

By Bill McConnell

Federal judges opened the door for more TV industry consolidation last week, throwing out the FCC's 30% cap on one cable company's share of the audience.

Although the ruling directly affects only cable, the ruling casts doubt on the validity of the FCC's broadcast ownership cap, which bars TV station owners from reaching more than 35% of the U.S. audience, and buoys a Fox effort to have it jettisoned.

The ruling, handed down by the federal appeals court in Washington, came a week after the Supreme Court upheld the 1992 law that is the basis for the cable caps. But in ordering the FCC to establish new limits, the lower court said the FCC failed to explain why the specific restrictions were justified given the infringement on cable companies' free speech-rights. The suit against the FCC was filed by Time Warner and AT&T.

"The FCC must still justify the limits that it has chosen as not burdening substantially more speech than necessary," wrote Judge Stephen Williams. "The FCC must show a record that validates the regulations, not just the abstract statutory authority." He suggested a 60% limit as more appropriate.

The decision also ordered the FCC to set new channel-occupancy limits, which bar a cable company from devoting more than 40% of its channel lineup to programming it owns. The restrictions seem to have been "plucked from thin air," Williams added.

The judges ordered the FCC to rewrite some of the ways it tallies partial investments in cable systems. They found that the FCC hasn't justified why limited partnerships, generally exempt, must be counted if the limited investor supplies programming to the partnership. They also said the FCC showed no reason for its deci-

sion last year to drop the "single-majority-shareholder" exemption, which shields holdings of minority investors from attribution when a partner controls 51% or more of the partnership.

AOL Time Warner officials said the decision made for a "good day for cable operators' First Amendment rights."

Consumer groups predict the decision will squelch opportunities for independent cable programmers. "It is up to the FCC to create a new limit that will protect consumers from media consolidation," said Cheryl Leanza, deputy director, Media Access Project.

Some broadcasters cheer the ruling, which appears to leave their ownership cap vulnerable. "I think it has pretty significant importance for us," said one industry source who would like to see the 35% cap lifted. News Corp., owner of Fox Television Stations, has a challenge pending before the same federal panel.

The other Big Four networks also want the cap raised or eliminated. They now have ammunition

against the political muscle of network affiliates and smaller station groups, backed by the NAB, that want to preserve it.

It's unclear whether immediate relief will be delivered to the one cable company impaired by the cap: AT&T, with a 42% share of multichannel subs. As part of the government's approval of the MediaOne Group purchase, it agreed to sell enough cable businesses by May 19 to get below the cap. FCC officials said when the merger was approved that they would hold AT&T to the deal regardless of how the court case turned out.

But AT&T is free to ask that merger terms be altered, and the FCC's view of ownership caps may change under Chairman Michael Powell.

AT&T officials would say only that they are "pleased" by the decision. ■

'The FCC must show a record that validates the regulations, not just abstract statutory authority.'

—Judge Stephen Williams

Photo: John Troha



DTV deadlines in doubt

Broadcasters and Commerce Committee chairman appear in agreement that 2002, 2006 are too close for comfort

By Paige Albiniak

There's "not a snowball's chance in Gila Bend, Ariz.," that all 1,600 commercial broadcasters will be transmitting digitally by May 2002. That's how Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) put it last week during a hearing on the DTV conversion. Broadcasters weren't arguing. What's more, there's about as much chance they will be giving back their analog spectrum by the end of 2006.

"I think 2006 is going to be a very difficult deadline to meet," conceded Ben Tucker, executive vice president of Fisher Broadcasting and president of the NAB Television Board, but only after a lot of prodding from an irritated McCain.

At first, Tucker told McCain that broadcasters are "on track" to add a digital signal by May 2002, the date by which the FCC requires all commercial broadcasters to be broadcasting digitally. In his testimony, Tucker also said "it's not in the best interest of the broadcasting industry to delay the DTV transition." But later, he admitted that it's going to be hard to get all broadcasters up and running as quickly as Congress and the FCC would like. "Small-market broadcasters are going to run into hardships, there's no question about it," Tucker said.

Senate Commerce Committee Chairman

McCain, who routinely complains that broadcasters have received \$70 billion of spectrum for free, found a comrade-in-arms in new committee member Sen. Peter Fitzgerald (R-Ill.). Fitzgerald said the government's loan of the digital spectrum to broadcasters was one of the "corporate-welfare giveaways I wanted to go to Washington to fight."

Fitzgerald joined McCain in grilling broadcasters about when they would give back the analog spectrum and also asked whether they would be willing to pay fees to stay on the analog spectrum past 2002—a suggestion the Bush administration also made in its annual budget released last week (see In Brief).

Tucker ultimately said no, with McCain adding: "What you would probably do is come to the Congress to get an extension, and that's what you are planning on doing."

Broadcasters wouldn't go so far as to say that, but they did ask Congress to require cable operators to carry all their signals—whether digital or analog, one full channel or six multiplexed.

"Undoubtedly, the most important issue for Pax TV in terms of a successful DTV

transition is cable and satellite carriage of all 6 MHz of our stations' digital signals," said Jeff Sagansky, president of Paxson Communications.

"During the transition, digital cable systems must be required to carry both the analog and digital channels of local broadcasters," Tucker said. "With 70% of the American public getting their broadcast channels through cable, cable cannot be allowed to act as the digital gatekeeper."

Not surprisingly, cable's representative, Insight Communications President Michael Willner, balked at that suggestion. "Whether they convert to digital doesn't affect me at all, except that they keep trying to confiscate my property," Willner told Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska).

Stevens was more sympathetic to broadcasters' difficulties: "I think there is a need for an extension of deadlines in existing law," he said.

In addition to dual must-carry during the transition, broadcasters want legislation requiring all TV sets to have analog and digital TV tuners by next year, which would allow consumers to get both analog and digital TV signals over the air. Broadcasters also want Congress and the FCC to help sort out

the partly resolved interoperability issues between the cable industry and consumer electronics manufacturers.

Wireless companies are hungrily eyeing broadcasters' huge hunk of spectrum, planning to use it for new, super fast wireless services. Wireless companies

"haven't pushed and screamed too much about this, but they're about to," warned Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.). "The pressure is building for this to take place."

The FCC also wants the broadcasters to get off, promoting a plan first proposed by Paxson Communications Chairman Lowell "Bud" Paxson. According to that plan, spectrum auction winners would pay incumbent broadcasters billions to vacate their spectrum quickly. ■

**'Small-market
broadcasters are
going to run into
hardships, there's no
question about it.'**

—Ben Tucker, Fisher Broadcasting,
NAB TV Board

Push comes to shove

'On-the-bubble' syndie shows face ax after February sweeps

By Susanne Ault

When syndicators ignored November sweeps' election-muddled results, several "on-the-bubble" series, though not officially renewed for next season, weren't canceled. But after February's no-excuses sweeps, some of the bubbles will have to pop.

None of the ratings-challenged shows posted marks above 2.0 in the weighted metered markets last month, according to Nielsen Media Research. And most of them are doing worse in their time periods versus last year's occupants of those slots.

A few are close to definite dismissal. *Judge Mills Lane* (1.3 rating/5 share, down 24% from its year-ago time-period average) has already lost its Tribune station launch group, and

Queen Latifah (1.6/6, down 6%) is expected to be dropped from the Fox O&Os. *Real TV* (1.6/5, flat) reportedly closed down production last Friday, and *Dr. Laura* (0.9/5, down 25%), relegated to late-late night, should also be counted in that group.

However, many such shows could survive to see fall 2001. "For us, we like *Moral Court* (1.1/3, flat)," says KCAL-TV Los Angeles Programming Director Virginia Hunt. "Of course, we are looking for better numbers, but, for daytime shows, it's brutal what your expectations can be. To just get a 2.0 now is a home run."

Also helping *Moral Court's* case is that it has locked up two-year deals in many markets, according to a source close to Tribune, which airs the show on several of its stations. But, since the strip "is on the edge economically, [Warner Bros.] has gone back to stations and told them there would not

be a double run," possibly because slim ad rates can't off-set the extra residual fees to show staffers and talent. A Warner Bros. spokesperson had no comment.

The source sees the stations' side of the issue, too: "With the economy being what it is, stations are probably a little reticent to pay for something new and unproven."

Why would studios continue with such series? As syndication insiders point out, studios are less interested in the show than in its time period, which is crucial to good relations with advertisers.

"Warner Bros. is a real estate business," says one syndication source. "They are not going to give up prime real estate on stations until the absolute last minute. As soon as studios say it's over, stations start moving the shows and the advertisers start asking for make-goods."

Yet Warner Bros.' *Queen Latifah* is on the ropes for that very reason. Sources say the Fox O&Os want to make room for planned regional rollouts by production partner Twentieth Television. The station group's chief, Bob Cook, has hinted at a talk show on selected outlets, and *Texas Justice* debuts this month on six Southern Fox O&Os.

Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus (1.0/4, down 38%), now on many NBC-owned stations as the lead-out to *The Today Show*, is probably looking over its shoulder at NBC's own 2001 project, *The Other Half*. For the first three weeks of February, the Columbia TriStar show nabbed a 0.7 household rating, 13% below its season-to-date average.

—Virginia Hunt,
KCAL-TV Los Angeles

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One source at a major NBC affiliate says,

"I would sure like some relief from this show as soon as possible; presumably, this is where *The Other Half* will run."

A Studios USA Domestic Television spokesperson says it is "actively selling" freshman *Arrest & Trial* (1.7/4, 11%), clearing it in 66% of the U.S., though not in Los Angeles and New York. King World's *Curtis Court* (1.6/5, down 11%) is similarly homeless there for next season. ■

Writers strike writ large?

Negotiations between the Writers' Guild of America (WGA) and film and TV producers have broken off, raising concerns in Hollywood that a strike may not be far off. WGA executives claim that they are about \$60 million apart on a new three-year contract.

"While the suspension of these talks will not inevitably lead to a strike, we are deeply concerned," said *ER* executive producer and WGA West President John Wells. "No one is anxious for a strike."

The two sides have been negotiating for the last five weeks, getting ever closer to May 1, when the current WGA contract with studios and the networks expires. Two months later, the Screen Actors Guild contract with the Alliance of Motion Picture & Television Producers is also up.

Nick Counter, the president and chief negotiator for the producers and networks, said WGA members walked away from their "fair" proposal of a \$30 million contract increase over three years. "These negotiations started some 28 days ago. I think both sides worked very hard to bridge the gap between them, but the gap is just too big at this point," Counter said.

Wells said that the WGA is looking for an 11.3%, or \$60.9 million, increase in residual fees over the next three years and an additional \$40 million increase in pension and health care coverage. There is no set date to resume the negotiations. —Joe Schlosser

A bidding stand-off

New network homes for *Buffy*, *Frasier*, and *Dharma & Greg*?

By Joe Schlosser

A high-priced game of Russian roulette, television style, may cause three series—*Frasier*, *Dharma & Greg* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*—to move to new networks next fall, all evidence of the power of a hit show in an increasingly fragmented television universe.

NBC's exclusive negotiating period for *Frasier* with Paramount Network TV came and went late last week, with both sides holding firm to their demands. Paramount wants a three-year, \$5.5 million renewal, while NBC executives would rather have a two-year pact for less money.

Insiders say CBS is ready to step up to the plate for its co-owned studio and nab

Frasier. ABC is facing a renewal in the area of \$3 million per episode for *Dharma & Greg*, which is produced by 20th Century Fox, or the reality of losing its Tuesday night comedy to NBC or Fox. Negotiations for *Dharma* are in an early stage, and where *Frasier* ends up may influence ABC's decision.

Likewise, The WB CEO Jamie Kellner said last week that he has made his final offer to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* producer, 20th Century Fox, and "the ball is now in their court." *Buffy*, in its fifth season on The WB, may wind up on rival Fox.

The WB is ready to pay \$1.6 million, while the studio is believed to be asking for closer to \$2 million per episode. As of this

week, 20th Century Fox is able to shop the series around.

Studios sell programs to networks at a deficit, hoping to make up the difference in syndication. But *Buffy* is unusually expensive to produce.

"We have no idea whether Fox will decide to come down; we have made our proposal to them, and they made a proposal back to us that was not acceptable," said Kellner. "We've been pretty clear about how we get there and that we are willing to take all of the revenue that the show generates and take off the fixed costs of agency commissions and the paid media to support the show. ... That's as far as we will go." ■

It's possible that *Frasier's* Eddie might be jumping to CBS.



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IN BRIEF

POWELL: DON'T RUSH TO DIGITAL

FCC Chairman Michael Powell says Europe's lead in "third-generation [3G]" wireless services are no reason to rush the digital-TV transition. "A lot of times, first technology is seductive," he told the Precursor Group last week. "The Japanese had a whole HDTV system developed before we got started. Funny thing, they missed the ability to digitize."

Forcing TV stations to abandon analog by 2006 just to make room for unproven 3G technology won't go over well if few viewers have DTV sets, he warned: "There is very little tolerance for TVs' going black in America."

OVERBUILDER GOING UNDER

After struggling for weeks to find a way to stay in business, over-builder Digital Access is closing its doors.

Digital Access aimed its \$450 million in equity bankroll at Nashville, Tenn.; Milwaukee; Indianapolis; and Kansas City, Mo. The company had expected to borrow another \$900 million.

But the frozen lending markets prompted Digital Access pull-out of everything but Nashville as of two weeks ago. Chairman Joe CeCe said his equity investors decided that, even if the Nashville build were successful, they couldn't get the 30%-plus returns in equity they demand.

FCC PLUGS LEAK

The FCC fired a Cable Services Bureau employee for leaking confidential documents to a lobbyist regarding three telcom mergers and a cable open-access inquiry. Because of the leaks, the agency ruled that lobbyists doing business before the FCC must return any nonpublic drafts.

Small potatoes, big dreams

AT&T system deal helps Mediacom, Charter goals

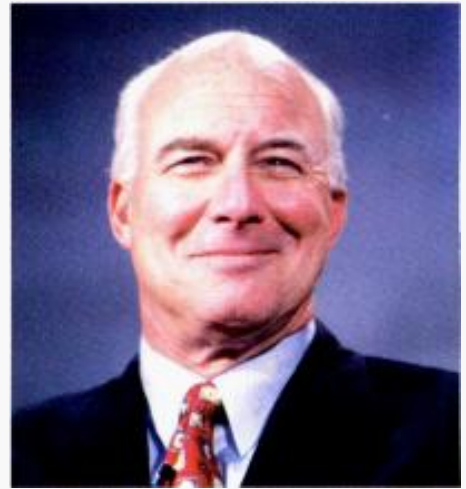
John M. Higgins

By unloading some stepchildren, AT&T Broadband is helping two other cable operators achieve long-held dreams.

The biggest effects from the \$3.5 billion in systems sales AT&T cut last week will be felt by Mediacom Communications, which will double in size and graduate from serving cast-off rural systems to bigger towns and small cities. The buyer of a separate group of systems, Charter Communications, will fulfill a long-held desire to control virtually all the cable subscribers in St. Louis, which is its home market.

Rural cable operator Mediacom agreed to pay \$2.2 billion for its package. The systems were afterthoughts to AT&T Chairman Michael Armstrong, serving small cities and towns in Georgia, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri. But Mediacom Chairman Rocco Commisso has built his company over the past five years by stitching together systems in many truly rural areas. The new buys give him small cities, including Columbus, Ga.; Moline, Ill; and Des Moines, Iowa—places that have higher home densities than other Mediacom markets

Those are sub-prime markets to AT&T, which is focused on major markets like San Francisco and Chicago. "To me, these are crown jewels; to them, it's a rural divestiture strategy," said Commisso. The deal comes to \$2,600 per subscriber and around 12-times running-rate cash flow; it doubles Mediacom's size to 1.6 million subscribers.



AT&T Chairman Michael Armstrong's sale of \$3.5 billion worth of cable systems helped reduce the struggling Broadband unit's debt without endangering its systems in larger markets, such as Chicago and San Francisco.

After years of trying to dominate its home market of St. Louis, Charter Communications Chairman Jerry Kent scored, landing AT&T's half of the area in a wide-ranging \$1.8 billion system deal.

St. Louis-based Charter and its predecessor company, Cencom, have owned systems in the suburbs serving 260,000 subscribers for years, but Kent has longed for the 245,000 subscribers in the city owned by AT&T and its predecessor, Tele-Communications Inc. Kent will now have more than 90% of the market. Charter also gets 156,000 subscribers in Nevada, most notably Reno, and 147,000 in Alabama.

Charter will cover about 60% of the \$1.8 billion price with cash. Kent is paying up to \$500 million in Charter Common stock and trading away systems in Miami Beach and Sebastian, Fla.—markets where AT&T has nearby cable operations. Kent was enthusiastic, even though it may push his leverage to a precariously high 7.8-times annual cash flow.

The deal comes to \$3,100 per subscriber and around 16-times cash flow. That's less than the huge \$5,500-\$6,000 per sub and 20-times-plus deals from last year, but those were for high-growth properties, and not all of these systems are in as strong markets. ■

'To me, these are crown jewels; to them, it's a rural divestiture strategy.'

—Rocco Commisso, Mediacom chairman

DirecTV deal wobbling?

GM may not be willing to sell DBS unit to News Corp.

By John M. Higgins

Rupert Murdoch's enduring lust for a U.S. DBS play may once again go unfulfilled. Industry and Wall Street executives are growing skeptical that General Motors will actually sell its Hughes Electronics and DirecTV operation.

Signals from GM officials and a new round of solicitations from other buyers have industry players doubting that GM will be willing to sell the company, particularly to be merged into News Corp.'s Sky Global international DBS operations.

"The problem is that both sides are overvaluing their assets," said one analyst. "At the end of the day, I think most people over-

estimate the cash flows from DirecTV."

Hughes' stock has been dropping ever since word broke two weeks ago that Murdoch was talking about a deal that would value Hughes only around \$35 billion. "They leaked the deal to the Street; the Street said we don't like it," said one investment banker. "I think GM screwed up, had this auction, thought there would be five bidders, and there's only one."

That, Wall Street bankers and analysts said, is why News Corp. Chairman Murdoch acknowledged Tuesday that talks continue but at a "slow and grinding pace." He wants to pull a reverse merger, push his Sky Global unit—which includes

U.K.'s BskyB and Asia's Star DBS services—into Hughes, give Hughes shareholders most of the stock plus some cash, and wind up running the combined operation.

But the valuations aren't right. GM owns

30% of Hughes, which is a tracking-stock subsidiary of the car manufacturer. When GM started talking about selling Hughes last year, the unit's stock was in the mid-\$30s, and it appeared the company could get nearly \$50 per share from Murdoch. Now the stock is at \$22 and might sell for \$35.

So instead of a \$45 billion-or-so valuation, GM officials are looking at a \$30 billion valuation. Money managers said GM and Hughes executives have been quietly asking what the market's reaction might be if DirecTV is not sold. ■



News Corp. Chairman Rupert Murdoch has long sought a U.S. satellite operation.

