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Top of the Week March 11, 2002

DRAWING FIRE FCC chief Michael Powell takes heat for putting markets before regulation. » 6

BUYERS UNITE Publicis and Bcom3 merge, forming world's second-largest media-buying concern. » 7

NEWS REPORT Study of prime time programming finds major differences among CNN, Fox and MSNBC. » 10

OSCAR WIN Advertisers are betting that the ABC's Academy Awards telecast remains a hugely watched event. » 12



Cindy Crawford will be pitching for Pepsi in spot to air during the Oscars.

Programming

Austerity measures Broadcast nets cut out March pre-upfront gatherings. » 20

Face to face Cable nets opt for one-on-one visits instead of upfront parties. » 21

Syndication Watch After a three-month test, *Good Day Live* is announced for national rollout in the fall. » 23

Station Break South Carolina low-power station says it was forced off the air by digital signal of full-power station. » 24

Focus Macon, Ga., No. 122 DMA, looks to top \$30 million in revenue this year. » 31

Washington

DTV deadlines More than 650 stations want waivers; long-term prospects for their



Is XM's Hugh Panero after radio's local advertising dollars? The NAB thinks so.

EXCLUSIVE DEAL Mazda's \$10 million Disney campaign includes TV, radio, Internet, but not ABC network. » 14

LAYOFFS SLOW Media companies laid off 283 workers last month—78% less than in January, 27% below February 2001. » 14

FX FIX Off-net dramas haven't helped the ratings-challenged network. Will original series *The Shield* do the trick? » 16

PATENTED Broadcasters fear that new patent means XM Satellite Radio aims to horn in on local advertising business. » 19

getting on the air are unclear. » 27

Antitrust Senators wave Clayton Act at EchoStar/DirectTV merger. » 28

Business

Forecast Loosening ownership regulations is likely to spur some, but not a torrent, of TV-station deals. » 30

Technology

Hopeful New RTNDA presence and an advertising uptick could help NAB overcome some of industry's trade-show woes. » 32

Pretty pictures BNN discovers that, even in war-torn Afghanistan, hi-def gear makes for improved storytelling. » 33

CENTER SECTION

NBC AT 75

From David Sarnoff to Bob Wright, how the network grew to become a giant. » A3

Q&A with Chairman/CEO Bob Wright, the exec who took NBC into the 21st century. » A14

Andrew Lack had the ill luck to become president and COO in the worst ad-sales environment in a decade. » A20

Despite squabbles, relations between the network and its affiliates are 'great,' says NBC TV President Randy Falco. » A24

Precisely where the legendary NBC chimes originated remains a mystery. » A26



SPECIAL REPORT

NAB SELLERS GUIDE

Well into the transition to digital, seven station groups talk about their strategy for what comes next. » 35

B&C Eye	4
Broadcast Ratings	22
Changing Hands	31
Classifieds	54
Editorials	58
Fates & Fortunes	50
Fifth Estater	53
Open Mike	52
The Week That Was	18



CABLE TV

Inbounding the ball

ESPN is fairly giddy to start NBA coverage, TNT is an old hand, but the league's third cable outlet is scrambling. As part of the NBA's new TV deal, a new channel co-owned by the league and AOL Time Warner will have 96 games per season for six seasons, starting this fall. The tentatively named All Sports Network needs to line up more staff, distribution and ads. The partners say they are working furiously and hope to have news by the NCTA convention in May. NBA Commissioner David Stern and Turner's Mark Lazarus are leading a search for a top executive. Stern is talking to major operators. ASN will replace CNN-SI, currently in about 20 million mostly satellite and digital cable homes, and will inherit some of its programming, such as lacrosse and auto racing.

The partners hope the channel will be ready in September or October. If it isn't, games could temporarily air on the league's thinly distributed digital net, NBA.comTV.—A.R.

BC EYE

REGULATION

Be prepared

Prompted by the Sept. 11 attacks, the FCC is recruiting broadcast, cable and satellite TV executives for an FCC advisory committee on safeguarding the electronic mass communications during a terrorist attack or other catastrophe.