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Millennium Sales & Marketing

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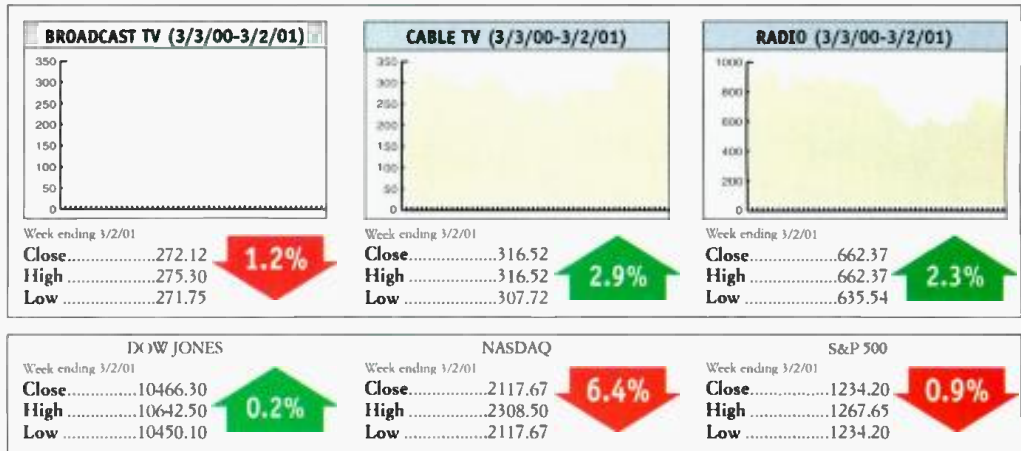
Week of February 26-March 2

WINNERS

	3/2	% change
Regents Comm.....	\$8.75	17.90
Radio One Inc.....	\$16.94	17.32
Mediacom Comm.....	\$20.25	14.89
Cox Radio Inc.....	\$23.25	12.86
Televest Comm.....	\$18.44	8.46

LOSERS

	3/2	% change
Liberty Sat.....	\$3.25	(18.11)
Antec Corp.....	\$8.88	(6.58)
Salem Comm.....	\$14.25	(6.56)
Big City Radio.....	\$4.40	(6.38)
Classic Comm.....	\$2.94	(6.00)



Whole latte shaking

Earthquake is reality TV (and radio) Seattle style

By Dan Trigoboff

Seattle Mayor Paul Schell and Microsoft mogul Bill Gates were about to discover what real power is.

Schell and Gates were separately, but simultaneously, holding court before TV cameras—Schell to discuss the previous day's Mardi Gras riots, Gates to address an educational symposium at a Westin hotel ballroom—when the 6.8 earthquake hit.

Both scenes provided dramatic footage for local audiences at KIRO-TV, as well as national cable and network audiences.

Viewers saw chandeliers shaking and attendees exiting at the Westin. Meanwhile at the mayor's conference, KIRO-TV reporter Brian Wood was shouting for his newsroom to "come to me" live.

News crews all over the city were dropping their assignments to go live with shots of quake damage and seismology reports. "Nobody did a planned story all day," said KIRO-TV News Director Bill Lord.

"Everybody was told to get out of the building, although some news people stayed," said Dave Lougee, who was news director at KING-TV before becoming general manager. Within minutes, "all the news and opera-

tions people ran back in and on the air. It's more than just an adrenaline rush," he added, praising all the Seattle broadcast news media already exhausted from covering riots late the previous night. "Everybody knows they have an enormous public service to fulfill. ... Everybody got vital information on quickly."

KOMO-TV, the ABC affiliate, had problems briefly with powering its satellite feed, prompting ABC to ask KIRO-TV for the use of its video. KIRO-TV refused and also refused to give NBC permission to use footage of the Gates conference on *Nightly News*. The network, citing fair-use doctrine, used a few seconds anyway.

NBC affiliate KING-TV did not give Fox News Channel permission to use its footage, but Fox said the footage it used came courtesy of Northwest Cable which, like KING-TV, is owned by Belo. It also used footage from ABC affiliate KOMO-TV and Fox affiliate KCPQ(TV).

"At about 11 seconds into the quake," said KOMO-TV News Director Joe Barnes, "I rushed into the newsroom and said, 'Get on the air!' We were just minutes away from our 11:00 news anyway."

Even with his relatively small staff, KCPQ's Todd Makhtari quickly got his station's three trucks on the road, soon joined by trucks borrowed from Fox and more flown in by station owner Tribune, along with reporters and photographers. "We had Chinese food brought in for dinner," Makhtari said. "My fortune said, 'Idleness is the holiday of fools.'"

Washington's first earthquake in more than 50 years rattled some radio stations more than others. Seattle's unscathed KISW(FM) played songs like *You Shook Me All Night Long* by AC/DC. Other stations, among them Olympia's KGY(AM), rose above their broken recorders and computers to cover the drama.

At KGY, the station contended with a burst hot-water tank and damaged equipment. Citizens, including Washington's secretary of state, walked in or called up to report how they dealt with the quake. ■

—P. Llanor Alleyne contributed to this story



'At about 11 seconds into the quake, I rushed into the newsroom and said, "Get on the air!"'

—Joe Barnes, KOMO-TV



Fusing fact and fiction

Television needs oases of rationality, not purveyors of 'magic'

Johnny Carson once had the famous spoon bender, Uri Geller, on to give a little demonstration of his psychic skills. When Geller took his seat, he was surprised to find a coffee table laid out with objects Carson had chosen to test those skills. Carson, who was a magician in his youth, asked Geller to use his mental dowsing powers to figure out which of several small metals vials contained water.

That shouldn't have been too tough for a guy who claims he can shove around bookcases with his brain. But guess what? He couldn't do it. He claimed the vibes were bad. I'm thinking (and I bet Carson was thinking) he couldn't do it because he hadn't set up the trick as all good magicians must.

Last week, there was a little dust up over a *Time* magazine article that suggested that there might be video chicanery involved when famed psychic (it says here) John Edward tries to talk to dead people. Edward has a nightly show on Sci Fi during which he puts members of his studio audience in touch with their dearly depart-

ed. So popular has the show become that Studios USA was able to sell *Crossing Over with John Edward* into broadcast syndication this fall.

The show's producers fired off a letter to *Time*, denying the allegations that Edward is helped by clever editing and a staff that eavesdrops and learns personal information about members of the audience while milling around with them before the show.

I'm amused. Could it be that Edward is not really able to conjure up the dead? *Time* ought to investigate the WWF. I got a tip that those guys are faking it.

Now I can't tell you about Edward. But here's a fact: No psychic in recorded history has been able to prove in a con-

trolled scientific setting that he or she can tell the future, visit with the dead, or read your mind with any more accuracy than an accomplished poker player.

To their credit, the producers don't claim Edward is real, just that he's really good television. "It is not our intent to persuade or convince anyone to believe in psychic phenomena," they wrote to *Time*. "We encourage viewers and guests to approach *Crossing Over* with a healthy sense of skepticism, and then make up their own minds about what they see.

"It's not about whether you believe or don't believe he's talking to someone from the other side," says Studio USA's Steve Rosenberg. "It's about that moment when he really

connects with someone."

Of course, TV is awash in UFOs, alien abductions and just every other paranormal phenomenon you can think off.

But one of TV's great unexplained mysteries—one even a man of John Edward's extraordinary talents couldn't explain—is why such programming dreck has found homes on networks like Discovery and The History Channel.

Say what you will about Edward, he resides primarily on

want to question every claim on every show on the network. I don't think that is what founder John Hendricks had in mind. Not that I read minds. But if not for the bug in the lower right corner, you wouldn't know Discovery from Fox sometimes.

Now, these shows tend to present the strange goings-on as reported occurrences, not as fact. But the overall effect of shows like Discovery's upcoming *Monsters, Cannibals and Strange Graves* is to lend plenty of cre-

No psychic has been able to prove that he or she could read your mind with any more accuracy than an accomplished poker player.

Sci Fi as in *Science Fiction*. People can't say they weren't warned going in.

But History is almost the diametric opposite of Sci Fi. It is, or is supposed to be, well, about History. It claims to be one of the great purveyors of nonfiction television. Yet, there are enough spooks loose on their schedules to make Leonard Nimoy jealous. History has a regular series called *Haunted History*, an excuse for retelling every old ghost story the producers can find, sometimes dramatized.

Last Thursday night, Discovery aired an hour on the afterlife (with zombies!) that careened so violently between fact and fiction that it made you

dence to them. It's tough to give up programs for which the public seems to have an insatiable appetite, but I wish Discovery and History at least would. They, of all networks, should be oases of rationality.

I'm starting to sound like a curmudgeon. Maybe all of it is harmless fun. But tune into John Edward. See how emotionally upset some of his subjects become. Some people really believe this stuff. Including, perhaps, the editors of *Time*. What would Henry Luce say? Maybe John Edward should ask. ■

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SPECIAL REPORT

From the time kids can toddle on over to the TV set, they understandably find the medium mesmerizing.

The bright colors, moving figures, happy music—it's enough to make a child want to just sit there all day.

And today, more than ever, children can sit and sit and sit. For example, PBS, Disney, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Fox Family, Fox Kids and WAM! all kick off their days with TV for kids. Most of them start with programming for the preschool set and set aside afternoons and early evenings for the older crowd, ages 6-11, 9-14 (the newly defined tween segment) and teens.

And there is money to be made. According to New York City-based ad tracker Competitive Media Reporting (CMR), The total ad spending on children's educational, children's and family entertainment and animation programming for 2000 was \$1.138 billion, up \$20 million from 1999. More specifically, \$1.08 million was spent during educational programs, \$277 million during children's and family entertainment, and \$860 million during animated fare.

Fox Kids' Joel Andryc, executive vice president of programming and development for Fox Family and Fox Kids, says: "Children's TV is more competitive today and a much more

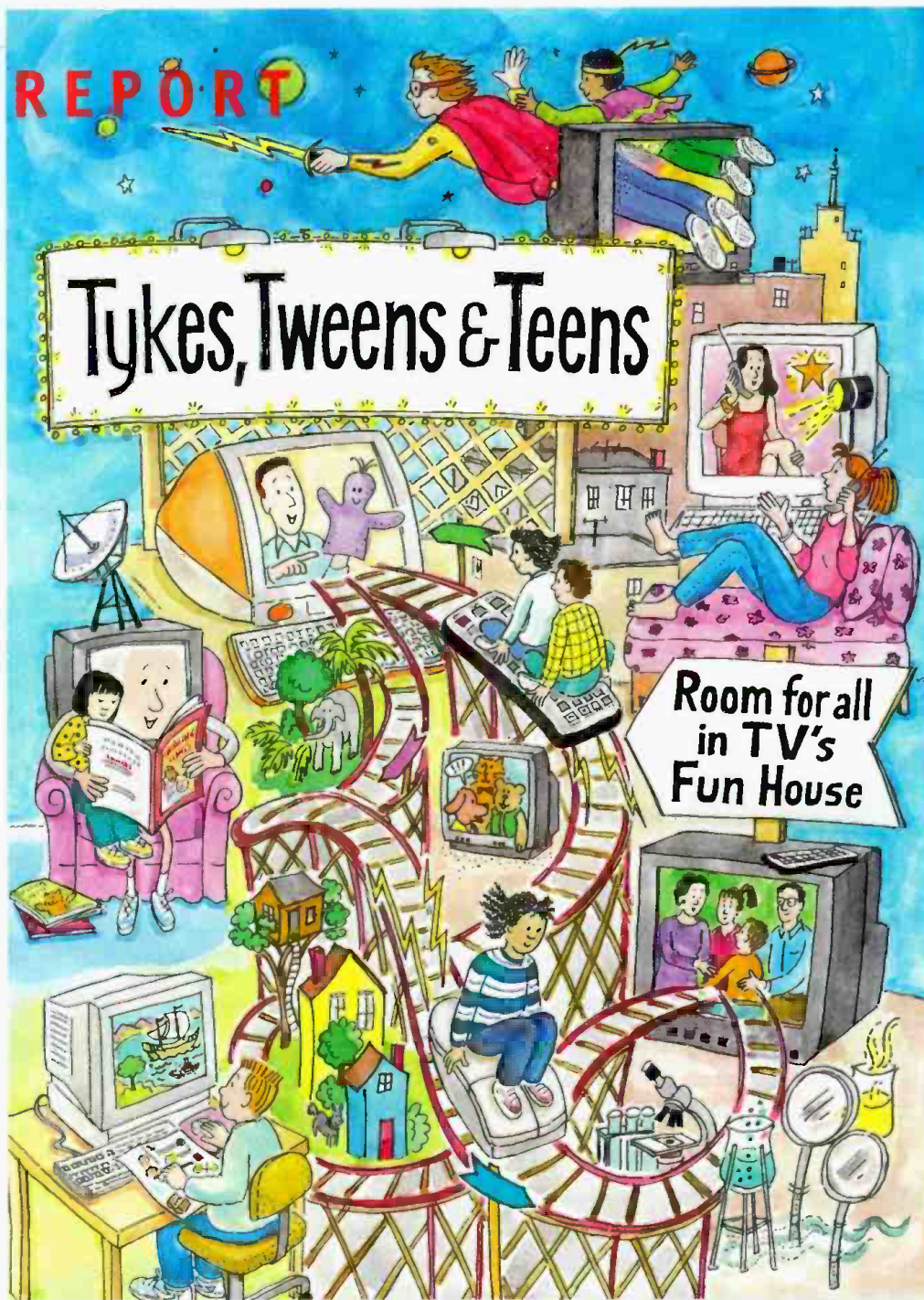


Illustration: Susan Detrich

BY CATHERINE SCHEITTING SALFINO

lucrative industry. The entire ad industry realized that kids have funds of their own and that they influence the purchasing decisions of their parents."

John F. Wilson, senior vice president of programming, East, for PBS, says a big way children's television has changed over the years is how

kids "watch up," or watch shows for bigger kids.

This offers an underlying challenge for children's programmers. Andryc says that it's tough today to make shows that kids want to watch and yet send out the right message. Fox Kids' *Digimon: Digital Monsters* is aimed at 6- to 11-

year-olds yet garners preschool viewers, too.

"Kids are growing up more quickly as they see movies and prime time programming that skews older," Andryc explains. "And while Barney may have been appropriate for a 5-year-old in 1990, that doesn't hold true today." ■

Tyke TV grows up

Programming for the under-6 group diversifies and educates



Illustration: Susan Detrich

It appears the children's networks are listening to experts who say that the programs watched by the 2-5 group should be educational. While not all shows for the preschoolers teach letters, numbers, shapes and colors, like the standard for today's kids' shows, *Sesame Street*, they strive to introduce children to sharing, problem solving, getting along with others and creativity.

The hit programs for this youngest set generally have one thing in common: They're gentle. They don't involve combat fighting, weapons, intense romance among kids or scary plot lines. They do involve one or more of the following: singing, dancing, silliness, friendship. And when kids get caught up in these shows, they don't realize they're being shown how to share by Barney, how to count by Steve and Blue, or

the importance of getting along by Rolie Polie Olie. But that's what programming executives say they are trying to get across.

"I'm convinced they like good stories well told," says John F. Wilson, senior vice president of programming, East, for PBS. "The show has to be based on a story line with strong characters kids can relate to. Anytime you get away from that and try to present a straightforward program on, say, social literacy, kids will get turned off. But if you present Arthur having to get along with his sister, D.W., then you have something kids will watch. They didn't know it, but they were getting a lesson on how to problem-solve, function as a group, share."

PBS's top shows for the 2- to 5-year-olds are *Arthur*, *Teletubbies*, *Dragon Tales*, *Barney* and *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, which is a new animated series based on the books by Norman Bridwell. Newer up-and-comers are *Caillou* and *Zoboomafoo*. The network is finding the Nielsen age breakdown tough, though.

"We're compelled to measure it 2-5 and 6-11 because of Nielsen, but, increasingly, it's unsatisfying to us," Wilson says. "We refer to

it as little kids and older little kids, because it's less about age and more about stage. The 2-5 bracket doesn't describe everything; there's a huge range there. A show for school-age kids often draws 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds. But, generally, little children like *Teletubbies*, *Mr. Rogers* and *Barney*. Kids then look toward shows like *Arthur*, *Dragon Tales* and *Clifford*. Those 4- and 5-year-olds often watch *Zoom*, which features big kids. But the viewing habits of kids differ household by household. When my 6-year-old was 2, he didn't watch any TV. But my 2-year-old is now into watching what my 6-year-old likes."

Wilson says that, since PBS can't stop little kids from watching shows for

bigger kids, where there's more ambiguity in the resolution of stories and the "peril" is more intense, it makes sure the older-skewing shows feature some characters with which 3- and 4-year-olds can identify.

This age/stage issue is something that Nickelodeon reflects in its schedule, as it breaks its programming into two segments: Nick Jr. and Nickelodeon.

"Broadly, we believe we reach 2-14,"

PBS can't stop little kids from watching shows for bigger kids, so it makes sure these shows feature some characters that 3- and 4-year-olds can identify with.

Besides *Rugrats*...

Children 2-5

Broadcast, 6 a.m.-6 p.m.

Show/Network	Shr/Rtg	Aud (000)
Little Bill/CBS	19/4.1	758
Little Bear/CBS	19/4.0	706
Dora the Explorer	21/4.2	659
Disney's House of Mouse	20/3.8	597
Disney's Mickey Mousework	17/3.2	498

Children 6-11

Broadcast, 6 a.m.-6 p.m.

Show/Network	Shr/Rtg	Aud (000)
Pokémon2/WB	21/6.0	1449
The X-Men/WB	16/4.3	1049
Los Luchadores/Fo	13/4.0	969
Jackie Chan Adv	16/4.0	974
Zeta Project/WB	14/4.0	73

Children 12-17

Broadcast, 24 hours

Show/Network	Shr/Rtg	Aud (000)
Malcolm in the Middle/Fox	25/9.9	2249
Temptation Island/Fox	30/9.8	2214
The Simpsons/Fox	16.6	2171
Survivor II/CBS	21/8.0	1809
Grounded for Life/Fox	17.6	1729

While Nickelodeon provides seemingly one-stop shopping for children in the cable universe, the broadcast market has its own favorites. Ratings are cover the period 10/2/00-2/18/01.

SPECIAL REPORT

says Cyma Zarghami, executive vice president and general manager of Nickelodeon. "The core that Nielsen measures is 2-11, but, specifically, we have a whole part of our day devoted to 2-5, which is the Nick Jr. block. The numbers can then be broken down again for 6-11 and also the tweens, 9-14, which is the Nickelodeon block."

Nick Jr. targets little viewers with its biggest franchise hit, *Blue's Clues*, as well as new fare like *Dora the Explorer*, *Little Bill* and the newly launched *Bob the Builder*. *Blue's Clues* remains a favorite because it directly asks children for help in figuring out what the dog, Blue, wants to do, based on clues shown on screen. *Dora the Explorer* features Latina adventurer Dora, who shows kids how to solve problems, while encouraging interaction by counting and speaking Spanish, as well as physical activity, such as clapping hands and jumping around. *Bob the Builder* encourages friends to help each other, solve problems together and provide shoulders (or cranes) to lean on.

The Disney Channel starts its day with a block of programming called Playhouse Disney, aimed at 2- to 5-year-olds. Playhouse shows run until 2 p.m., when Zoog Disney takes over for the afternoon and evening with programs aimed at the 9-14 tween audience, but they get a sprinkling of 6- to 8-year-old viewers (and their parents).

Disney Channel's Rich Ross, general manager and executive vice president of programming and production, says the network targets boys and girls equally, although it reaches more girls than boys with a 60/40 skew.

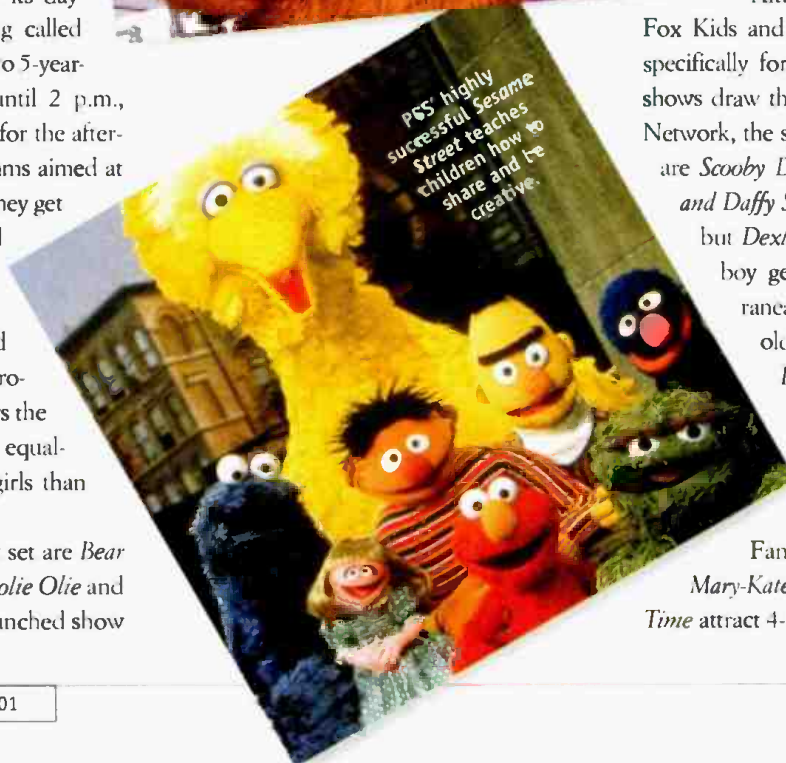
Hit shows for the youngest set are *Bear in the Big Blue House*, *Rolie Polie Olie* and *The Book of Pooh*, a newly launched show



Disney's *The Book of Pooh* has peaked in every time slot in which it's shown.



Bear in the Big Blue House is one of Disney's hit shows for the young crowd.



PBS' highly successful *Sesame Street* teaches children how to share and be creative.

that's peaking in every time slot in which it's shown. The animated *New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh* has aired for years, but the network wanted to put a fresh spin on the silly ol' bear.

"We went to Mitchell Kriegman, who produced *Bear in the Big Blue House*, and told him we wanted to give Pooh a new twist with new characters," Ross says. "He came up with 300-year-old Japanese puppetry called *bunraku* and teamed it with virtual sets, so you can't see the puppeteers on the sets. Now a 5-year-old looks at the show and says, 'Hey, it's my stuffed animal walking around.'"

Another Playhouse Disney hit is *Out of the Box*, which depicts a group of kids and their two caregivers having fun in their backyard playhouse made of giant boxes.

"We developed it for 18 months, and people said it wouldn't work," Ross recalls. "We wanted characters in a show that were caregivers, and people of color are often caregivers. Also, men are part of the caregiving fabric, and that was important for us. Tony and Vivian are vivacious and great, and they show kids how to do things that are fun, as well as how to deal with things they don't want to do."

Although Cartoon Network, Fox Kids and Fox Family don't program specifically for the 2-5 set, some of their shows draw the youngsters in. At Cartoon Network, the shows pre-schoolers like best are *Scooby Doo*, *Dexter's Lab*, *The Bugs and Daffy Show* and *Tom and Jerry*. All but *Dexter's Lab*, about a diminutive boy genius and his secret subterranean laboratory, are reruns of old classics. Fox Kids' *Digimon: Digital Monsters* and *Power Rangers* and the syndicated Scholastic's *The Magic School Bus* are hits with the youngest viewers. Fox Family's *The Adventures of Mary-Kate & Ashley* and *It's Itsy Bitsy Time* attract 4- and 5-year-olds. —C.S.S.

Tween shall meet

Kids 9-14 are the newest hot programming demo

Illustration: Susan Detrich



The tween group generally accounts for no more than 20% of the audience, but networks increasingly want their programming to appeal to this

However, a lot of the network's shows appeal to the 9-14 group already. Programming will include live-action and animated shows such as *Taina*, *Caitlin's Way*, *As Told by Ginger*, and *Hangin' With Mr. Cooper*, as well as a weekly countdown of viewers' top music-video picks.

Cyma Zarghami, executive vice president and general manager of Nickelodeon, says the move is designed to give tweens their own branded night, similar to its Saturday night "Snick" programming.

One network seemingly dedicated to the market is WAM! America's Kidz Network, part of the Starz Encore Group LLC. The channel is a commercial-free children's offering basically dedicated to programming for tweens. It provides 60 hours a week of subject-specific education-

featuring honor-roll students as on-ists. The WAM! Kids also introduce *At the Movies*, classic family movies every Sunday afternoon.

Midge Pierce, vice president of Programming, the key is emphasizing kids in real situations. "While there developmental spread in this demo, here one critical commonality: a or information that helps them their world. The constant thread in drama is seeing tweens being themselves reaching their potential."

It breaks its programming down to slots: *The Mind Zone* from 3 a.m. to 5 a.m., which provides education that is fun, and the *OH! Zone*, WAM's after-school starting at 3 p.m. The *End Zone* sees weekend programming, which includes movies and other hit shows.

Thunderstone & the Tribe, about kids coming together after an apocalyptic virus

wipes out everyone over 21, is a hit with this age group, as is *Caught in the Middle*, which follows eight freshmen at Mercer Island High outside Seattle, as they make the transition from middle to high school.

"Last year's debut marked the first time a camera crew spent a full year inside an actual high school," Pierce says.

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WAM's *Thunderstone & the Tribe* is successful with the 9-14 crowd.

"For years, children's television has talked down to kids and pandered to their worst instincts," Pierce explains. "Our interaction with tweens over the years has convinced us that kids crave substance, information and attention."

At Disney, the tween audience has made the new *Even Stevens* comedy a popular program, according to Rich Ross, Disney Channel general manager and executive vice president of programming and production. "Also, *Lizzie McGuire* just premiered and has done really nice business. The shows acknowledge that a tween [has] one foot in childhood, the other in teen-hood."

Original series like *Jett Jackson* and *So Weird* are building their audiences. Ross points out that Disney unveils its new shows on weekends. Eventually, they air four or seven times a week.

"*Jett* was the first to do that, then *So Weird*," Ross says. "It's an opportunity to develop something appropriate for us and not depend on others to do it."

During Cartoon Network's Toonami, the weekday-afternoon action-adventure block that looks to grab tween boys, *Dragonball Z* is the top-rated program not only on Cartoon Network but across all ad-supported cable at 5 p.m., says Tim Hall, executive vice president.

"We're always trying to come up with a winning formula," Hall explains. "A few years ago, action *anime* [Japanese animation] came on strong. While it's not true *anime*, *Pokémon* got kids interested in *anime*."

Fox Family's big draws in the tween market also happen to attract the 6- to 11-year-olds: *Angela Anaconda*, *The Kids from Room 402* and the various shows featuring Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen.

"We do know boys growing up navigate toward action adventure and prankster comedy," says Andryc. "And girls like characters, relationships and more meat to the story. It's been proven scientifically. If you're completely removed from what they do, it will be hard to develop a hit show for them." —C.S.S.

Redefining kids

With the 9-14 tween demo increasingly catching on with programmers and a 2-5 demo that is built on solid properties, one would think the 6-11 market would be on the wane. But with Nielsen still measuring the 6- to 11-year-old category, programmers still look to reach the grade-schooler.

At PBS, the younger kids in this group still enjoy *Arthur* and *Clifford*, as well as *Zoom*, says John F. Wilson, senior vice president of programming, East, for PBS. "*Zoom* features kids who are a little older, and it takes a look at real kids, what they like and what they're about," he says. "There's a point on the show when they talk about 'What was your most embarrassing moment?' Even my 6-year-old likes that."

"*Zoom* will soon be adding a local bent to its programming," Wilson notes. The new format will allow stations to lift segments and replace them with locally produced content. Stations will be able to decide how much local content, if any, they wish to add.

"The idea is to use a national show in a local way: say, *Zoom* in Cleveland," he continues. "There's a strong community-service aspect to it, which is perfect for PBS. Today, there are few independent stations that still produce local shows. National cable networks can't and won't do it. It's important for PBS to make use of that; it's smart, and it's in keeping with our public-service mission."

Fox has the luxury of having two networks that can go after boys and girls. Fox Family targets girls ages 6-11 and 9-14, while Fox Kids skews to boys ages 6-11. However, Joel Andryc, executive vice president of programming and development for Fox Family and Fox Kids, acknowledges that both younger and older kids tune in.

Fox Kids has a 75%-boys audience and programs accordingly, with a lot of action-adventure shows and prankster comedy. Hits include *The Power Rangers*, which is in its 10th season, and *Digimon: Digital Monsters*, which is riding a wave of popularity using Japanese animation.

Fox Family isn't meant to compete with Fox Kids. The 3-year-old network skews about 60% girls, with perhaps the most important show involving the Olsen twins, Mary-Kate and Ashley.

"They're more than a show to us; they're a franchise," says Andryc. "We can present the concept that this is the Olsen twins' network. We're even getting some boys watching, now that the girls are 14."

Nickelodeon switches from Nick Jr. to its Nick programming—shows aimed at older kids—after 2 p.m. In this block, the highest-rated show is *Rugrats*, a network staple for a decade (and now found on everything from lunch boxes to movie screens). *SpongeBob SquarePants*, an animated show about the adventures of a sea sponge and his undersea pals, in its second season, is emerging as a strong performer, according to Cyma Zarghami, executive vice president and general manager of Nickelodeon. "Great characters withstand the test of time," she says. "*Rugrats* is a special example of a show that has something for everyone. It's been on the air for 10 years and is the highest-rated property in kids television for the last three years."

At Disney, afternoon Zoog Disney programming targets and gamers mostly older kids but definitely attracts kids from this group, as well. Top shows for the network during this time slot are *Lizzie McGuire*, *Even Stevens*, *The Jersey* and *The Famous Jett Jackson*. All are live-action shows featuring teen characters.

"In my book, you can't predict a hit as much as build for success," says Rich Ross, Disney Channel's general manager and executive vice president of programming and production. "To borrow a phrase, quality is job one. We know we can't scrimp. But in cable, you also have to be smart."

Cartoon Network's prime time ratings increased 13% last year, with numbers driven by the expansion of original programming.

"We tend to write shows that work for our core 6- to 11-year-old audience but also incorporate humor that works on a variety of levels," says Tim Hall, executive vice president. "While we don't want to be inappropriate or too clever for the 6-11 kids, our focus works for older kids, too. Other networks have said they're focusing on younger kids. And there's plenty of room for the preschool audience, but that's not where we're headed."

An example of the new shows that appeal to both kids and adults is *Powerpuff Girls*, one of the network's most popular originals. And like the Looney Tunes cartoons, it's designed to offer different appeal to old and young. —C.S.S.

Ya just don't get it

Teenagers befuddle network execs in life and on TV

Network execs say the teen audience is a tough one. You don't need an expert to tell you that few adults really know what teens are thinking.

And, for better or for worse, teens tend to want to watch adult programming. However, some networks have set their sights on the group with shows that are educational or just simply fun but without the titillating sex and violence found on most network prime time schedules.

PBS has been reaching out to teens with its series *In the Mix* for eight years.

Producer David Beilinson says the award-winning documentary series, which features 12 new shows a year, reaches teens through other teens, without feeding viewers the adult perspective.

"Each show deals with a single theme

ranging from sex to drugs to dating to college to careers," says Beilinson, who adds that the show has won everything from an Emmy to the prestigious Prism award, as well as plaudits from publications, including *The New York Times*.

"It's a segment of the American population that we haven't focused on and that I feel is underserved with quality programming."

—John F. Wilson, PBS

"We have a new show about ecstasy, but it takes a new approach. We have teen reporters and producers reaching out to other teens, showing kids in rehab. After our shows air, they are offered to high schools, youth groups and non-profits as educational videos. It sounds like a cliché to say, but we give these kids a voice," says Beilinson.

Outside of *In the Mix*, PBS has found the teen audience more elusive. John F. Wilson, senior vice president, program-



ming, East, says, beginning in April, the network will make a more concerted effort to provide something by, for and about teens.

"To be honest, I don't see it as 'going after' the teen market," he says. "It's a segment of the American population that we haven't focused on and that I feel is underserved with quality programming. Also, as you talk to older kids, you find they want to see themselves in a real, honest way. That's what *American High* is about—an honest depiction of life as a teen."

American High was originally produced by Fox, but it wasn't doing the business the network wanted, so PBS picked it up. Wilson says PBS will add new material to original episodes, add all new episodes and see how they all play. Additionally this fall, the network plans to air *Senior Year*, which has a similar approach and style.

And WAM! has its first teen-specific program block called TBIO (Teens by Invitation Only). TBIO is a Friday-night movie package, featuring the latest Hollywood hits aimed exclusively at teens. Titles like *She's All That* and *Ten Things I Hate About You* attract teen audiences and encourage them to watch programming on other networks.

Disney's afternoon Zoog block is targeted to 9- to 14-year-olds but does attract kids



up to 17. Shows that also appeal to older teens include *The Famous Jett Jackson*, *The Jersey* and syndicated shows like *Boy Meets World*.

Cartoon Network realizes that its shows appeal to kids, teens and adults alike. However, the network primarily targets the 6-11 and 9-14 audience.

Nickelodeon reaches plenty of kids in the 9-14 block but doesn't have programming targeted to other teens. However, *The Amanda Show*, which airs on Saturday nights, garners teen attention. *All That* cast member and Nick comedienne Amanda Bynes is the star of this variety show. Another aspect of programming to teens is that they won't be teens for long. The goal for many programmers is to ingrain some viewing habits before they head into the 18-34 demo.

Of course, little on television obsesses teens the way MTV does. The network most heavily sells its older audience, 18-24, but attracts plenty of teen eyeballs, particularly to lifestyles of the rich rappers show, *MTV's Cribs*, and controversial stunt show *Jackass*. "TRL is a mecca for teens," says Harvey Ganot, MTV Networks executive vice president of ad sales, referring to afternoon hit *Total Request Live* and its adored host Carson Daly.

One of the reasons *TRL* is such a hit may well be that, because it reflects the musical tastes of today's teens, it can maintain a freshness that longer-form programs can't. "You really have to replenish your shows and speak to a new teen audience every three or four years," says Brad Turell, WB executive vice president of network communications. "And teens want to discover something that's their own."

Turell says that, while shows like *Dawson's Creek* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* attract a teen audience, they also attract 18- to 34-year-olds, the network's core demo. "We have to come up with new shows like *Popular* or *Sabrina*, things that bring in new teens. You really have to always be cultivating them. And you want to market to people as young as you can so they become loyal to your brand for the rest of their lives." —C.S.S.

Flat upfront looms

Cross-platform selling helps transcend kids programming

By Steve McClellan

For the second year in a row, buyers and sellers are expecting a flat kids upfront market, which is expected to garner between \$775 million and \$800 million in spending commitments from advertisers. The bulk of the market will probably move sometime in late April, as in the past couple of years.

This year's market is changing in ways that reflect what's going on in the broader TV market. Cross-platform selling—a concept still germinating in the broader market—has become an integral part of the kids market. All the major players—including Viacom, Disney and Fox—are selling multimedia packages, which almost always include an Internet component with some mix of network, cable, radio, TV and print. Now, more than ever, the kids buy is more than just about eyeballs; it's about marketing and promotion as well, executives say.

"The market has really transcended," says Joe Uva, president of Turner Entertainment Group Sales and Marketing. "It's not just a TV buy anymore but more about an overarching relationship with kids and the convergence between programming and promotion opportunities—on-air and off-air, online and off-line."

The name of the game now, says Uva, is linking as many "kids touch points" as possible. For Turner, now part of AOL, those touch points are numerous and include the Cartoon Network, Cartoon.com, AOL Kids channels, print vehicles, such as Time

for Kids, and even co-owned Kids WB.

Kids WB, the top-rated broadcast network in kids dayparts during the week and on Saturdays, is still sold separately from Cartoon, but, according to Uva, packages can be arranged for interested advertisers.

At Nickelodeon, integrated marketing/advertising packages have been a major piece of business for several years. In addition, the company is aggressively seeking "non-traditional kids advertisers," says Sue Danaher, executive vice president and general sales manager.

Ford is a recent example that combines both strategies. It has purchased time in Nick Jr. on both Nickelodeon and CBS, where Nick Jr. runs Saturday mornings. The company also buys print ads in

Nickelodeon magazine, and Blue, the puppy character in *Blue's Clues*, is Ford's "spokespuppy" for a child-safety campaign tied to specially created Web sites. Ford is also a sponsor of a *Blue's Clues* tour.

In fact, says Danaher, at Nickelodeon, the pursuit of new revenue and the development of integrated marketing packages year round really are more critical to Nick's revenue growth than the upfront. "We participate in it, but the majority of our business and the bigger deals are not confined to the upfront."

Gary Montanus, who took over as senior vice president for the Disney Kids Network some four months ago, agrees that the pitch to kids advertisers focuses more on "integrated marketing" strategies than on just eyeballs. He adds, "It's really about combining more components that affect kids' lives." ■



Blue has made the move to Ford spokespuppy.

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Programming

Survival of the fiercest?
Survivor: Australian Outback conquers for CBS.



Who's not on top?

February sweeps show gains for Fox, CBS and NBC, but, as *Millionaire* wanes, so does ABC

By Joe Schlosser

CBS, with the help of *Survivor: The Australian Outback* and some hit new series, clawed its way to the top of the February sweeps. The network claimed first place in both households (9.4 rating/15 share) and total viewers (13.9 million) for the 28-day sweeps period, according to Nielsen Media Research.

NBC, which only managed to tie ABC in adults 18-49 in February 2000, is now alone atop the category with a 5.4/14 average for the month. NBC was able to withstand CBS' *Survivor* with some last-minute trickery and a strong new "Must See TV" Wednesday-night lineup.

But the biggest story of the sweeps may well be not who's on top but who's not. Skeptics are now second-guessing ABC executives for airing *Millionaire* four times a week this season and all but killing what was a very good thing.