The committee will be modeled on the Network Reliability and Interoperability Council established for the phone industry in 1992. Corporate executives sit on the council and develop strategies to prevent disruptions and make plans for disaster recovery. Media trade groups have been asked to suggest prospective members. FCC officials plan to announce the committee in a couple of weeks.—B.M.

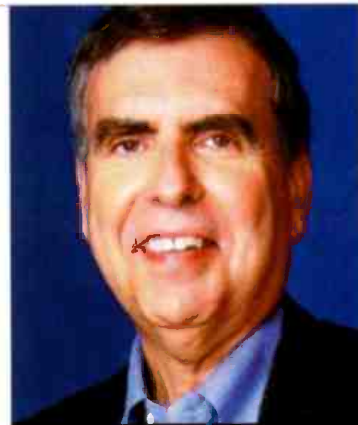


FCC Chairman Michael Powell (third from right) visited Ground Zero in New York the week after the terrorist attacks last September.

HD BELIEVERS

Given the chance to shave the cost of shooting pilots, studios will probably take it. That may be one of the reasons more than 20 pilots, mostly sitcoms, for next season will be shot on HD as opposed to film.

The first pilot to be shot on HD this year, Paramount's *Do Over*, begins shooting this week. Other studios expected to turn to the HD-tape format include Studios USA, Touchstone Television, Warner Bros. and 20th Century Fox. Legendary producer Jim Burrows (*Cheers*, *Friends*, *Will & Grace*) will shoot his new pilot, *Dexter's Prep*, on HD tape. The odds are also good that the pilots that get picked up will shoot their entire season on HD tape.—K.K.



BUSINESS

Searing sendoff

Retiring AOL Time Warner CEO Jerry Levin (above) will get plenty of accolades before he exits May 16, but he took some heat at a March 5 dinner during Bear Stearns's annual conference for media investors. Levin was blasted by State Street Research's Larry Haverly, a major media investor. After Levin spoke, Haverly stood and blamed Levin's management for "destroying \$150 billion in value." He compared Levin to Walter Forbes, the former chairman of Cendant now under indictment in a book-cooking scandal. Even those accustomed to Haverly's brashness were startled. "Comparing him to Walter Forbes and Cendant, you are calling him a crook," said one witness. Levin replied that his net worth is tied up in AOL: "I've suffered that loss, too."—J.M.H.

DRUG MONEY

Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) is the latest lawmaker to cast a worried eye on TV ads for prescription drugs. The House's watchdog on healthcare says that prescription-drug companies are "getting a good return on their investment" but that is because the ads sell more drugs to consumers whether they need them or not. Waxman joins other lawmakers in decrying the cost of prescription drugs, an ad category that has grown to almost \$2 billion a year for broadcasters since 1997. Congress is looking for ways to keep pharmaceutical costs down.—P.A.



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FCC Chairman Michael Powell faced Senator Fritz Hollings and a less than congenial Senate Commerce Committee.

Chairman Powell on hot seat

A deregulatory stance may sound good at election time, but does it suit the industry?

By Paige Albiniaik

It's gut-check time for Michael Powell. After a little over a year in office, the FCC chairman has a problem: He's a deregulatory guy, but some powerful lawmakers are pressuring him not to deregulate, often encouraged by well-heeled lobbies with fickle interest in deregulation.

The result is a budding reputation as a do-nothing chairman. "This is a chairman who is very lofty and erudite," said one industry executive. "He's very gifted as a speaker. And he hasn't done a goddamn thing." Said another, "He's running the risk of being all hat, no cattle. In a Texas administration, that's dangerous."

Judging by his own rhetoric, Powell should be leading the charge to raise the 35% national TV-station ownership cap, to lift the ban on owning both newspapers and broadcast-TV stations, to loosen small-market TV duopolies, and to allow cable and phone companies to compete head-to-

Sen. Hollings told Powell he is better-suited to be 'executive vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.'

head in the broadband arena.

But the pressure is on the chairman to hold the line. Some lobbies would prefer that Powell let things alone. Representing TV-station groups that fear the power of the networks, the National Association of Broadcasters is working to preserve the 35% cap. And AT&T doesn't want to see the regional phone companies offering deregulated broadband services anytime soon.