Last season's ratings champion is off considerably from its February 2000 results, down more than 25% in adults 18-49, 20% in total viewers and another 19% in households. ABC's median age went from 44.1 last year at this time to a 47.2 for the sweeps.

Fox, which was a distant third in adults 18-49 a year ago and down on its luck, has dramatically changed its fortunes. Thanks in part to *Temptation Island* and the renewed success of many veteran series, Fox finished a close second in adults 18-49 (5.2/13) and was the outright winner in both adults 18-34 (5.5/15) and teens (4.5/14).

And The WB, which was struggling last year at this time, bounced back and is now tied and even ahead of UPN in many ratings categories.

At ABC, it's time to remember the good old days. "For the last couple of years, we have seen that this is a hit-driven business where we are all one hit away from dramatically changing the landscape," says Lloyd Braun, ABC Entertainment Group's co-chairman. "We had the good fortune of having *Millionaire* last season, which continues to be a terrific show for us. ... We feel that, if we have seen anything over the past couple of years, [it's that] the hits have to keep on coming every year."

Stu Bloomberg, ABC Entertainment Group co-chairman, adds, "It was our turn with *Millionaire*, and CBS has a hit with *Survivor*. As we have all seen, if you have one hit, it immediately catapults you. They have it with *Survivor*, and we're all one hit away from regaining that."

With *Millionaire* gobbling four hours of ABC's schedule, the network launched only four series—none of which has broken out of the pack. The network has scheduled a handful of new midseason shows over the next several weeks, including comedies from Denis Leary and Damon Wayans. ABC executives are mum, but *Millionaire* will likely be trimmed to three or even two weekly installments come September.

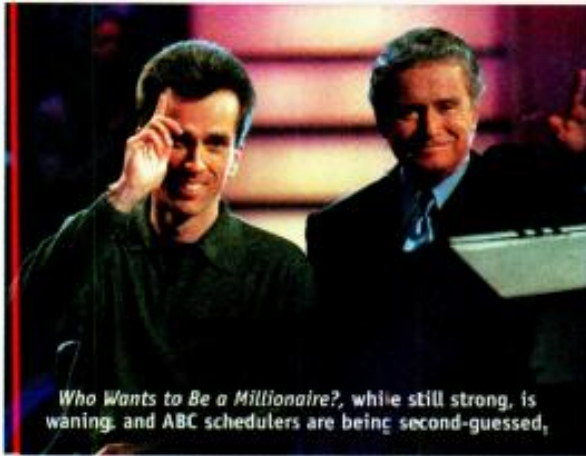
On the opposite end of the spectrum, CBS TV President and CEO Les Moonves cheerfully tells reporters: "We have an awful lot to brag about in February. It's been our best sweeps in a long time."

The combination of *Survivor*, a strong Monday night of comedies and other specials, including *The Grammy Awards*, led

CBS to its first non-Olympics February-sweeps victory (in households and viewers) since 1993. *Survivor* finished the sweeps as the most watched show—with 28.8 million viewers—and proved CBS schedulers correct in putting it opposite NBC's long-dominant Thursday-night lineup. "Thursday night used to be one of my least favorite

'We have an awful lot to brag about in February.'

—Les Moonves, CBS TV



Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?, while still strong, is waning, and ABC schedulers are being second-guessed,

nights of the week." Moonves says. "Now it's becoming one of my favorites."

CBS' median age, still the oldest of the major networks, dropped from a 53.6 to 51.6 for the sweeps. On the strength of *Survivor*, Moonves says he expects CBS to "lead the charge" in percentage increases with national advertisers during the coming upfront season.

To combat *Survivor*, new NBC Entertainment President Jeff Zucker devised a plan to extend the comedy *Friends* to 40 minutes and also added two special, prime-time *Saturday Night Live* installments. "So much was made of the showdown between *Survivor* and *Friends*, and we just want to say we are thrilled with the way we came out of this," says a relieved Zucker.

On Thursdays from 8 to 10 p.m., NBC held almost all of its ground, averaging a 10.3 rating in adults 18-49, just shy of February 2000's 10.4 average.

NBC managed a strong February showing without a reality project, although Zucker says that "it would make everything much easier" if NBC had one and that it's "an incredible priority for us right now." One bad sign for NBC: Its median age went from 44.4 last February to a 49.6 this year.

The loudest cheers at the end of the sweeps may have been coming from the Fox lot in West Los Angeles. A year ago, critics were all but writing off the network, whose poor fall showing resulted

in the ousting of its entertainment head Doug Herzog.

Suddenly this winter, Fox gained the most momentum of all networks and has a string of new hits, including *Temptation Island*.

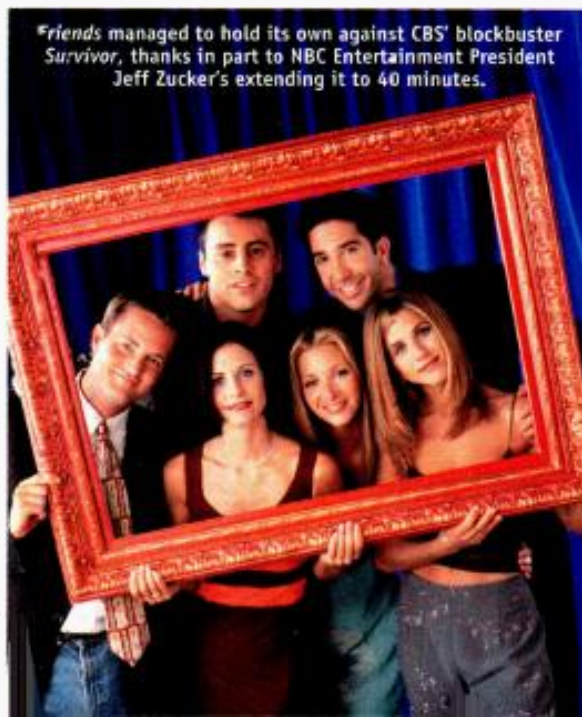
"We dramatically closed the gap of a year ago," says Fox Broadcasting and 20th Century Fox head Sandy Grushow. "We are happy with the sweeps, but we are certainly cognizant of the fact that we still have a lot of work to do. However, we do move for-

ward with momentum, depth and, I think, a schedule that is solid in key demos on almost every night of the week."

After a year of distribution problems and other woes, The WB has rebounded almost across the board. The network was up 13% in adults 18-49, 10% in adults 18-34 and 2% in total viewers to a 3.9 million viewer average. The WB was off in terms of teen viewership, falling 24% from last year in total teens.

"The network season-to-date is at the highest rating level it has ever been; we're really proud of the programs, and the whole boat seems to be lifting up," says WB CEO Jamie Kellner.

UPN, which was rising high on *WWF Smackdown* and some new hits last February, dropped back a step this time. (See Top of the Week.) The network was down 12% in total viewers, 12% in adults 18-49 and 11% in households. ■



Friends managed to hold its own against CBS' blockbuster Survivor, thanks in part to NBC Entertainment President Jeff Zucker's extending it to 40 minutes.

IN BRIEF

REAL SEX AND THE CITY

Stone Stanley Entertainment, the producer behind ABC's *The Mole* and The WB's *Popstars*, has acquired the U.S. rights to *Single Girls*, described as the reality version of HBO's *Sex and the City*. *Single Girls* originates from Screentime, the Australia-based production company that sold Stone Stanley the U.S. format rights to *Popstars*.

The project, currently being shopped to the major broadcast networks, will follow five women going on dates, according to a Stone Stanley representative. So far, the studio has had luck in reality, scoring a new-episode order on *The Mole* and expecting The WB to do the same for *Popstars*, which has broken ratings records for the Weblet in its Friday-night slot.

TBS TAKES CABLE TOP SPOT

Strong performance in movies and *Ripley's Believe It or Not* pushed TBS Superstation into the top slot in February prime time Nielsen ratings. According to Nielsen data provided by Discovery Networks, TBS Superstation tied USA Network with a 2.0 for the four weeks between Jan. 29 and Feb. 25.

But TBS topped USA by averaging 1.662 million households, a tad higher than USA's 1.623 million. USA's rating was a 17% drop from the year-ago month, when the network still had World Wrestling Federation programming. TBS' was an 18% jump.

Lifetime, which had been No. 1 in the fourth quarter and again in February, was close behind with a 1.9, a 27% increase driven largely by its original movies. Fox News cleanly won the news wars, posting an 80% increase to 0.9. CNN stayed flat at 0.8.

IN BRIEF

SHOWTIME SETS SEVEN ORIGINAL FILMS

Seven original pictures are in the works at Showtime. Among them are three biopics: *Adam Clayton Powell*, with Vanessa Williams (*Shaft*), about the black New York congressman; *10,000 Black Men Named George*, featuring Andre Braugher (*Gideon's Crossing*) as A. Phillip Randolph, organizer of the Pullman Car Porters in the 1930s; and *The Judith Exner Story*, starring Natasha Henstridge (*Bounce*) as the woman between mob head Sam Giancana and President John F. Kennedy. All titles are tentative.

In the family category: *Off Season*, with Sherilyn Fenn and Hume Cronyn; *The Wilde Girls*, featuring mother-daughter team Olivia Newton-John and Chloe Lattanzi; *Bobbie's Girl*, teaming Jonathan Silverman and Bernadette Peters; and *I Was a Teenage Faust*, with Robert Townsend and Morgan Fairchild as employees of the devil.

POWER OF ATTORNEY GETS MARCIA CLARK

Power of Attorney has snagged Marcia Clark for three episodes this week, but don't look for a match-up between Clark and her O.J. Simpson case partner, *Power* star Christopher Darden.

Although a representative for distributor Twentieth Television agreed that the showdown would have definitely been a boon in May sweeps, when the episodes are likely to air, Clark simply "refused to go up against him."

Instead, Clark will face the real-life lawyer portrayed in *Erin Brockovich*, Ed Masry, and women's advocate attorney Gloria Allred.

No Friendly persuasion

King World loses programming president after a six-year run

By Joe Schlosser

Andy Friendly, King World's president of programming and production, is leaving the Viacom-owned syndication giant after a six-year run to pursue other interests.

Friendly is the latest King World executive to leave since the company's merger with CBS last year.

That list includes new NBC Enterprises President Ed Wilson and Twentieth Television head Bob Cook. Friendly let King World executives know last November that he would forgo a renewal on his contract, which expires later this year.

"The one thing we did is build quality shows. Not all of them worked; some broke my heart. But I'm very proud of the teams we built and the work we did," says Friendly, who is the son of legendary CBS News producer Fred Friendly.



Andy Friendly will move into a consulting position with King World until 2002, when he will teach at the University of Southern California.

In 1995, Friendly joined King World as executive vice president of programming and production, overseeing all of the studio's first-run programming, including *Hollywood Squares*, *Inside Edition*, *Wheel of Fortune* and *Jeopardy*.

Also during that time, King World launched *The Martin Short Show* and *The Roseanne Show*. Those two were unqualified bombs.

Friendly says that he will move into a consulting position with King World for the remainder of the year and that he's going to teach a TV class at his alma mater, the University of Southern California.

Prior to joining King World, Friendly was executive producer and vice president of prime time programs at CNBC. A King World spokeswoman says a senior-level executive will be named soon in the programming and development department. ■

Crossing controversy

Studios USA stands behind psychic medium John Edward

By Susanne Ault

Studios USA firmly defended the star of its high-profile series *Crossing Over With John Edward* last week, following an article questioning the legitimacy of Edward, who calls himself a psychic medium.

A studio spokesperson called the March 5 *Time* story "a blatant case of irresponsible journalism and an embarrassment for a major news weekly," adding the writer of the article "never watched the show" on cable's Sci-Fi channel.

The article quotes audience member Michael O'Neill, who was selected by Edward in an attempt to "contact" O'Neill's dead grandfather. O'Neill says Edward's psychic

powers missed the mark several times. But when the show was edited, O'Neill said, it appeared that O'Neill was responding positively to statements that, in fact, he disagreed with.

O'Neill also suspects that show handlers concocted an hour-long technical delay before the show to listen to the waiting audience with hidden microphones. The show did not respond to *Time* on that.

Last week, Studios USA was taking the any-publicity-is-good-publicity position. A spokesperson said, "The idea that we are getting this kind of press for a show that hasn't hit the air yet in syndication gives us more optimism that we are onto something big." ■

Righting a wrong

A reporter helps overturn a conviction and uncover corruption

By Bill Kirtz

Boston television reporter Dan Rea has crossed the line between journalism and advocacy, he's the first to admit. But in doing so, he helped free a man wrongly convicted of a mob murder and helped unravel a still escalating case of FBI corruption.

"The line hasn't moved," says the Emmy-winning WBZ-TV veteran. "I, as a reporter, moved. I looked at this case in terms of whether justice was done, and it became clear that it hadn't."

For Rea, that led to a three-year investigation, much of it on his own time between political and international assignments. In more than 30 reports, he built a case for the innocence of Joseph L. Salvati, convicted with three others for a 1965 killing.

Rea knew from experience about false claims of convicts. But while poring through documents, he began to doubt whether Salvati had received a fair trial.

He used police contacts to locate a report in which an eyewitness to the murder didn't mention Salvati's name.

After that, Rea was committed to seeing justice done. He spent more than two months on the story before airing his first piece. During the next three years, his efforts—along with those of attorney Victor Garo, who spent thousands of unpaid hours on the case—led to Salvati's release after 30 years in jail.

Last month, after years of publicly questioning Rea's professionalism and denying any miscarriage of justice, the Suffolk County district attorney dropped the case.

But the story is hardly over. Two of Salvati's co-defendants died in jail, but another was freed after 33 years. Attorneys for the families of the four men now plan a multimillion-dollar civil-rights suit against the FBI, alleging that it concealed proof of their innocence. That claim has become intertwined with a major federal trial involving two

Boston mob leaders and the FBI agents who allegedly protected them. "It's a mind-boggling frame-up," says Rea. "I'd like to think people took note of what we did."

They've done more than take note. Law-enforcement officials, competitors and even

'Too many of us fear that other stations' having a different lead means that you have the wrong lead. It may be that they have the wrong lead.'

—Dan Rea, WBZ-TV reporter



Dan Rea interviews (l-r) Marie Salvati and Joe Salvati, with attorney Victor Garo.

some at Rea's CBS owned-and-operated station took shots at his journalistic integrity for pursuing the story, for pushing WBZ to editorialize on behalf of Salvati's innocence and for Rea's continuing to cover the case even after he became an integral part of it.

Rea doesn't care. "There are not that many stories in a career like that. I have a very powerful tool—television—and the responsibility not to use that tool irresponsibly. I put my reputation on the line. If I was wrong, my credibility was forever lost."

Not surprisingly, as a result of the Salvati story, he says he has received about 100 letters and calls asserting that other convicts are innocent, too. He's looking into two of them.

What can other reporters learn from this? "Take a chance; pursue a story," he says. "Don't be discouraged by the pack journalism we all fall into. Be prepared to stand out there on your own and realize that people are laughing behind your back. Too many of us fear that other stations' having a different lead means that you have the wrong lead. It may be that *they* have the wrong lead." ■

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StationBreak

BY DAN TRIGOBOFF

A MILLION'S NOT ENOUGH

ABC provided some extraordinary aid for owned station WPVI-TV Philadelphia in its effort to maintain late-news dominance over strong competition from NBC-owned WCAU(TV). WPVI General Manager Dave Davis sought and received permission to rearrange ABC's nighttime schedule, putting *Primetime* at 9 p.m. and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* at 10 p.m. Not being able to use *Millionaire* as a late-news lead-in was a frequent complaint of affiliates last year, when the show was the season's runaway hit. ABC did the reshuffle nationally last Wednesday, the last night of sweeps.

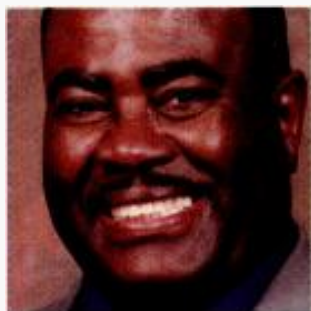
Did the special scheduling help ABC's cause in Philly? Davis said WPVI made a slight inroad into Thursday night's *ER* dominance but still expected WCAU to win the five-day late-news average. Davis said he expected to win the seven-day average, as well as the race in other dayparts. WPVI had dominated late-night news since the early 1990s—until WCAU's surge.

DRAKE TO DEPART FROM SINCLAIR

Barry Drake, head of Sinclair's television division since 1999 and former head of its radio division, said last week he is leaving the company, effective May 31. Drake said he intends to keep working, "maybe in radio, maybe in television, maybe anything," but has

nothing specific in mind. Both Drake and Sinclair said that the decision to leave was Drake's and the company will immediately launch a search for his replacement.

Prior to heading the TV division, Drake headed Sinclair's radio division. Sinclair CEO David Smith called Drake "a major part of the value we realized last year, when Sinclair sold its radio division for \$1.045 billion." Smith also credited Drake with leading the station group toward "a renewed focus on local advertising markets,



RTNDF winner

Gary Wordlaw returns to Washington this week to accept the Radio Television News Directors Foundation's First Amendment Service Award. Wordlaw, now president and general manager of WTVH-TV Syracuse, N.Y., had been news director at WJLA-TV Washington and has worked both on and off the air in TV news. Wordlaw says he believes his experience in news "makes me more in tune with my news department and the things they face every day."

improved programming and promotion, and better operating systems."

MORE SINCLAIR EXITS

Barry Drake wasn't the only one leaving Sinclair's station group last week (see above). The company said it is reducing its work force by 147 people, or about 4%, in response to the current economic slowdown. Sinclair made some cuts late last year, including discontinuing news at its Winston-Salem, N.C., ABC affiliate, WXLY-TV, laying off about 10.

FIRING OFFENSE

WLS-TV Chicago management said last week that the culprits who defaced walls inside its Disney-occupied building with swastikas remained unidentified. The incident—first reported by *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Robert Feder—was referred to the Chicago police's hate-crimes unit. "If it was one of my employees," said WLS President and General Manager Emily Barr, "he or she will be fired." Barr said that, although all the swastikas appeared in space used by ABC-owned WLS-TV, there are numerous people connected to other Disney-owned businesses in the building.

FAMILY AFFAIR

Boston continues to lead the nation among major markets in anchor changes due to personal matters. Last week, Heather Kahn said she would be leaving WCVB-TV to spend

more time with her three children—one of whom was born New Year's Eve. Kahn will be replaced by early-morning anchor and *HealthBeat* reporter Liz Brunner. Kahn said she expects to continue hosting *American Baby*, a weekend show aired on FX and produced by WCVB-TV owner Hearst-Argyle.

Last year, WBZ-TV anchor Liz Walker switched from evenings to mid-days to spend more time with her son. And in the biggest shakeup of all, longtime WCVB-TV married co-anchors Chet Curtis and Natalie Jacobson separated on air following their real-life separation. Curtis left WCVB-TV last week after nearly 30 years to join the New England Cable Network.