Two weeks ago, Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) let Powell have it for being too deregulatory. And last week, at a hearing on Capitol Hill, Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Fritz Hollings (D-

S.C.) followed suit. Even *The New York Times* took a swipe at Powell for doing nothing to stop media consolidation.

It all makes industry representatives wonder whether Powell is going to get caught up in politics and lose the heart—or the power—to address their causes. "I have not been terribly impressed with Powell's courage of conviction," said one observer. "How many of those bold statements has he made good on?" So the question is: Can Powell stay the course? He says yes.

"My commitment to my agency and to my country is that we're not going to sit here for two years. We're going to keep going, and we're going to get stuff done. I know that will produce concerns, but we'll take those concerns into account. I think our approach is fairly balanced and fair."

But if getting "stuff done" means deregulation, Hollings made clear he would prefer that Powell not get it done. "All you need to do as chairman of the FCC is take care of the

law that we passed. You have that responsibility. Instead, you seem to abandon that responsibility and leave it to the market," Hollings told Powell during a hearing before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee that Hollings also chairs and that oversees the FCC's budget.

"I think the law recognizes," Powell responded, "that the use of market forces can be concomitant with the public interest."

From old-school Democrat Hollings, the criticism of Bush-appointed Powell is expected. But what isn't is criticism from top Republican Lott, who told a gathering of broadcasters the FCC "distorts" the law. Like Hollings, Lott wants the 35% cap to stay in place and dislikes the initial FCC approach on broadband deregulation.

Explaining Lott's hostility to Powell, one lobbyist said, "Lott's always been a small-state guy": Media consolidation and local control of media are important to him.

Still, Hollings remains Congress's most outspoken lawmaker regarding Powell himself, telling him Thursday that he is better-suited to be the "executive vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce," presumably defending corporate interests, "than the chairman of a regulatory agency."

"Are you happy with your job?" Hollings asked. "Extremely" was Powell's edgy response.

Hollings found some extra ammunition when conservative *New York Times* columnist William Safire—never a friend to big media—called Michael Powell "round-heeled," meaning a pushover, in his op-ed column. Safire said Powell is "steering the [FCC] toward terminal fecklessness."

"I'm not going to get into what the newspaper said today or what it didn't say," Powell told reporters in response to the harsh words. "I'm going to keep doing what I get

paid to do. And I hope that, at the end of my five years, someone will look at the record and judge me any way they want to."

Hollings is also unhappy with Powell on wireless company Next Wave's bankruptcy and FCC handling of that case. But it's Powell's market-based approach to regulation that bugs Hollings most. The senator cited two reports in which Powell was quoted as saying, "my religion is the market." Powell replied he didn't recall saying that but agreed that the market is often able to regulate business matters better than regulators.

All the pressure may be slowing Powell down. But some lobbyists say those who believe Powell would quickly opt for sweeping changes misread the man. He's no Mark Fowler, the Reagan appointee who championed radical deregulation in the early 1980s, they say. "He's stated that he's deregulatory," says one, "but not revolutionary." ■

Publicis gobbles up Bcom3

Merger gathers media buyers Starcom, Zenith and Optimedia under one umbrella

By Steve McClellan

The media-buying universe got a little smaller last week with the merger of the sixth- and seventh-largest agency holding companies, Paris-based Publicis and Chicago-based Bcom3, respectively, for a little more than \$3 billion.

Publicis is the surviving company and becomes the fourth-largest agency holding company in the world (behind Interpublic, WWP and Omnicom) but the second-ranked media-buying concern (behind Interpublic).

The merger would put under common ownership Chicago-based media buyer Starcom MediaVest, a unit of Bcom3, and both Zenith and Optimedia, the media-buying units of Publicis.

The combined national TV billings of Publicis and Bcom3 are estimated to be about \$7.5 billion, behind the combined billings of Interpublic Group's buying units (Universal McCann, Initiative and TN Media), totaling some \$8.6 billion.

Publicis's national spot-TV billings will grow significantly. The company has had spot billings of more than \$2.3 billion through Zenith and Optimedia. Starcom and MediaVest will add about \$1.5 billion.