MORE JSA'S FOR NBC/PAX

Last week, Paxson Communications rolled out three more joint sales agreements with NBC affiliates. Gannett-owned KPNX-TV and Paxson's KPPX-TV Phoenix; Raycom's WMC-TV Memphis, Tenn., and Paxson's WPXX-TV; and Cowle's KHQ-TV Spokane, Wash., and Paxson's KGPX-TV will team up, with the NBC stations providing sales and marketing infrastructure. Paxson now has 42 JSAs, 15 in the top 20 markets and 20 in the top 30.

All news is local. Contact Dan Trigoboff at (301) 260-0923, e-mail dtrig@erols.com, or fax (202) 463-3742.

Syndication Watch

FEB. 12-18 *Syndicated programming ratings according to Nielsen Media Research*

TOP 26 SHOWS

Rank	Program	HH AA	HH GAA
1	Wheel of Fortune	10.9	10.9
2	Jeopardy	8.9	8.9
3	Wheel of Fortune (wknd)	6.7	6.7
4	Judge Judy	6.6	9.6
5	Entertainment Tonight	6.6	6.7
6	Oprah	6.5	6.7
7	Friends	6.0	6.6
8	Seinfeld	5.3	5.3
9	Frasier	4.9	5.4
10	Entertainment Tonight (wknd)	4.9	5.0
11	Live With Regis	4.3	4.3
12	Judge Joe Brown	4.0	5.4
13	Hollywood Squares	4.0	4.0
14	Jerry Springer	3.7	4.1
15	The X-Files	3.7	4.1
16	Drew Carey	3.6	4.0
17	Friends (wknd)	3.6	4.0
18	Andromeda	3.6	3.9
19	Maury	3.6	3.8
20	Extra	3.5	3.6
21	Seinfeld (wknd)	3.5	3.5
22	Montel Williams	3.4	3.5
23	ER	3.3	3.9
24	Divorce Court	3.2	4.2
25	Inside Edition	3.2	3.3
26	Jeopardy (wknd)	3.2	3.2

TOP GAME SHOWS

Rank	Program	HH AA	HH GAA
1	Wheel of Fortune	10.9	10.9
2	Jeopardy	8.9	8.9
3	Wheel of Fortune (wknd)	6.7	6.7
4	Hollywood Squares	4.0	4.0
5	Jeopardy (wknd)	3.2	3.2

According to Nielsen Media Research Syndication Service Ranking Report Feb. 12-18, 2001

HH/AA = Average Audience Rating (households)

HH/GAA = Gross Aggregate Average

One Nielsen Rating = 1,008,000 households, which represents 1% of the 100.8 million TV Households in the United States

NA = Not Available

The answer is the 'Clue Crew'

After 60 consecutive sweeps periods as the second-highest-rated syndicated series, King World's *Jeopardy* is known for, well, having all the answers. So, typically, its producers have to think long and hard before jazzing things up. Borrowing from TV's current reality craze, though, seemed as good an idea as any.

This week, *Jeopardy* host Alex Trebek is asking viewers to send in video audition tapes of themselves to win one of four spots on the "Clue Crew," a team of roving show correspondents, considered part of the show's full-time staff, that will present *Jeopardy* clues around the world.

"This is *Jeopardy* meets *Making the Band*. It really is," says Executive Producer Harry Friedman of the Clue Crew's debut next fall. "This is a chance of a lifetime for somebody."

He is looking for a nice cross section of viewers. "They are going to have to show us that they understand the show, displaying a natural curiosity that you have or don't have."

Reality shows usually bring in a youthful crowd, and Friedman acknowledges that this format-freshening is a way to attract younger viewers. Although *Jeopardy* jumps over its syndicated rivals in total households, shows like *Judge Judy* or *Entertainment Tonight* often beat it in the key adult 18-49 demographic.

"Absolutely, we are going after younger viewers," he says. "But the beauty is that we can do all these things without changing the basic structure of the show."

Trebek is a fan of the Clue Crew. He sees it as a way to thank viewers for supporting him and the show for 17 years. "We get mail from a lot of people who suggest clues, saying they want to write for us," he says. "We already have a full-time writing staff, but now they can participate in another way by presenting clues for us on the air. We hope that some of our die-hard fans will move out to Southern California to work on the show that they've enjoyed for so many years."

King World chief Roger King also gave his okay to the Clue Crew, attributing *Jeopardy's* long-running success to such "well executed innovations."

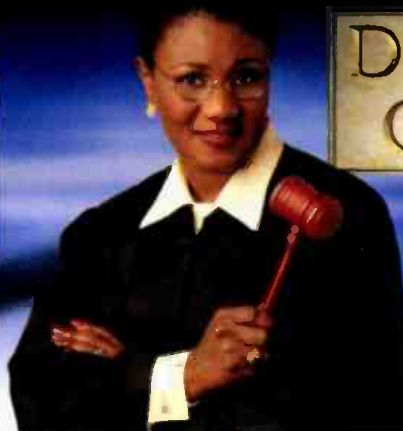
—Susanne Ault



Jeopardy producers are looking hard at ways to jazz up the evergreen game show.

Divorce Court Beats Oprah In Birmingham!

#1 Court Show in the Market!



DIVORCE COURT

The New Court Leader

20th TELEVISION

Source: NIELSEN OVERNIGHTS, 2/11/01-2/17/01, HH Avg. Court shows: People's Court, World Court, Mike Lane, Judge Joe Brown, PD, Judge Holmbeck, Judge Judy, Judge Mathis, Court Court.

Programming

CableWatch

FEB. 19-25 *Cable programing ratings according to Nielsen Media Research*

C A B L E ' S T O P 2 0

Ranked by rating. Cable rating is coverage area rating within each basic cable network's universe; U.S. rating is of 100.8 million TV households. Sources: Nielsen Media Research, Turner Entertainment.

Rank	Program	Network	Day	Time	Duration	Rating Cable	HHs U.S.	Cable (000)	Share
1	m/"Attila (Part 1)"	USA	Tue	9:00P	121	6.1	4.9	4898	9.3
2	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	10:00P	60	5.8	4.6	4617	9.4
3	m/"Pretty Woman"	TBS	Sun	8:00P	151	5.7	4.7	4696	8.3
4	m/"Attila (Part 2)"	USA	Wed	9:00P	121	5.6	4.5	4488	8.3
5	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	10:00P	69	5.4	4.3	4330	8.8
6	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	10:00P	69	5.2	4.2	4165	8.5
7	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	10:00P	67	5.1	4.1	4071	8.3
8	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	9:00P	60	5.0	4.0	3978	7.0
9	m/"Hard to Kill"	TBS	Sun	8:00P	120	4.8	4.0	3961	7.3
10	m/"A Few Good Men"	TBS	Sun	8:00P	180	4.6	3.8	3780	6.9
10	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	9:00P	60	4.6	3.7	3663	6.5
12	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	9:00P	60	4.4	3.5	3504	6.1
12	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	9:00P	60	4.4	3.5	3471	6.2
14	Dog Show	USA	Tue	8:00P	180	3.9	3.1	3120	5.9
15	m/"When He Didn't Come Home"	LIF	Sun	4:00P	120	3.8	3.0	2974	7.4
16	m/"A Few Good Men"	TBS	Sat	8:05P	180	3.7	3.0	3037	6.6
17	m/"Deadly Matrimony, Part II"	LIF	Sun	6:00P	120	3.5	2.8	2765	5.7
18	NBA All Star Saturday	TNT	Sat	8:00P	191	3.4	2.8	2756	5.9
18	Rugrats	NICK	Sun	9:30A	30	3.4	2.7	2721	9.8
20	m/"Father of the Bride II"	TBS	Sun	1:31P	119	3.3	2.7	2679	7.4
20	Dog Show	USA	Mon	8:00P	180	3.3	2.6	2648	4.8
20	m/"Deadly Matrimony, Part I"	LIF	Sun	4:00P	120	3.3	2.6	2643	6.6
20	m/"Home Invasion"	LIF	Sun	6:00P	120	3.3	2.6	2639	5.6
20	Rugrats	NICK	Wed	7:30P	30	3.3	2.6	2634	5.3

D E M O T R A C K E R : P E O P L E 1 8 - 3 4

Ranked by rating. Cable rating is coverage area rating within each basic cable network's universe; U.S. rating is of 100.8 million TV households. Source: Fox Family Channel

Rank	Program	Network	Day	Time	Duration	Rating Cable	HHs U.S.	Cable (000)	Share
1	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	10:00P	69	5.0	4.0	2429	13.3
2	WWF Entertainment	TNN	Mon	9:00P	60	4.3	3.4	2046	9.8
3	Jackass	MTV	Sun	9:00P	30	2.6	2.0	1219	5.9
4	Jackass	MTV	Sun	10:00P	30	2.5	2.0	1191	6.1
5	Grammy Wrapup 2000	MTV	Sun	9:30P	30	1.9	1.5	883	4.3
6	South Park	CMDY	Wed	10:00P	30	1.9	1.4	822	4.5
7	TNT Sunday Movies	TNT	Sun	3:00P	165	1.8	1.5	894	7.0
8	Roseanne	TBS	Mon	6:30P	30	1.8	1.5	890	7.4
9	Sunday Movie I	LIF	Sun	4:00P	120	1.8	1.4	859	7.0
10	Temptation Island Spcl	MTV	Sat	1:00P	30	1.8	1.4	834	9.5

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Programming

BroadcastWatch

COMPILED BY KENNETH RAY

FEB. 19-25 Broadcast network prime time ratings according to Nielsen Media Research

Week	abc	CBS	NBC	FOX	PAX TV	U/PIN	WB
21	8.3/14	9.4/14	6.1/9	8.2/12	1.1/2	2.4/4	3.7/5
8:00		28. King of Queens 8.9/14	65. Friends 5.8/9			93. Moesha 2.5/4	
8:30		37. Yes, Dear 8.3/12	64. Will & Grace 6.0/9	41. Boston Public 7.9/12	125. Miracle Pets 0.8/1	90. The Parkers 2.6/4	76. 7th Heaven 5.0/8
9:00	29. ABC Mcnday Night Movie—Good Will Hunting 8.8/14	11. Ev Lvs Raymd 11.8/17	65. Will & Grace 5.8/9	31. Ally McBeal 8.6/13	113. Touched by an Angel 1.3/2	94. The Hughleys 2.4/3	97. Roswell 2.3/3
9:30		20. Becker 10.3/15	74. Just Shoot Me 5.2/8			101. Girlfriends 2.1/3	
10:00		31. Family Law 8.6/14	46. Frasier 6.9/11		116. Diagnosis Murder 1.2/2		
10:30			52. Frasier 6.6/11				
	7.7/12	9.6/15	7.5/12	6.7/10	1.0/2	1.7/3	3.2/5
8:00	42. The Mo e 7.7/12	14. JAG 11.0/17	69. 3rd Rock fr/Sun 5.5/9	43. That '70s Show 7.5/12	128. Mysterious Ways 0.7/1	106. UPN's Movie Tuesday—Epicenter 1.7/3	87. Buffy the Vampire Slayer 3.4/5
8:30			68. DAG 5.6/9	57. Titus 6.3/10			
9:00	45. Dharma & Greg 7.4/11	43. 60 Minutes II 7.5/11	13. Frasier 11.2/17	52. Dark Angel 6.6/10	118. Touched by an Angel 1.1/2		88. Angel 3.1/5
9:30	57. Geena Davis 6.3/10		27. Three Sisters 9.1/14				
10:00	31. NYPD Blue 8.6/14	18. Judging Amy 10.4/17	50. Ed 6.7/11		116. Diagnosis Murder 1.2/2		
10:30							
	7.4/11	16.8/25	9.9/15	6.8/10	1.1/2	2.4/4	1.5/2
8:00	10. Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? 12.0/18	2. 43rd Annual Grammy Awards 16.7/26	62. Ed 6.1/9	69. That '70s Show 5.9/9	132. Twice in a Life 0.6/1	103. 7 Days 1.8/3	
8:30				76. Grounded/Life 5.0/7			
9:00	48. Drew Carey 6.8/10			14. The West Wing 11.0/16	36. Temptation Island 8.4/12	113. Touched by an Angel 1.3/2	89. Star Trek: Voyager 3.0/4
9:30	72. Spin City 5.3/8						
10:00	83. Whose Line Is It Anyway? 4.1/6			8. Law & Order 12.6/20		111. Diagnosis Murder 1.4/2	
10:30							110. Dawson's Creek 1.5/2
	8.2/12	12.1/18	14.1/21	4.4/7	1.1/2	4.5/7	3.2/5
8:00	75. Whose Line Is It 5.1/8	2. Survivor II 16.7/25	5. Friends 13.7/21		118. It's a Miracle 1.1/2		90. Gilmore Girls 2.6/4
8:30	69. Whose Line 5.5/8		9. Will & Grace 12.1/18	82. Fox Thursday Night Movie—The Nutty Professor 4.4/7	122. Touched by an Angel 0.9/1	81. WWF Smackdown! 4.5/7	86. Charmed 3.8/6
9:00	12. Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? 11.3/17	6. CSI 13.1/19	14. Just Shoot Me 11.0/16				
9:30							
10:00	40. Primetime 8.0/13	50. 48 Hours 6.7/11	1. ER 17.9/28		113. Diagnosis Murder 1.3/2		
10:30							
	7.7/13	6.1/11	9.6/17	4.7/8	0.9/1	2.0/3	1.9/3
8:00	85. Two Guys a Girl 4.0/7	48. Diagnosis Murder 6.8/12	25. Providence 9.3/16		128. Encounters With the Unexplained 0.7/1	97. Shocking Police Videos 2.3/4	99. Sabrina/Witch 2.2/4
8:30	83. Norm 4.1/7			80. Fox Movie Special—Starship Troopers 4.7/8	125. Touched by an Angel 0.8/1	106. Getaway 1.7/3	99. Popstars 2.2/4
9:00	20. Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? 10.3/18	72. The Fugitive 5.3/9	31. Dateline NBC 8.6/15				109. Popular 1.6/3
9:30							
10:00	30. 20/20 8.7/15	61. Nash Bridges 6.2/11	17. Law & Order: Special Victims Unit 10.9/19		118. Diagnosis Murder 1.1/2		
10:30							
	6.4/11	8.1/14	2.6/5	6.0/11	0.8/1	KEY: RANKING/SHOW TITLE/PROGRAM RATING/SHARE • TOP TEN SHOWS OF THE WEEK ARE NUMBERED IN RED • TV UNIVERSE ESTIMATED AT 102.2 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS; ONE RATINGS POINT IS EQUAL TO 1,022,000 TV HOMES • YELLOW TINT IS WINNER OF TIME SLOT • (NR)=NOT RANKED; RATING/SHARE ESTIMATED FOR PERIOD SHOWN • *PREMIERE • PROGRAMS LESS THAN 15 MINUTES IN LENGTH NOT SHOWN • S-T-O = SEASON TO DATE • SOURCES: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH, CBS RESEARCH	
8:00		55. That's Life 6.4/11	90. NBC NFL Football—New York/New Jersey Hitmen vs. Chicago Enforcers 2.6/5	67. Cops 5.7/10	128. Miracle Pets 0.7/1		
8:30				57. Cops 6.3/11			
9:00	55. ABC Saturday Night Movie—Phenomenon 6.4/11	38. Kate Brasher* 8.2/14			62. AMW: America Fights Back 6.1/11	122. Touched by an Angel 0.9/2	
9:30		24. The District 9.6/17				128. Mysterious Ways 0.7/1	
10:00							
10:30							
	11.7/18	9.8/15	5.4/9	7.9/12	0.8/1	1.4/2	2.0/3
7:00		7. 60 Minutes 12.8/21	61. NBA Basketball—Orlando vs. L.A. 3.7/7	79. Futurama 4.8/8	125. Candid Camera 0.8/1	111. UPN NFL Football—Memphis Maniax vs. Los Angeles Xtreme 1.4/2	103. Jamie Foxx 1.8/3
7:30	35. Wonderful World of Disney—Lady and the Tramp 8.5/13			57. King of/ill 6.3/10	121. Candid Camera 1.0/2		106. The PJs 1.7/3
8:00		18. Touched by an Angel 10.4/16		22. The Simpsons 9.7/15	122. It's a Miracle 0.9/1		94. Steve Harvey 2.4/4
8:30			76. Dateline NBC 5.0/8	25. Malcolm/Middl 9.3/14			94. Steve Harvey 2.4/4
9:00	4. ABC Premiere Event—Life With Judy Garland: Me and My Shadows, Pt. 1 13.8/21	38. CBS Sunday Movie—The Mask of Zorro 8.2/13	54. The West Wing 6.5/9	22. The X-Files 9.7/14	132. Pax Big Event Sunday—Butterbox Babies 0.6/1		102. Nikki 2.0/3
9:30			46. The West Wing 6.9/11			103. Nikki 1.8/3	
10:00							
10:30							
WEEK	8.3/13	10.3/16	7.8/12	6.6/10	1.0/2	2.3/4	2.6/4
5-8	8.6/14	8.7/14	8.3/13	6.4/10	0.9/1	2.6/4	2.6/4

Changing Hands

TVs

KBPX(TV) Flagstaff/Phoenix, Ariz., and WPXS(TV) Mount Vernon, Ill./St. Louis

Price: \$17.75 million (includes \$15.1 million cash and \$150,000 noncompete agreement)

Buyer: Equity Broadcasting Corp. (EBC), Little Rock, Ark. (Larry E. Morton, president/0.9% owner; WinStar New Media Co. Inc., 63% owner [Stuart B. Rekant, president]); owns/controls five TVs, four FMs and three AMs; is buying construction permit to build KUTH(TV) Logan, Utah; has interest in KBCA(TV) Elk City/Oklahoma City, Okla. EBC's directors also are directors of Kaleidoscope Foundation Inc., which has applied to build 10 noncommercial TVs. Winstar owns 70% of KBPD(TV) La Grande/Portland, Ore.; has CPs to build four TVs

Seller: Paxson Communications Corp., West Palm Beach, Fla. (Lowell W. "Bud" Paxson, chairman/owner; Jon Jay Hoker, president, TV group); owns/is buying 68 TVs, including KBPX(TV) Phoenix and KPPX(TV) Tolleson/Phoenix. Note: Paxson retains KBPX call letters but may not use them in Phoenix

Facilities: KBPX: ch. 13, 1 kW visual, ant. 1,778 ft.; WPXS: ch. 13, 302 kW visual, 30.2 kW aural, ant. 991 ft.

Affiliations: Both Pax TV

Broker: Paxson Communications Management Co. Inc. (seller; gets \$1.775 million)

KMAZ(TV) Las Cruces/El Paso, N.M.