Most billings are for network TV, but a small percentage of the dollars are spent in cable and national syndication.

Optimedia is currently overseen by Gene DeWitt, who earlier announced his resignation to

take over the helm of the Syndicated Network Television Association, the New York-based trade association for sellers of national syndication ad time.

It was unclear last week whether the announced merger would affect DeWitt's timetable for moving to SNTA. He previously said he hoped to complete the transition by mid April but couldn't be reached for comment last week.

A spokeswoman for Publicis said last week that current plans are not to change operating structures of the media-buying firms. "They will continue to run autonomously at this point."

The structure is different at Interpublic. Last year, the company created a company called

Magna Global, which negotiates all the purchases of national TV time on behalf of the company's buying units. At least for now, Publicis is not planning to create a similar company, the spokeswoman said.

A third big agency, Dentsu, based in Tokyo, will get a 15% stake in the new Publicis as a result of its current 21% stake in Bcom3.

The merger is likely to result in staff reductions. Combined, the two agencies employ 56,000 people worldwide. Bcom3 says it does work for half the world's top 100 brands, including Sony, Audi, Cadillac, Crest and Nintendo. Publicis clients include L'Oreal, Nestlé, Hewlett-Packard and Coca-Cola. ■

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3 nets: News, Views, Confused

Study of prime time programming finds major differences among major cable news networks

By Dan Trigoboff

In a blurb: “CNN is a newsgathering network. Fox is an opinion network. And MSNBC is a confused network.”

That’s the Cliff Notes version of a report by Andrew Tyndall, who studied the three cable news networks for PBS’s *NewsHour With Jim Lehrer*.

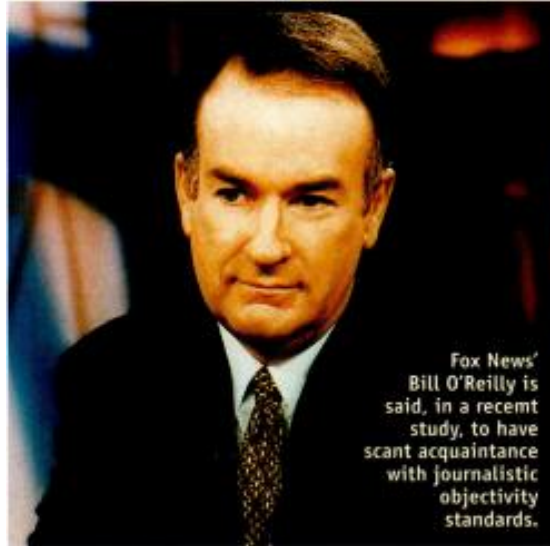
Tyndall, media analyst for ADT Research and publisher of the *Tyndall Report*, suggests Fox’s strategy may be rooted more in combativeness than in conservatism. “We’re not

saying all the opinions are conservative or right-wing. Critics point to those instances where Fox appears to be to the right of CNN and draw the conclusion that that’s Fox. The conservative view gets more time, but opinion of all sorts gets more time. Fox programs tend to be more argumentative, more opinionated.

“It’s pretty good television,” he added.

Commissioned for a report that aired last week, Tyndall’s research was drawn from a single January week of prime time programming. But CNN’s and Fox’s styles, he said, “are so distinct it’s difficult to imagine they don’t spill over into the other dayparts.”

He saved some of his most descriptive analysis for Fox, which, he said, “has brought a bombastic, opinionated and breezy style to each of its prime time programming formats. At each turn—Brit Hume’s panel of in-house analysts, Shepard Smith’s disdain for politically correct speak, Bill O’Reilly’s opinionated abandonment of the codes of journalistic objectivity, Sean Hannity’s aggressiveness compared with his part-



ner—this distinctive style exaggerated a right-of-center tilt compared with CNN.”

At another point, he noted that, while other news nets refer to accused al-Qaida sympathizer John Walker Lindh by name, Fox’s Smith called him “Jihad Johnny.”