Price: \$8 million cash

Buyer: Council Tree Communications

Station Trades

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

THIS WEEK

TV/Radio	□ \$0	□ 0
TVs	□ \$27,050,000	□ 3
Combos	□ \$3,550,000	□ 2
FMs	□ \$4,550,000	□ 4
AMs	□ \$18,035,000	□ 5
Total	□ \$53,185,000	□ 14

SO FAR IN 2001

TV/Radio	□ \$200,000,000	□ 1
TVs	□ \$116,050,000	□ 9
Combos	□ \$2,332,645,000	□ 22
FMs	□ \$75,679,600	□ 41
AMs	□ \$55,521,054	□ 31
Total	□ \$2,779,895,654	□ 104

VI LP, Longmont, Colo. (Mason Dearborn Capital Partners IV LP, 48.4% owner [John A. Canning Jr., president]; Alta Communications VIII LP, 20.3% owner [Timothy L. Dibble and Brian W. McNeill, each 25% managing members]; Arctic Slope Regional Corp., 1.3% owner, which invests for Native Americans under Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and Stephen C. Hillard, .96% owner). Arctic Slope and Hillard have interests in WWSI(TV) (formerly WACI) Atlantic City, N.J./Philadelphia and eight other Telemundo affiliates

Seller: Lee Enterprises Inc., Davenport, Iowa (Richard D. Gottlieb, president); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: Ch. 48, 79.4 kW visual, 7.9 kW aural, ant. 113 ft.

Affiliations: Telemundo

Brokers: Daniels & Associates (buyer); Kalil & Co. Inc. (seller)

KOZJ-TV-DT Joplin and KOZK-TV-DT Springfield, Mo.

Price: \$1.3 million (assumption of debt)

Buyer: Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield (Janice R. Dye, president); owns KSMS-FM Point Lookout and KSMU(FM) Springfield, Mo., and construction permit to build FM in West Plains, Mo.

Seller: Ozark Public Telecommunications Inc., Springfield (Sarah White, president); no other broadcast interests

Facilities: KOZJ: ch. 26, 51.3 kW visual, 5.13 kW aural, ant. 932 ft.; KOZK: ch. 21, 1,410 kW visual, 141 kW aural, ant. 1,791 ft.

Affiliations: Both PBS

Combos

WLAK(FM) Huntingdon and WIEZ(AM)-WMRF-FM Lewistown, Pa.

Price: \$2.5 million (includes \$1.95 million cash; includes three-year noncompete agreement)

Broker: First Media Radio LLC, Easton, Pa. (Alex Kolobielski, president/member; First Media Radio Holdings LLC, member [Richard E. Marriott, representative]); owns two FMs and one AM. Kolobielski also has interest in two other FMs and

CLOSED FEBRUARY 2001

Nassau Broadcasting Partners, LP

has acquired

WEEX & WODE
Allentown, Pennsylvania
from

Clear Channel Communications Inc.

Southern Broadcasting Corp.

has sold

WABD, WCVQ, WDSN & WZZP
Clarksville/Hopkinsville, TN/KY
to

Saga Communications Inc.

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one other AM. First Media Radio Holdings' sole member, First Media LP, is also sole member of First Media Ventures LLC, which has interest in New Northwest Broadcasters LLC, which owns/is buying 27 FMs and 14 AMs
Seller: Mifflin County Broadcasting Co., Lewistown (Frank P. and Eleanor Troiani, owners); no other media interests.
Facilities: WLAK: 103.5 MHz, 160 W, ant. 1,427 ft.; WIEZ: 670 kHz, 5.4 kW day; WMRF-FM: 95.7 MHz, 3.9 kW, ant. 407 ft.
Format: WLAK: rebroadcasts WMRF-FM; WIEZ: news. info; WMRF-FM: hot AC
WJWS(AM)-WSHV(FM) South Hill/Petersburg, Va.
Price: \$1.05 million
Buyer: JBS Broadcasting Inc., Apex, N.C. (A. Thomas Joyner, principal); owns WHLF-FM South Boston/Danville and WJLC(FM) Clarksville/South Boston, Va., and WAZR(FM) Woodstock, Va.
Seller: Old Belt Broadcasting Corp., South Hill (Norman L. Talley, president); no other broadcast interests
Facilities: AM: 1370 kHz, 4.2 kW day; FM: 98.9 MHz, 15 kW, ant. 312 ft.
Formats: AM: gospel, rhythm & blues; FM: country
Broker: Patrick Communications

FMs

KZAM(FM) Ganado/Victoria, Texas
Price: \$1.5 million
Buyer: Fort Bend Broadcasting Co., Houston (Roy E. Henderson, owner); owns three other FMs. Henderson also owns 10 more FMs and three AMs; construction permits to build two Texas FMs, and 51% of KVCQ(FM) Cuero/Victoria, Texas
Seller: Bill Hooten, Victoria; is buying KTKO(FM) Beeville, Texas (Changing Hands, Feb. 5)
Facilities: 104.7 MHz, 50 kW, ant. 459 ft.
Format: Country
KLTD(FM) Temple, Texas
Price: \$1.5 million (includes \$50,000 non-compete agreement)
Buyer: Cumulus Media Inc., Atlanta (Lewis W. Dickey Jr., president/75% owner of one of Cumulus' three attributable shareholders; brother John W. Dickey, executive vice president); owns/is buying 220 other FMs and 92 AMs, including KTEM(AM) Temple
Seller: KenCannon Communication Ltd., Graford, Texas (Steve Cannon and Ken Williams, limited partners). Williams

owns 33.3% of KTON(AM) Belton/Copperas Cove and KLFX(FM) Nolanville/Harker Heights, Texas
Facilities: 101.7 MHz, 16.5 kW, ant. 410 ft.
Format: Contemporary Christian
Broker: Media Services Group Inc. (seller)
WWZK(FM) Villas/Cape May/Atlantic City, N.J.
Price: \$1.4 million (for stock)
Buyer: WZK LLC, Cape May Court House, N.J. (Wilbur E. Huf Jr., 30% managing member). Principals of WZK LLC have interest in WCZT(FM) Avalon/Cape May, N.J.
Seller: Marc Scott Communications Inc., Fairplay, Colo. (Marc Scott, president/51% owner); owns WJNN(FM) North Cape May, N.J.
Facilities: 98.7 MHz, 3 kW, ant. 292 ft.
Format: AC
WJLR(FM) Seymour/North Vernon, Ind.
Price: \$150,000
Buyer: Midwest Ministries Inc., North Vernon (Marty Pieratt, president/owner). Pieratt has interest in three other Indiana FMs
Seller: Good Shepherd Radio Inc., Corydon, Ind. (Keith L. Reising Jr., president); owns/is buying five Indiana FMs; owns construction permit to build FM in Versailles, Ind. Reising owns two FMs and one AM, all Ind.
Facilities: 91.5 MHz, 5.6 kW, ant. 351 ft.
Format: Christian information, education

AMs

KJOI (formerly KLUV) Dallas
Price: \$16 million cash
Buyer: Clear Channel Communications Inc., San Antonio (L. Lowry Mays, chairman; Randy Michaels, CEO, Clear Channel Radio); owns/is buying 18 TVs and about 1,126 other radios, including KDMX(FM), KFBB(FM), KSKY(AM) and KZPS(FM) Dallas, KHKS(FM) Denton/Dallas and KEGL(FM) Fort Worth/Dallas; is selling KDGE(FM) Dallas and call sign and format of KTXQ(FM) Fort Worth/Dallas to seller
Seller: Radio One Inc., Lanham, Md. (Catherine L. Hughes, chairwoman/owner; Alfred Liggins, president); owns/is buying 47 other radio stations, including KBFB(FM) Dallas, along with KDGE(FM) Dallas and call sign and format of KTXQ(FM) Fort Worth/Dallas, both being bought from Clear Channel. Note: Radio

One recently closed on deal to buy KJOI from Infinity Broadcasting Corp. for same price (Changing Hands, May 22, 2000)
Facilities: 1190 kHz, 50 kW day, 5 kW night
Format: FoxSports Radio
WLIM Patchogue, N.Y.
Price: \$850,000 (includes five-year noncompete agreement)
Buyer: Polnet Communications Ltd., Chicago (Walter Kotaba, president/owner); owns three other AMs
Seller: Long Island Music Broadcasting Corp., Medford, N.Y. (George Hoag and Ellsworth Shiebler, principals); no other broadcast interests
Facilities: 1580 kHz, 10 kW day, 37 W night
Format: Nostalgia, jazz
Broker: Satterfield & Perry Inc. (seller)
KUAI Eleele, Hawaii
Price: \$550,000
Buyer: Visionary Related Entertainment Inc., Rohnert Park, Calif. (John Detz Jr., president/66.7% owner); owns five FMs and two AMs, all Hawaii. Detz owns 80% of KNUQ(FM) Paaulo, Hawaii
Seller: American Islands Broadcasting Corp., Eleele (Bill Dahle, principal); no other broadcast interests
Facilities: 720 kHz, 5 kW
Format: AC
KGTO Tulsa, Okla.
Price: \$455,000 cash
Buyer: Perry Broadcasting Co. Inc., Oklahoma City (Russell M. Perry, president/owner); owns two FMs and two AMs, all Oklahoma
Seller: Cox Radio Inc., Atlanta (Robert F. Neil, president); owns/is buying 67 FMs and 16 AMs, including four FMs and one AM in Tulsa
Facilities: 1050 kHz, 1 kW day
Format: Adult standards, nostalgia
Broker: McCoy Broadcast Brokerage (buyer); Media Venture Partners (seller)
WDXZ (formerly WXWY) Robertsdale, Ala.
Price: \$180,000
Buyer: Great America Radio Network Inc., Gulf Shores, Ala. (Walter J. Bowen, owner); is buying WBCA(AM)-WYDH(FM) Admore, Ala.
Seller: Gulf Coast Broadcasting Co. Inc., Orange Beach, Ala. (R. Lee Hagan, principal); owns WCSN(FM) Orange Beach, WIJK(AM)-WPGG(FM) Evergreen and WABF(AM) Fairhope/Mobile, Ala.
Facilities: 1000 kHz, 1 kW day
Format: Big band, MOR
—Compiled by Elizabeth A. Rathbun

Just a little more breathing room

Advertising study: Networks, cable cut 'clutter' for the first time in a decade

By Steve McClellan

For the first time in 10 years, the level of non-program minutes in network prime-time TV shows declined last year, according to a new monitoring report detailed last week.

The study, by the American Association of Advertising Agencies and the Association of National Advertisers, was one of the opening topics at the Four A's convention in New Orleans and covered the six major networks, selected syndicated shows and 19 cable networks.

Why the decline? The industry annual "TV clutter"

report, as it's sometimes called, didn't draw any absolute conclusions. But the study suggested that the protracted presidential-election coverage was a key factor.

The coverage lasted five weeks past Election Day and included dozens of commercial-free special reports on the networks.

And the decline in prime time clutter was modest, a mere 1.6%, to an average 16 minutes and 17 seconds from the 16:43 for the comparable period monitored in 1999. Agency executives last week stressed that they believe clutter is still a big problem.

Allen Banks, executive vice president, Saatchi & Saatchi, said there continues to be a "ridiculous amount of clutter that exists in all media but is particularly annoying when listening to radio or watching television."

O. Burch Drake, president of the Four A's, said, "The clutter issue remains a serious

one that ad agencies plan to watch closely. Our feeling is that less clutter allows good advertising to get the exposure it deserves."

Clutter reduces the effectiveness of ads because viewers get irritated by the huge volume of ads and tend to tune them out, according to ad executives.

Among the Big Four networks, ABC, CBS and Fox all showed declines in prime time clutter last November. In ABC's case, it was the first drop since 1992. NBC posted the only gain, climbing 4% to 17:15 per hour.

That's a new prime time clutter record for November, the study said, surpassing 16:57 per hour attributed to ABC in November 1999.

The study monitors two weeks a year, one in May and one in November. In May 2000, each of the Big

Four showed gains in total prime time clutter, with ABC climbing to 18:02 per hour, an all-time high for both periods measured by the study.

On the cable side, the study showed Fox Family Channel was the most cluttered network, with 18:05 minutes last November, while Nickelodeon was the least cluttered of the cable networks monitored, with just 13:44 minutes.

It's pretty clear that viewers will tune out and "zap" ads at every opportunity. Mark McLaughlin, a partner in Fuel North America, New York, a new-media advertising company, said studies show that users of personal video recorders, such as TiVo, fast-forward through up to 80% of the commercials in the shows they watch.

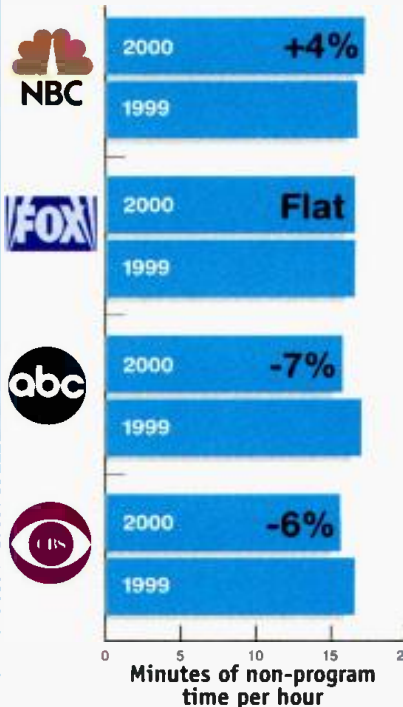
McLaughlin thinks TiVo's popularity is about to explode. "The genie is out of the

The genie is out of the bottle, and consumers love it.'

—Mark McLaughlin, Fuel North America

Prime time network clutter

Nov. 2000 vs. Nov. 1999



Source: AAAA/ANA 2000 Commercial Monitoring Report based on Competitive Media Reporting data.

bottle, and consumers love it," he said.

But it's the digital age in general that presents challenges for advertisers, said Richy Glassberg, chairman of Phase2Media, New York. "What if the viewer can download ER for a buck and skip the commercials?" he asked.

Surprisingly, about a third of TV clutter consists of messages that aren't ads, such as program promos and local news teasers and public-service announcements.

The biggest drop in actual commercial time came in network news programming, where advertising decreased a dramatic 26% to 11 minutes and 39 seconds per hour. That drop, the study concluded, was clearly due to election coverage and represented a record low for network news programming over the past decade. ■

Battling over buildings

Landlords fight rules allowing tenants to erect dishes, antennas, or choose telcom providers

By **Bill McConnell**

Disputes over satellite dishes at rental properties will come to a head this week. That's when the federal appeals court in Washington hears an appeal by building owners of FCC rules issued in 1998 giving tenants right to install DBS dishes and antennas on balconies and other portions of the property they control.

The FCC also is mired in a fight over broader rules outlawing exclusive contracts between owners and a single communications provider. Building owners, along with local phone companies, including BellSouth and Verizon, are hoping to relax those rules.

The battle to hook up rental properties, such as office buildings and apartments, is one of the hottest fights over access.

In the last three years, regulators have taken several steps giving commercial and residential tenants more power to choose TV, telephone and other communications providers other than the ones already serving their buildings.

But landlords and incumbent providers are fighting the new requirements, most of which have come in the form of FCC regulations they say violate basic property rights.

It's easy to see why: Controlling the entrée to customers in the rental market could dictate who gets to turn those renters into subs.

Sales for multi-tenant broadband services and equipment is expected to more than double from \$3.4 billion last year to \$8 billion in 2005, according to Cahners In-Stat Group (which is owned by BROADCASTING

& CABLE's parent company).

FCC Cable Services Bureau Chief Deborah Lathen and the Wireless Bureau are entangled in a number of similar battles, all of which are fallouts from the 1996 Telecommunications Act's order to end communications monopolies and bring new technologies to consumers. The most high-profile fights concern Internet providers' drive to gain access to the cable companies' broadband networks and utility companies' battle to eliminate caps on prices charged to cable companies that string their wires on utility power poles to deliver Internet service.



Real Access Alliance attorney Matthew Ames represents building owners.

"The immediate issues we're facing all center around the question of access. But it comes in many flavors and colors," Lathen told the five FCC commissioners last week. "All of these things have a very familiar refrain."

Federal judges today (March 5) get to add a few bars of their own when they take up the building-owners' challenge to the FCC's antenna rules.

"We don't think the commission has authority to regulate property owners or to tell them they must let tenants put up antennas," said Matthew Ames, attorney for the Real Access Alliance, a coalition of building owners. Furthermore, he said, the FCC doesn't differentiate between commercial and residential properties, but the economics of each business differ.

Businesses renting office space will pay large sums for telecommunications links and often demand that landlords give them the choice of providers. Some feel that renders the FCC's rules a useless intrusion.

A Real Access Alliance survey found that 94% of commercial tenants said their telcom needs are being met, and only 1% reported that management had denied a request to obtain services from others.

Profit margins from serving households, on the other hand, are so low that providers may refuse to serve apartments altogether without the right to sign exclusive contracts. "It's hard to get people to build duplicate wiring," Ames said. "There are economic barriers that have nothing to do with property owners."

But the FCC counters that before the rules, landlords routinely barred new providers. As for the agency's authority, the FCC told the appeals court that the same power to dictate the terms utility companies must follow when leasing pole space to cable operators justifies the antenna rules.

The building owners, joined by local phone companies, are waging a similar fight against the FCC's general rule requiring landlords to grant competitors access to a building's communications services.

This uneasy coalition is split over what the phone companies say is too much power for building owners to dictate the connection point to a building's wiring network.

The Smart Buildings Policy Project, which represents competitors to the incumbent phone monopolies, wants to make rules tighter by nullifying exclusive contracts in place before the rule that was passed last summer.

Although the landlords have offered to negotiate a settlement, Philip Verveer, the project's Washington attorney, says the sides are too far apart for him to be optimistic about a deal: "We're skeptical that we can get a satisfactory agreement outside the FCC." ■

IN BRIEF

MERGER MONITOR

The Federal Trade Commission last week tapped Dale Hatfield, retired head of the FCC's technology office, to monitor AOL Time Warner's compliance with the government's terms for the merger. The combined company agreed to meet a set of conditions over five years, including opening Time Warner's broadband Internet lines to competing services and agreeing to some price restrictions on high-speed Internet service.

FCC'S REMAKE MAVEN

Mary Beth Richards has been named special counsel for the FCC's restructuring effort. Richards has been a deputy managing director since 1997 and has held various staff jobs in the Common Carrier Bureau.

BCFM JOB BANK

The Broadcast Cable Financial Management Association has launched an online job bank (www.bcfm.com) to help stations build revenue and bring traffic to their Web sites. "Employers pay to advertise their jobs on your employment center just as they would in your local newspaper," said Jamie Smith, director of Internet services for BCFM.

MEDIA INSTITUTE ADDITIONS

Jill Lessor, domestic policy chief for AOL Time Warner, and Gregory Schmidt, general counsel for LIN Television, have been tapped to join the Media Institute's Board of Trustees. Lessor is based in AOL's Washington office and has led Internet industry efforts on First Amendment policies, privacy, taxes and unsolicited commercial e-mail. Schmidt is interim co-president of digital TV trade group MSTV and former partner at the Washington law firm of Covington & Burling.

LPFM, take two

McCain introduces bill to expand service; chances of passage seen slim

By Paige Albiniaik

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) last week introduced legislation to pump new life into the FCC's low-power-radio effort. Passage is considered a long shot.