MSNBC, he said, offers elements reflecting both its competitors’ approaches — Brian Williams’s traditional newscast, talk shows hosted by conservative Alan Keyes and “bombastic” Chris Matthews—while

“We watched Fox pull up and move ahead. We began to ask ourselves, “Is it the programming, or is it the politics of the network?””

—Terence Smith, *NewsHour*

carving out no particular niche. MSNBC was not interviewed by *NewsHour* and had no comment on the report.

“We had taken a look three years ago at the competition among the cable news networks,” *NewsHour* reporter Terence Smith told BROADCASTING & CABLE. “At that point, CNN was head and shoulders above

the other two. As we watched, it changed. We watched Fox pull up and move ahead. We began to ask ourselves, ‘Is it the programming, or is it the politics of the network?’”

Tyndall found that the makeup of Fox’s in-house experts, the content of commentaries and, in particular, what he found was the downplaying of the Enron story that week—in contrast to its play on other networks—adds up to a right-of-center slant. The Enron story, he said, tended to make capitalism look bad, and Fox is clearly marketing to a conservative audience.

Said PBS’s Smith, “I think it is in contrast to the corporate view as expressed by Fox: ‘fair and balanced.’ I think Tyndall’s content analysis demonstrates there is a right-of-center perspective.”

In the *NewsHour* report, Fox anchor Brit Hume said his network’s audience appreciates that it’s fair and balanced, even if it’s perceived within the media as right-wing. Hume noted the public’s long perception of most TV news as tilting left.

“The public believes in the validity of the left-wing slant,” said Carl Gottlieb, deputy director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism and a former news director at a Fox-owned station. “The Fox attitude may be more in line with what they believe. The only news that is not opinionated is the news we agree with,” he observed.

A Fox spokesman said it was hardly news that Fox offers a lot of opinion.

In fact, Tyndall does suggest that the conservative perspective could be merely that some of the better-known conservative commentators are more excitable. Even on CNN, conservative hosts Robert Novak and Tucker Carlson interrupt far more than liberal Bill Press, and CNN’s Keith Olbermann and Jeff Greenfield, liberals both, are described as “courtly, leisurely and unobtrusive.” ■

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And the winner is ... ABC

Oscar ad time sells out a month earlier than last year at rates just 5% off

By Steve McClellan

ABC has a load of prime time problems, but the upcoming Oscars telecast doesn't appear to be one of them. Advertising commitments held up well compared with last year. And now network officials are praying that viewership for the film industry's annual salute to itself holds up better than the Grammys telecast on CBS did a couple of weeks ago.

Advertisers, though, are betting that Oscar remains a hugely watched TV event. ABC sold out its commercial time in this year's Oscars telecast about a month ahead of last year. And it did so at an average rate of \$1.25 million per 30-second spot, down just 5% from a year ago.

Last year's Oscars telecast was low on the suspense meter, ABC says, but still grabbed a 26.2 rating and 40 share in households and a 17.8 rating in the lucrative 18-49 demos. It averaged 42.9 million viewers, but 72.2 million saw some portion of it, Nielsen says.

ABC officials say they're satisfied with ad sales this year, given the depressed ad economy. Between the Oscars and the Barbara Walters special that leads into it, the network will rake in almost \$80 million for the night, sources say.

Geri Wang, senior vice president, prime time sales, wouldn't comment on specific sales figures. "But we're really pleased" with sales for the show, she said, suggesting that the sales are "a sign of strength" in the ad marketplace.

The Oscars telecast is the single biggest entertainment event of the year for drawing the female audience that many advertisers covet. Patrick Conboy, vice president, strategic marketing, for J.C. Penney, calls the telecast "the Super Bowl for women. It's a place where fashion, culture and style converge. That's what middle America looks for at the Academy Awards and is why we want to be part of it." Penney is



During the Academy Awards show March 24, Cindy Crawford will star in a new Diet Pepsi spot similar to one she did for regular Pepsi 10 years ago.

using the night to unveil a spot promoting its 100th anniversary.

ABC has landed nine new advertisers for this year's telecast on March 24, including Apple computer, UPS and regional phone company Verizon. It also snagged two new categories: retailers, represented by Penney, and personal appliances, with Salton advertising its Ultrasonic electric toothbrush.