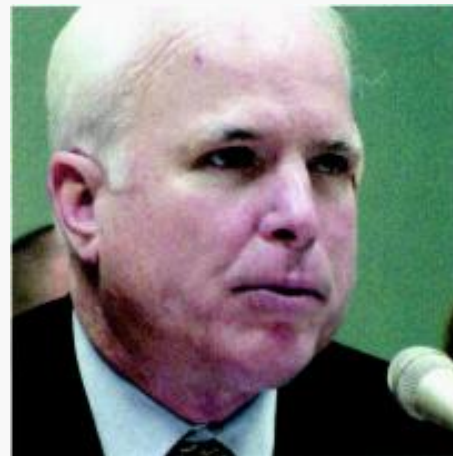
"Low-power FM radio will provide many communities with increased sources of news and perspectives in an otherwise increasingly consolidated medium," McCain said in a statement. "Last Congress, special-interest forces opposed to low-power FM radio, most notably the National Association of Broadcasters and National Public Radio, mounted a successful behind-the-scenes campaign to kill low-power FM radio without a single debate on the Senate floor."

Technically, LPFM wasn't killed. But it was severely limited.

McCain's bill would reverse legislation that Congress passed last December as part of a larger spending measure. That bill, sponsored by Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.), limited low-power FM to nine markets in urban areas. Congress instructed the FCC to test for interference in those markets and report back. But low-power radio stations can be built in less-populated markets where they fit on the FM band at least four channels away from existing high-power stations.

That was enough to give hope to advocates of low-power FM.

"The FCC is going to be granting construction permits to the first 200 or so rural stations that can get on the air—that will be happening in the next month or two," said Michael Bracy, executive director of the Low-Power Radio Coalition. "There's such a demand for the service. We're going to see



Sen. John McCain's bill would give the FCC authority to determine when low-power stations are interfering and what they should do to fix the problem.

upwards of 500 to 600 rural stations getting on the air this year."

Although that doesn't help would-be stations in urban areas, Bracy doesn't think McCain's legislation will pass.

McCain introduced a similar bill last year that didn't get very far. Instead, Bracy is counting on a report coming back from the test markets that shows low-power FM stations don't interfere with existing stations. Then he and other grass-roots lobbyists can push Congress to let the FCC authorize a full LPFM service.

In addition to allowing the FCC to license low-power stations as it sees fit,

McCain's bill also would give the agency authority to determine when low-power stations are interfering and what they should do to fix the problem. In a tangential provision, the bill also would require that the FCC "complete all rulemakings necessary to implement full-power stations' transition to digital broadcasting no later than Feb. 23, 2002."

Neither the FCC, which has changed hands since Congress passed the bill, nor the NAB had any comment. ■

The FCC is going to be granting construction permits to the first 200 or so rural stations that can get on the air.

—Michael Bracy,
Low-Power Radio Coalition

PBS crossing new ITV frontier

Triveni Digital DataHub to help send out enhanced TV to viewers in seven cities

By Ken Kerschbaumer

The interactive-TV capabilities enabled by the Advanced Television Enhancement Forum (ATVEF) Transport B Type specifications will get their first over-the-air tryout on March 27, when the Public Broadcasting Service sends enhanced programming for *Scientific*



When an icon flashes, the viewer presses a button, and an L-shaped frame pops up containing content related to the program.

American Frontiers to DTV receivers in seven markets. The trial will last for four episodes, concluding in May.

"It's a standard that really blends television broadcasting with what people enjoy in computer interactions," says Mark Simpson, president of Triveni Digital, of the ATVEF spec. "So, instead of blankly watching a screen, you can see additional information and do some amount of steering of the program."

Triveni Digital is playing a key role in the trial, providing its SkyScraper data-broad-

casting systems to PBS and seven of its stations. Tools in SkyScraper DataFab enable a content provider like PBS to schedule, insert and manage enhanced data securely. The interactive content was designed by Chedd-Angier Production Co., producer of the program.

The *Frontiers'* deployment of enhanced TV will be a single-screen experience: When an icon flashes on the screen, the viewer presses a button on the remote, and an L-shaped frame pops up containing content related to the TV program.

Seven local PBS stations are participating in the trial: WETA Washington, D.C.; Oregon Public Broadcasting, Portland, Ore.; New Jersey Network, Trenton, N.J.; Maine Public Broadcasting, Lewiston, Maine; Twin Cities Public Television, St. Paul/Minneapolis; WHYY-TV Philadelphia; and KQED San Francisco.

Each station will have a DataHub that will allow it to insert local enhanced programming into the program stream, an important feature to Daron Triff, director of business development for PBS Interactive.

Two viewing experiences will be tested. In one, 100 trial participants will use Zenith ATVEF-enabled digital television set-top boxes. In the other, 50 PC users will use Wavexpress TVTonic TV/Web browser software and a digital tuner card.

"What we're doing is making a one-screen experience of the Internet overlaid over the broadcast," says Stephen Carrol, vice president, broadcast distribution, for Wavexpress. ■

GENDER COMPOSITION OF CABLE-TV SITES

January 2001
Source: Media Metrix

Site	Males 18-	Chg.
1 CNBC	65.3	up
2 ESPN*	65.0	down
3 SCIFI.COM	64.2	down
4 FOX.COM SITES*	60.6	up
5 CNN.COM	60.3	down
6 HISTORYCHANNEL.COM	60.0	up
7 FOXNEWS.COM	57.2	down
8 MSNBC.COM	56.1	down
9 COURTTV.COM	54.3	up
10 USANETWORK.COM	53.9	up
11 WEATHER.COM	52.6	up
12 CBS.COM SITES*	52.4	up
13 PBS.ORG	50.8	up
14 EONLINE.COM	49.9	down
15 NBCI*	49.7	up
16 VH1.COM	49.6	up
17 COMEDYCENTRAL.COM	47.7	down
18 DISCOVERY.COM	41.6	down
19 ABC.COM*	41.6	up
20 MTV.COM	41.2	up
21 FOODTV.COM	40.8	down
22 AANDE.COM	39.8	down
23 BET.COM	38.3	down
24 THEWB.COM	37.0	up
25 TVLAND.COM	36.7	down

Site	Females 18+	Chg.
1 LIFETIMETV.COM	71.3	down
2 HGTV.COM	63.6	down
3 AANDE.COM	57.5	up
4 COUNTRY.COM	56.0	up
5 FOODTV.COM	55.6	up
6 ABC	50.1	down
7 DISCOVERY.COM	49.3	up
8 EONLINE.COM	45.2	up
9 USANETWORK.COM	44.8	down
10 VH1.COM	44.0	up
11 BET.COM	43.5	up
12 THEWB.COM	43.0	up
13 WEATHER.COM	42.5	down
14 CBS.COM SITES*	42.2	down
15 COURTTV.COM	41.9	down
16 FOXNEWS.COM	39.7	up
17 NBCI*	39.2	down
18 MSNBC.COM	39.0	up
19 CARTOONNETWORK.COM	34.1	down
20 CNN.COM	33.9	up
21 PBS.ORG	32.3	down
22 CNBC.COM	31.9	down
23 SCIFI.COM	31.8	up
24 FOX.COM SITES*	31.5	up
25 TVLAND.COM	30.8	down

Composition: Percentage of a Web site/channel/application's visitors that belong to a specific age/gender grouping.

* Represents an aggregation of commonly owned/branded domain names.

Chg.: From December 2000 to January 2001.

Note: Sites categorized by BROADCASTING & CABLE.

NA: Comparison with previous month not available.

NC: No change from December 2000 to January 2001.

Sample Size: More than 60,000 nationwide.

WRAL's wireless act

With Palm Pilot VII in hand, station goes where you go

The Palm VII is not the type of Palm Pilot that is limited to number-crunching and appointment logging. Internet connectivity in places where laptop hookups are not practical—for which the Palm VII is good—is the main selling point.

And to those of you who provide content for the Palm VII, this focus group of one says a hearty thank you.

Let's see: I recall an evening in San Jose last June. There I was, waiting for a commuter train. My beloved Portland Trail Blazers were playing the Los Angeles Lakers in an NBA playoff game. With antenna up, I went to ESPN's wireless site and got updated scores every minute or two.

A good thing, this wireless Web. So good, in fact, that the other day, I went on the Palm site (www.palm.net) and looked for new content providers with a wireless "Web clipping app" feed I could set up on my Palm VII. There were two local television station Web clippings listed: WRAL-TV Raleigh, N.C., and WPVI-TV Philadelphia.

I inserted my trusty Palm VII into a synch cradle, hooked it up to my PC and downloaded the WRAL wireless user interface into my Palm VII. Then, with my antenna facing skyward, I accessed the feed.

The WRAL-TV wireless presence was far more substantive, offering sections for news, sports, weather and traffic. On any day, there are about 20 screenloads of content on WRAL's antenna-accessed site.

As you may know, WRAL is a significant leader in the adaptation of advanced media technologies. It has been doing high-definition broadcasts since July 1996 and was one of the first local television stations with

a significant Web presence.

The Palm initiative is at least 18 months old, and the Capitol Broadcasting outlet is also sending content to Web-enabled cell phones.

I called John Conway, who has been involved in WRAL's online efforts since the beginning. Still based at WRAL, Conway is currently director of weather at Internet Broadcasting Systems Inc., of which WRAL is an affiliate.

"Initially, we did wireless access because our computer programmers said they would easily be able to port existing content published to the Web site and port it to wireless," Conway said.



When a new page is posted on the parent Web site, a new text-only file of that page's contents is put into a template suitable for the Palm interface and is then sent to wireless Internet company AvantGo Inc. for wireless distribution.

The secret to this portability is XML (Extensible Markup

Language), a Web publishing language that makes it easier to transport Web content between devices and platforms.

'Once it is done and set up, it runs and keeps running.'

—John Conway, Internet Broadcasting Systems

Language), a Web publishing language that makes it easier to transport Web content between devices and platforms.

The Web-to-wireless transfer process can be automated, which makes the task that much easier. "Once it is done and set up, it runs and keeps running," said Conway, reminding me of countless Energizer Bunny commercials.

Palm VII users see a main screen with four links, representing the four main sections of the site. To reach their preferred section, they simply tap their stylus on the section title.

Next, a page with headlines appears in the window of their Palm VII device. Each headline is underlined. Tapping the stylus on the underline brings up the story.

Non-wireless Palm V users

can also access WRAL's Web clippings by hooking their device up to a computer-attached synch cradle and then accessing downloadable software from the AvantGo Web site.

The cell-phone product looks slightly different, with headlines only and no story text. For WRAL, there's no muss, no fuss, which is why the CBS affiliate is able to justify maintaining the service, despite less-than-awesome traffic and the lack of a revenue model.

On a typical day, fewer than

100 screens are downloaded to wireless cell phones. In contrast, in a recent week, a total of 6,769 screens of content were downloaded to PDAs; an unspecified number of those, though, were through AvantGo access, which requires that all 20 or so pages be downloaded before any one of them can be read.

"More and more people will access the Internet on some sort of mobile device," Conway asserted. "It behooves broadcasters serious about being on the Web to explore wireless access," to which I respond, "Have antenna; will travel." ■

Russell Shaw's column about Internet and interactive issues appears regularly. He can be reached at russellshaw@delphi.com

BROADCASTING CABLE

SPECIAL REPORT



TV & THE

BROADCASTING CABLE

SPECIAL REPORT
DIGITAL CABLE NETWORKS

ON AIR

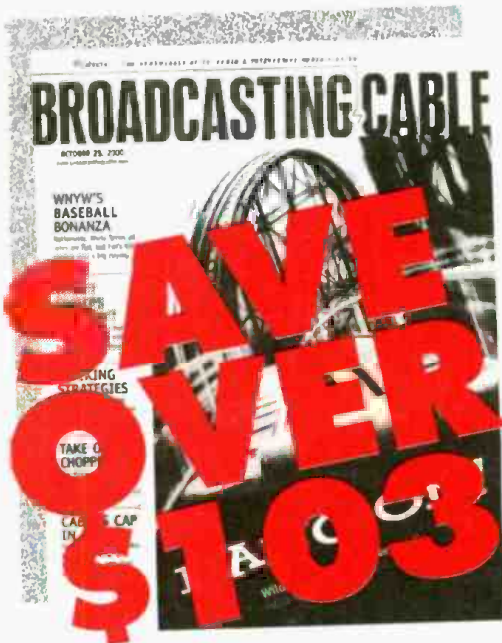
GOING DIGITAL

Digital programming is adding up to big revenue

in the industry. Digital programming is adding industry. With more MSO's as well as VOD services, the viewer interactivity and new revenue stream.

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IN BRIEF

DIGITAL CHOPPER

WPX New York took to the skies last week with a news helicopter that will use COFDM transmission with the help of equipment from Nucomm, NSI and Tandberg.

The chopper was designed by WPX Engineering Manager Ralph Augenfeld and Tribune engineers. It was assembled by Wysong Enterprises in Tennessee.

Augenfeld says the use of COFDM allows the digital signal to be sent from the chopper back to the WPX control room without any picture breakups.

To date, the helicopter signal has been transmitting at about 25% full power but is able to send pictures to the station from as far away as 100 miles without any problems.

BBC FLIPS FOR TELESTREAM

BBC News Online has purchased Telestream's FlipFactory software to automate the encoding and delivery of news content to the BBC Online Web site.

It will allow the site to reformat media into virtually any file format and data rate and then deliver it to distribution servers.

Geocast closes down

Datacasting company falls victim to a hesitant investment community

By Ken Kerschbaumer

Datacasting company Geocast Network Systems suspended business operations last week, a little more than a month after laying off approximately 20% of its staff. The company, which employed 190 people at the time of its shutdown, is currently in discussions to sell off its assets.

"I think we were a little ahead of our time, and the markets today aren't going to give us a lot of freedom in that regard," says Chairman and CEO Joseph Horowitz. "The bottom line is that the markets were just not there for us in terms of additional capital, and in this climate, unfortunately, that's a familiar story."

The Menlo Park, Calif.-based company burst onto the scene a little over two years ago, proposing to send data through terrestrial DTV signals to \$300 receivers that would be attached to a PC in the home. Partners included station groups Hearst-Argyle, Allbritton and Belo, which provided coverage of 37% of the country, as well as Liberty Media and Electronic Arts. The company also was expected to get into the DBS arena through a deal with EchoStar. Horowitz says that deal called for access to part of EchoStar's bandwidth, and the DBS



A small distribution base and relatively few partners and investors may have hindered Geocast's ability to acquire funding.

company did come through with the bandwidth. In the end, however, getting bandwidth wasn't the problem.

"The companies that are germane to this space all see the value of what we built," Horowitz adds, "but they have to be prepared to make certain investments to have their viewers see the benefit of it."

Geocast's relatively small number of partners and investors with a vested interest in the technology's implementation, may have limit-

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iBlast's Michael Lambert believes the Geocast business model proved to mean too much heavy lifting for the stations inserting content.

ed the company's ability to drum up money. Bear Stearns Managing Director Victor Miller says the problem Geocast faced was that its distribution base was not big enough. For example, he points out, datacast company iBlast has signed on stations offering 85% coverage of the U.S. "Geocast really had commitments from only a few groups. The advantage iBlast has is they have a number of partners who want to make money in the space so there could be a more logical source of funding to make sure the basic structure of the technology gets off the ground."

As for where this leaves Geocast's partners, Horowitz says he is unsure how they will proceed with datacasting plans.

iBlast CEO Michael Lambert says the problem for Geocast became a numbers game. "They signed up about 20 TV stations, and then, when we announced our business model, they pretty much were stopped in their tracks," he explains. "It's unfortunate because they're really smart engineers and very good technology people."

Lambert adds that Geocast's business model, which called for personnel to be deployed at stations inserting content, proved to be too much heavy lifting for the stations. "The business model didn't make sense, and, as a result, they burned through an enormous amount of cash."

With the loss of Geocast, doubts may begin to swirl concerning datacasting as a whole, but Lambert counters that. "We come at this because we're broadcasters ourselves, and we have an unfair advantage in that we have a lot of spectrum. The challenge is to create enhanced television services that ride alongside of our high-definition broadcasts to create value and help defer the costs of the business.



**"I think we were a little ahead of our time, and the markets today aren't going to give us a lot of freedom in that regard."
—Joseph Horowitz,
Geocast Network Systems**

"We're not a bunch of engineers in search of a business," he continues. "We look at it from the point of view that our job is to create enhanced services and revenue opportunities while [broadcasters] build out transmission facilities."

Bear Stearns' Miller is optimistic about the future of datacasting companies like iBlast, Wavexpress and Dotcast. The key will be getting funding, he

notes. "Those that access capital early are more fortunate, and people are going to have to realize that there are a lot of good ideas that are not going to be able to get access to funding right this minute. They'll have to be creative and, hopefully, have a lot of partners who will step in and support the ideas they want to be a part of."

Notes Lambert, "We recently had an additional funding commitment from our broadcast founders, so we have plenty of cash and we're not in tough financial straits." ■

IN BRIEF

SKYSTREAM SECURES \$44M

SkyStream Networks closed a \$44 million fourth round of funding from several Silicon Valley venture-capital firms (VCs) and strategic corporate investors.

The VCs are Amerindo Investment Advisors, Crosslink Capital, IVP, Integral Capital Partners, Mayfield, Norwest Venture Partners and WestBridge Ventures, in addition to AOL Time Warner Investments and Shaw Ventures, Shaw Communication's investment division.

SkyStream says it has received more than \$70 million in funding from the VC and corporate community, and IVP, Mayfield and Norwest Venture Partners all increased their investment in this round.

CRAWFORD TAPS IBEAM

Crawford Communications in Atlanta and iBeam have signed a non-exclusive reseller agreement that calls for iBeam to use Crawford for production, encoding and satellite acquisition to provide clients with turnkey services. In return, Crawford will resell iBeam's Activecast applications and streaming-media distribution services.

"Interactive Webcasting and streaming media have become necessary communications tools for any business," says Crawford Senior VP Jim Schuster.

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Peter Chernin

*President and COO,
News Corporation*

Tom Freston

Chairman and CEO, MTV Networks

Sir David Frost

Mel Karmazin

President and COO, Viacom Inc.

Geraldine Laybourne

Chairman and CEO, Oxygen

Gerald Levin

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Leslie Moonves

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Martin Nisenholtz

CEO, New York Times Digital

James Robbins

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Member of the Office of the Chairman, Citigroup/
Former Secretary of the Treasury of the United States*

Sir Howard Stringer

*Chairman and CEO,
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Jeff Taylor

CEO, TMP Worldwide

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More participants to be announced.

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F A T E S & F O R T U N E S

Broadcasting

Appointments at ABC Networks, Chicago: **Edward J. Wollock**, VP, Central division sales, named senior VP; **Michael R. Rubin**, VP/director, Central division sales, promoted to senior VP/managing director; **Jim Engleman**, senior VP, advertising sales, Buena Vista Television, adds Disney Kids Network to his sales duties.

Diana-Marie Howard, station manager, WEWB-TV Albany, N.Y., named VP/GM.