The network has 20 sponsors altogether, compared with 19 last year.

Other advertisers besides Penney are debuting spots in the Oscars telecast. MasterCard is introducing two: one to promote its debit card; and one, part of its "priceless" campaign, featuring dogs behaving badly.

Pepsi will unveil a new spot with supermodel Cindy Crawford to

introduce a new look for Diet Pepsi. Viewers with long memories may see something familiar about it. Pepsi's Dave DeCecco says that, 10 years ago, Crawford did a similar ad for a new look for regular Pepsi. The new ad will feature the same "Just One Look" theme song and Crawford poised (in similar jeans and tank top) to make her selection from a vending machine. Pepsi even hired the same producer to do the new ad.

For other advertisers, the program is one of a handful they're using to extend campaigns launched in the Super Bowl or the Olympics. General Motors, for example, bought eight units in the Oscars telecast, seven devoted to a Cadillac campaign that kicked in during this year's Super Bowl. UPS will continue its "brown" campaign, which it launched during the Olympics.

Kodak is back this year as a sponsor, with one less spot but a far bigger presence:

The Oscar show will originate from the brand-new Kodak Theatre in Hollywood. The company bought the rights to the name for 20 years, and ABC is contractually required to

mention the name of the theater a certain number of times throughout the telecast. ■

Whoopi Goldberg will, for the fourth time in a decade, host the Oscars, inaugurating the Kodak Theatre.



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IN BRIEF

REDEFINING 'PRINT PRESS'

The Chicago chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists asked the city to reconsider or delay police plans to enforce a long-dormant rule to subject reporters to fingerprinting and background checks. SPJ and Chicago Headline Club President Christine Tatum, a *Chicago Tribune* writer, told Mayor Richard Daley the rules could invade privacy or chill journalists' work. The ordinance, Tatum noted, "makes no mention of television, cable or online journalism but instead talks of 'news-reel' photographers, a breed extinct for at least 40 years." While the Headline Club supports accrediting media, she said, "we question the City of Chicago's right to determine who is a journalist."

TURNABOUT FOR TAUZIN?

Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Fritz Hollings (D-S.C.) plans a March 20 hearing on local telecom competition and will call Reps. Billy Tauzin (R-La.) and Ed Markey (D-Mass.) as witnesses. Tauzin last week led the House fight for the Tauzin-Dingell bill, co-sponsored by Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.), to deregulate the four remaining regional phone companies so they can more quickly deploy high-speed fiber networks. Markey led the fight against it.

Tauzin is less than eager about appearing. Said Tauzin spokesman Ken Johnson, "Billy's been a hunter too long not to know a bear trap when he sees one."

NATPE: HILTON'S PAID

NATPE sources say it sent "a very large check" to the Las Vegas Hilton for bills the hotel says it was owed. NATPE, hit last week with a lawsuit alleging it failed to use and pay for all its reserved rooms, says it paid shortly after notification of the suit. A hotel spokeswoman had no comment.

Platforming without a net

Mazda's \$10M ad buy from Disney includes TV stations, radio but not ABC network

By Steve McClellan and John Eggerton

One of the benefits of the cross-platform marketing package is that clients can pick and choose the particular medium. For the second time in as many weeks, a multimillion-dollar deal has surfaced without the seller's main TV distribution vehicle, the broadcast network, involved in the package.

In a deal between Disney and Mazda, the carmaker will use ABC owned and affiliated TV stations, Disney Online, Radio Disney, *FamilyFun* magazine and the Disney Store, but not the ABC network. The deal, spearheaded by Disney Online, is valued at close to \$10 million, sources say. The campaign for Mazda's MPV minivan is targeted at women with children ages 6 to 11.

Two weeks ago, Viacom put together a major cross-platform deal with Snapple that doesn't include the CBS network.

ABC affils to get a piece of Mazda business: WCVB-TV Boston; WFAA-TV Dallas; WJLA-TV Washington; WSB-TV Atlanta; WFTS-TV Tampa, Fla.; WPLG-TV Miami; WFTV(TV) Orlando, Fla.; and WMAR-TV Baltimore. ABC-owned stations in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Houston are also in.



Disney Online is spearheading the campaign for Mazda's MPV minivan, targeting women with children ages 6 to 11.

Cathy Eagan, VP, ABC national TV sales, credits the Disney Online division with the idea of using ABC's various platforms. Mazda opted for spot because it "really wanted to kick up this launch in 14 key markets. We try to create custom geography on an unwired basis."

The campaign extends though April. As part of it, Disney will get some cross-promotional punch from Mazda, with dealers giving Disney Store gift certificates and a Disney CD with every test drive. There will be more than 100 Radio Disney "events" at dealerships.

John Lisko, senior VP, Doner Advertising, which assembled the package, says that, while the TV stations provide the needed reach, "Radio Disney events provide an intimate connection with the consumers." ■

Media layoff pace slows

By John M. Higgins

The pace of media layoffs eased in February, with companies announcing layoffs of 283 workers, says a new study.

According to outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, the February level is 78% below the 1,294 layoffs of the previous month and 27% below the 384 in February 2001. The firm compiles company announcements and filings to regulators concerned with

layoffs. The study includes all media except Internet-related cuts.

It's as much art as science. For example, AT&T Broadband laid off 500 workers in the cable division's headquarters in February, but that shows up under telecommunications.

Challenger Gray counted 128,115 layoffs at all companies last month, which was up 28% from 101,731 in the year-ago period but down 40% from 212,704 in January. ■

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Can *The Shield* fix FX?

Off-net dramas haven't helped, and News Corp. frets over network's malaise

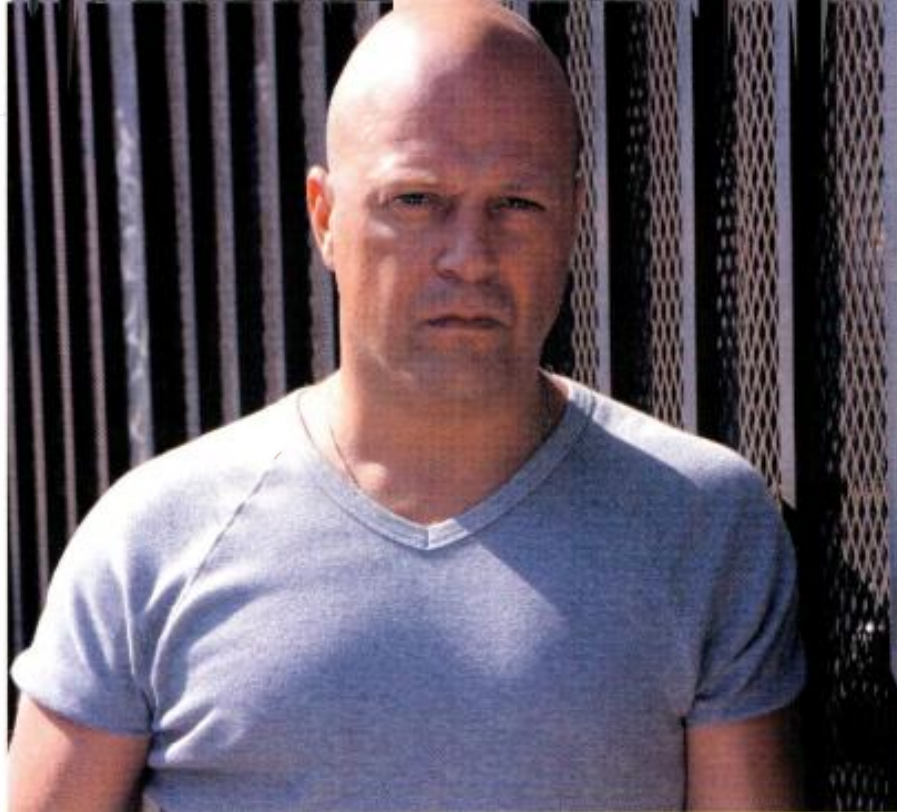
By Allison Romano

A year ago, with FX mired in a lingering ratings swamp, network President Peter Liguori predicted that a much-hyped slate of high-profile series would electrify the network.