Bill Ross, VP/GM, KWGN-TV Denver, Colo., appointed VP/GM, KETK-TV Jacksonville, Texas; KLSB-TV Nacogdoches, Texas; KFXK-TV/KFXK Longview, Texas; KWTL-TV/KLPN-TV Tyler/Longview, Texas.

Myrna Ramirez, director, human resources, Consultant-Broadcasting, Chicago, joins Tribune Broadcasting Co., Chicago, as VP, human resources.

Mark Bunting, national sales manager, WKRC Radio Group, Mobile, Ala., named national sales manager,

WKRC-TV Mobile, Ala.

Jerry Policoff, national sales manager, WXIX-TV Newport, Ky., joins KSAS-TV/KSCC-TV Wichita/Hutchinson, Kan., as national sales manager.

Duncan C. Laing, general sales manager, KOBI(TV) Medford and KOPI(TV) Klamath Falls, Ore., joins KNVN(TV) Chico-Redding, Calif., as general sales manager.

Randal Roberts, general manager, KFDK/KFXL/KLPN-TV Tyler/Longview, Texas, joins KMID(TV) Midland, Texas, as general sales manager.

John Knox, video production manager, NASA, Hampton, Va., joins WRNN-TV Kingston, N.Y., as station manager.

Heidi Sternberg, junior planner, ITN Media, New York, joins Fox Television Sales, New York, as group research manager.

Alan Weintraub, marketing sales manager, WLS-TV Chicago, named group director, Clear Results, Chicago.

Ron LaRussa, director, strategic planning and special projects, WGBH-TV Boston, named director, WGBH

Interactive.

Jonathan Lawhead, general manager, WXIX-TV Newport, Ky., joins WBNS-TV Columbus, Ohio, as director, sales.

Cable

Appointments at Comcast Cable Communications, Philadelphia: **Doug Gaston**, deputy general counsel, promoted to VP and deputy general counsel; **Sanford O. Ames**, director, business operations, promoted to regional VP, business operations; **Don Gould**, director, engineering, promoted to regional VP, engineering; **Fred McSweeney**, director, marketing, promoted to regional VP, marketing; **Robert F. Smith**, director, public affairs, promoted to regional VP, public affairs.

Programming

Appointments at The Walt Disney Company: **Jody Dreyer**, senior VP, corporate synergy and special projects, Burbank, Calif., named senior VP, corporate public service; **Susan Fox**, deputy chief, mass media bureau, FCC, Washington, named VP, gov-

ernment relations.

George NeJame, director, production and broadcast operations, Tribune Entertainment Company, Los Angeles, promoted to VP.

Rosalie Muskatt, executive producer and book acquisitions executive, Columbia TriStar Television, New York, joins Court TV, New York, as VP, original movies.

Long Ellis, director, broadcast television, OneMediaPlace, New York, joins Comedy Central, New York, as VP, sales planning and operations.

Jennifer Dingwall, senior director, domestic sales, Fox Family Worldwide, Los Angeles, promoted to VP.

Appointments at Odyssey Networks: **Joan Behan**, director, communications and publicity, New York, promoted to executive director; **Joseph Johnson**, director, creative services, Los Angeles, promoted to senior director.

Journalism

Stephanie Z. Smith, producer, *World News Tonight*, ABC



Diana-Marie Howard



Bill Ross



George NeJame



Long Ellis

F A T E S & F O R T U N E S

News, Washington, promoted to senior producer.

Diane Slaine-Siegel, senior producer, ABC News Productions, New York, named senior producer, *48 Hours*, CBS News, New York.

Frank Buckley, general assignment reporter, CNN, New York, named national correspondent, CNN, Los Angeles.

Appointments at National Geographic Channel, National Geographic Today, Washington: **Peter Standing**, general assignment reporter, wtnh-tv New Haven, Conn., joins as correspondent; **Kristin Whiting**, correspondent, ABC News Production, New York, joins as correspondent; **Eun Yang**, reporter, WUSA(TV) Washington, joins as correspondent.

Lou Tilley, anchor, kyw-tv Philadelphia, joins CN8, Philadelphia, as sports anchor and executive producer, Lou Tilley's Sports Connection.

Kirk Montgomery, morning weather anchor, WLAJ(TV) Lansing, Mo., joins KUSA-TV Denver, as weather anchor/entertainment reporter.

Radio

Ollie Holmes, VP, affiliate relations, NBG Radio Network, Portland, Ore.,

named VP, operations.

Monty Ivey, manager, Citadel Communication's Boise, Idaho, radio cluster, named general manager, Treasure Valley's Boise radio cluster.

Advertising/Marketing/PR

Appointments at Autonomy, Hollywood, Calif.: **Kevin Aratari**, head of production, adds the title of VP of the company; **Barry L. Smith**, VP, business development, Novocom, Los Angeles, joins as account executive and VP, international marketing.

Technology

Brian Newton, VP, Hitplay Media, Los Angeles, named CFO.

Satellite

Stephan Trubitt, senior master control, Greater Chicago Videopath, McCook, Ill., promoted to operations manager.

Associations/Law Firms

Susan Packard, president, Scripps Networks New Ventures, Knoxville, Tenn., elected to the board of trustees, Scripps Howard Foundation.

Marc O. Smith, editor-in-chief, CableFAX Daily, Phillips Business Information, Washington, joins The National

Cable Television Association, Washington, as senior director, communications.

Correction

In the Feb. 12 item about Ted

Torres joining KRON-TV San Francisco, there was an inadvertent error in the call letters.

—Compiled by P. Llanor Alleyne

(212) 337-7141

palleyne@cabners.com

Obituaries

Gilbert W. Miller, Katz Radio veteran, died Feb. 15 in his Massapequa Park, N.Y., home. He was 74.

Miller joined Katz in 1966. He founded the company's non-wired radio network in the early 1970s and, later, its sports division. After leaving Katz in 1978, Miller ran his own consulting and sales representation business. He had a long-standing affiliation with Rainbow Advertising Sales Corp. that was still operative at the time of his death.

—P. Llanor Alleyne

Robert Weiskopf, Emmy- and Peabody-Award-winning TV writer, whose credits include *I Love Lucy*, *Maude* and *All in the Family*, died in Los Angeles at 86.

He started in radio, doing scripts for Eddie Cantor, Rudy Vallee, Bob Hope and Fred Allen. He teamed up with Robert A. Schiller and moved into TV. Among their credits: *Make Room for Daddy*, *Our Miss Brooks* and skits for Red Skelton, Carol Burnett and Phyllis Diller.

Eileen, Weiskopf's wife, survives him, as do two sons, Kim and Walt, and two grandchildren.

—Beatrice Williams-Rude

Rosemary DeCamp, actress, died in Torrance, Calif., on Feb. 20, at 90.

Although she started as an ingenue, she quickly made her mark as a character actress, frequently having to use old-age makeup. Before appearing in movies, she was on radio, playing Nurse Judy on *Dr. Christian* for 17 years. On TV, she played the wife of Riley on *The Life of Riley*, first opposite William Bendix, then with Jackie Gleason. She was a regular on the CBS sitcom *The Bob Cummings Show* and played Mario Thomas' mother on *That Girl*.

Her four daughters survive her.

—Beatrice Williams-Rude

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T H E F I F T H E S T A T E R

Southern boy stays put

From South Carolina, McCall 'Charterizes' cable-system acquisitions

Last week's \$1.8 billion cable-system deal with AT&T is nothing for Charter Communications. Its executives like to brag about how they've completed 36 cable-system acquisitions worth around \$25 billion since multibillionaire Paul Allen stepped into the picture three years ago.

The downside of such busy acquisition activity is that somebody has to stitch all those new properties together. Accompanying each new system are customer service reps trained 20 different ways, if they have been trained much at all; technicians accustomed to working on different kinds of equipment than the gear in Charter's system the next town over; billing systems that won't talk to Charter's billing and accounting systems.

The man who irons a lot of that out is David McCall, senior vice president, of the company's eastern division. He is responsible for all of Charter's operations from Connecticut to Florida and is a big part of the reason the company has achieved some of the best

growth rates in the industry over the past two years. While other MSOs have been missing even modest growth targets, Charter increased cash flow in "same-store" systems, excluding recently acquired systems, by 18% last year.

And McCall spends a lot of time curing headaches in new properties that, to put it delicately, were "undermanaged."

"We've got some cats and dogs," he says. "It's not rocket science, it's about taking care of customers."

For a man responsible for about \$1.5 billion in annual revenue, McCall is a rather modest guy. He is sufficiently driven to want the reins of much of Charter's operations, long after payouts from various

takeovers of Charter and its predecessors eased his need for a weekly paycheck.

But he wasn't ambitious enough to raise his hand when Charter Chairman Jerry Kent was installing a chief operating officer last year: He doesn't want to relocate to St. Louis from the town where he grew up, Laurens, S.C. "He certainly was on the candidate list," says Kent. "But I know David; he wouldn't move."

McCall likes things stable. He lives five miles from the house where he grew up (and now owns and rents out). He has a 25-mile commute to Charter's offices, fairly long by South Carolina standards.

"I can do more for this company today here than I could



David McCall
Senior vice president,
eastern division, Charter
Communications

B. July 7, 1955, Laurens, S.C.; line foreman, Burnup & Sims Inc., 1974-77; system manager, Televue Cablevision, Simpsonville, S.C., 1977-83; regional manager, Cencom Associates, 1983-92; regional manager, Crown Media, 1992-94; southeastern regional operations manager, Charter Communications, 1994-97; senior vice president, southeast region, 1997-98; current position since 1998; m. Christy, 1979; sons: Bryan (23) and Christopher (18)

there," McCall says. "Part of our culture here is family. I couldn't move." To McCall, "family" includes a loyal team system, finance, marketing and engineering staffers some of whom he has worked with for two decades.

McCall has been in cable his whole adult life, starting by climbing poles. After helping build small systems around the South, he bumped into one of three lawyers who had secured the franchise for Laurens and needed help building it.

That system was one of the first acquired by three St. Louis accountants, including Kent, who created Cencom Associates. McCall gained responsibilities as Cencom bought other systems around the South, using money from syndicated partnerships. In 1992, Cencom sold its operation for \$1 billion to another Missouri-based company, Hallmark Cards.

But Hallmark executives soured on cable, partly because of fear of telco competition that has never really developed. In 1994, the old Cencom team bought a package including its old systems for less than Hallmark paid. McCall was still there, running its southeastern operation pretty much as he always did.

McCall now spends a lot of time "Charterizing" new systems: retraining and motivating sales and service people, making sure that the phones are answered quickly, improving maintenance, and supervising plant rebuilds—and, of course, rolling out digital cable and high-speed Internet product.

He exhibits no signs of boredom. "Those kinds of things excite me about the business," McCall says. "This business changes, and it still excites me." —John M. Higgins



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Public television serving the beautiful Shenandoah Valley is looking for an experienced TV professional for long-form documentary productions. Experience should include field producing and directing, strong interviewing and writing skills, and hands-on editing ability (digital editing preferred). The successful candidate will also assist in the production of other Production Department productions. Send resume and non-returnable work sample VHS tape to: WVPT TV, Attn: Executive Secretary, 298 Port Republic Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22801-3052. EOE

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KTRK-TV is looking for an Associate Producer for the Debra Duncan Show. Applicant must possess strong research and writing skills. Must have the ability to generate compelling show ideas and guests, excellent phone skills and working knowledge of television production. Field producing experience a plus.

Interested candidates should mail their resumes to: Wendy Granato, Executive Producer

KTRK-TV, 3310 Bissonnet, Houston, TX 77005

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MISCELLANEOUS CAREERS

Charter Communications, the nation's fourth largest multiple-system cable television operator with 6.3 million subscribers, is currently seeking qualified professionals for the following 2 Full Time positions in the programming department at our corporate office in St. Louis:

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The successful applicant will be responsible for acquisition of Video on Demand (VOD) content, including negotiating with motion picture studios and other content providers to obtain licensing agreements. Essential functions of this position include designing, pursuing and executing content license agreements for VOD content, negotiating with cable program networks for VOD content (i.e. ESPN, Disney, Discovery), identifying & negotiating other sources of content, including local content, and developing & maintaining relationships with studios & other content providers.

To be considered for this opportunity, you must hold a Bachelor's degree in Business or related field or equivalent experience, have VOD content acquisition work experience and 5 years programming management work experience. In addition, you must be a clear communicator, able to supervise & motivate others and use PC & software applications. Knowledge of cable television products & services is also preferred.

CONTENT MGMT ADMINISTRATOR



The successful applicant will be responsible for managing all Video On Demand (VOD) content titles, all data connected with titles and scheduling loading/unloading of content. Essential functions of this position include tracking all VOD titles & content data, managing third-party encoding of VOD content, trafficking titles to file servers, analyzing buying patterns and making recommendations regarding airing windows.

To be considered for this opportunity, you must hold a Bachelor's degree in Business or related field or equivalent experience and have the following work experience: 1 year database administration, 2 years market analysis and 2 years project management. In addition, you must be able to analyze & interpret data, prioritize & organize effectively and supervise & motivate others. Knowledge of PC & software applications and cable television products & services is also preferred.

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Please send cover letter and resume to:

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900 Front Street, San Francisco, CA 94111

Attn: Human Resources Department

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Cutting Vision, a post-production company in downtown NYC, is looking for a machine room supervisor/operator and a real troubleshooter on Avid systems. Supervise staff and take charge of our technical operations. You must have at least 5 years experience with on-line finishing, scopes (digital and analog), Digital Beta, NTSC/PAL, patching and a hands-on knowledge of networking. Experience working on both Macintosh and NT platforms, from software installations to hardware troubleshooting. Avid ACSR and experience with Unity a plus. Self-starter and a team player. Send resume, salary history in confidence to: jobs@cuttingvision.com or FAX: 212-533-9463. No phone calls please.

STUDIO MAINTENANCE ENGINEER

Must be able to perform the following duties: install and maintain studio transmission equipment including video switchers, audio consoles, DVE, CG, SS, cameras, and robotics. Familiarity with automation systems and master control environment. Should possess a general computer/networking background. Must be able to work on a rotating shift schedule. Candidate should have an engineering degree or equivalent technical training. SBE/FCC certification a plus. If you want to be a part of the exciting transition to HDTV in the most exciting city in the world, please send your resume and cover letter to: Kurt Hanson, Chief Engineer, WABC-TV, 7 Lincoln Square, New York, NY 10023. No telephone calls or faxes please. We are an equal opportunity employer.

TECHNICAL CAREERS

V.P., ENGINEERING

Fox O&O in Austin, Texas seeking a V.P., Engineering to oversee technical operation of facility and engineering/operations staff. Manage capital budget and coordinate with Fox corporate office on acquisitions. Provide monthly reports to Corporate Engineering department. Coordinate with other department heads on their engineering needs. Oversee purchase and installation of broadcast and related equipment. Coordinate with other VPs of Engineering of other O&Os. Responsible for station operation and engineering staff. Associates degree in electronics preferred. Five years Operations/Engineering experience in a live newscast environment with three years management experience. Have a working knowledge of station budgetary process. Overall knowledge of television production. Strong leadership and people skills. Send resume and cover letter to Human Resources, FOX-7/KVC-13, 119 E. 10th Street, Austin, TX 78701. Ref: position title on envelope. No phone calls, please. EEO Employer.

MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS

International Broadcasting Bureau, (U.S. Govt. Agency) seeks technicians to perform preventative maintenance and emergency and routine repair of television broadcast and production equipment to the component level. Must have good working knowledge of current state of the art digital electronics. Must be able to perform the following duties: install and maintain studio and transmission equipment including video switchers, audio consoles, DVE, CG, SS, cameras and robotics. Familiarity with automation systems and master control environment. Possess a general computer/networking background.

Interested candidates MUST CALL for copy of vacancy announcement #M/P-01-20 in order to address special rating factors. Closing date for applications, March 15, 2001. For information contact Susan King, 202-619-3117.

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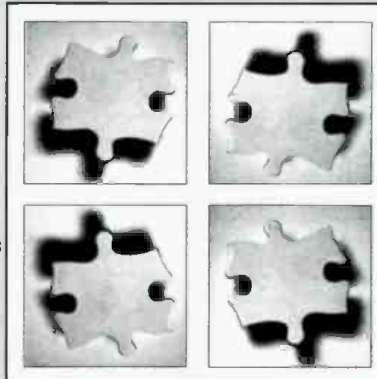
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Editorials

COMMITTED TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Career day

"Quiet down, class. Next, Miguel's father will tell us all about what it's like to be a reality TV producer."

"Well, kids, lately I've been offering lots of money to real people just like your mom and dad so that we can manipulate their minds and emotions for the entertainment of a mass TV audience. Some people say it's a dangerous game to be playing and that we are pandering for profit. Pandering is a big word that means giving people what they want, no matter what that is. We think the folks who say that are old sticks-in-the-mud. Besides, if we don't do it, someone else will anyway and then *they'll* make all the money.

"Many of you probably heard about the man on the show a couple of weeks ago . . . No, it's not our show, but we have one very much like it . . . who stabbed the pig to death and smeared blood on his face . . . Yes, you with your hand up in the back."

"Was it real blood?"

"Yes, but it was only a pig. Well, last week the man passed out and fell into a fire, screaming in agony. Agony is when something really hurts and you wish you hadn't done it. But he got to ride in a really neat helicopter. I haven't seen the ratings for the show yet, which tells us how many people watched and whether we can feel successful in the TV business, but I'll bet they were super D duper."

ASAP

New Chairman Michael Powell is preparing to remake the FCC, which is a good thing. In addition to suiting up for its daily duty as spectrum traffic cop, the agency is faced with the challenges of digital television, ownership caps and a host of other big issues. Right now, the five-person FCC has one vacancy and two lame ducks. We recognize that the infamous hanging chads have left numerous political appointments hanging, but for Chairman Powell to work effectively, the agency needs to be running on all cylinders. In that spirit, we encourage the Bush administration to pick its commission nominees as soon as possible.

Lead and get out of the way

The federal budget released last week includes spectrum fees from broadcasters. The budget Congress passes should not. Although it is not explained, the fees appear to be tied to continued use of the analog spectrum, since they begin to be phased out in 2006 and are gone by 2010. As Sen. John McCain and broadcasters agreed last week, the deadlines of 2002 for a digital signal and 2006 for the analog giveback are unrealistic. The budget seems to recognize that, too. By having the fees extend to 2010, it suggests that the return of analog spectrum might not be completed until then, which sounds like a more accurate prediction.

That the transition is delayed should surprise no one. There wasn't even a "hang your hat on it" transmission standard until two months ago. Maybe Congress should have auctioned the spectrum to broadcasters and given them full First-Amendment rights in the bargain, but they didn't and have been complaining about the lost \$70 billion ever since. We think resentment over that lost opportunity is what drives some in Congress to want to punish broadcasters by holding them to an unreasonable deadline and taxing them to boot. What they should do is adjust the deadlines, drop the fees and get behind the transition, not in the way of it.

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