Now, five months after the evening schedule of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Ally McBeal* and *The Practice* debuted, the move has been a clear disappointment. Ratings for *Ally* are anemic, and *The Practice* is not doing much better. *Buffy's* a modest draw but hardly a smash. To get the network out from under the expensive license fees, FX's corporate cousin Twentieth Television has shopped *Ally* and FX's current 5 p.m. show *The X-Files* to other cable networks. So far, no takers.

The off-net series were supposed to build the audience for FX's upcoming original productions. The first big splash comes this week with *The Shield*, a gritty hour-long drama focusing on corrupt cops in a fictional Los Angeles district. But the new series apparently will have to do for itself what all those expensive off-net shows didn't do for it: Find an audience.

Bowing Tuesday at 10 p.m. ET, *The Shield* costs \$1.3 million for each of the 13 episodes, plus a few additional million for marketing and promotion. It's FX's first shot at bringing edgy HBO-style fare—complete with foul language, nudity and violence—to basic cable. Liguori believes *The Shield's* content is “organic” and not



FX needs *The Shield*, starring Michael Chiklis, (above) to be a hit to offset off-net shows, like *Ally McBeal* (left), that have flopped.

gratuitous. And it's just the start: He wants three more series and four movies per year.

But corporate patience for the ever-changing channel is waning. Insiders say News Corp. President and COO Peter Chernin is growing wary of FX's tab for expensive originals that come up short in the ratings.

FX's latest original movie, *Sins of the Father*, scored a respectable 2.9 debut rating Jan. 6, but no doubt Chernin must have been frustrated. FX spent \$9 million on production and marketing of the movie. Yet on the same night, TNT scored a 3.1 rating for its third play that weekend of *The Mummy*,

a title TNT picked up for around \$3 million, or a third of the cost of an original movie. So why should FX spend lavishly on originals?

“News Corp. is a place that wants results,” admits third-year chief Liguori. “If I were in Peter's shoes, I would ask the same questions.”

A News Corp. spokesperson said that “investing in originals like *The Shield* are worth the risk.”

FX execs try to gloss over the glaring failure of *Buffy*, *Ally* and *The Practice* after ponying up \$675,000 per episode. They point to increases in the female demo as bringing a better gender balance to prime. “Clearly, it has not lived up to what we hoped,” Liguori said, “but we're making the best of it.”

But anemic ratings—*Ally* averages about a 0.4 after moving to 11 p.m., *The Practice* earns about a 0.5, and *Buffy* scores a modest 1.0—have resulted in an estimated \$20 million to \$30 million in lost revenue.

FX initially sold the shows at ratings between 1.4 and 1.9. When the Nielsen numbers fell well short, FX scrambled to give advertisers make-goods and upgrades.

Now FX is focused on originals to deliver ratings and repute. Besides frat-boy

favorite *Son of the Beach*, FX struggled to find a project that had a chance until *The Shield*. Plans for dark comedy *Bad News*, *Mr. Swanson* were scuttled after two pilots were made. Two other comedy pilots were nixed. A moderately popular series, *Tough Man*, is in jeopardy of being dropped.

FX expected to be playing with the big boys like USA and TNT by now. Prime time ratings hover about 0.8, although distribution has grown to 75 million. FX is one of cable's fastest-growing networks. Some of the growth is thanks to Fox Sports Net, which helped when it was negotiating carriage: Pick up FX or lose popular regional sports services, it told cable operators.

NASCAR auto racing, which FX shares with Fox for five months of the season, is working. Last year, FX aired three Winston Cup events, averaging a 3.3 rating, and 12 Busch series races, which pulled an average 1.6. The first Busch series race this year earned a 2.0 rating.

The Shield has been warmly received by critics, but some advertisers have recoiled. "We ask them, 'If you could buy a spot in the *Sopranos* or *Sex and the City*, would you do it?'" said Senior VP of Entertainment Kevin Reilly.

"It could do a huge rating," says Carat USA Director of National Broadcast Andrew Donchin, "but, if the content is offensive or off-course, it wouldn't make a difference to some clients."

FX execs say more than 50% of the inventory for the premiere is sold and big-name advertisers are well-represented. But a huge sum of money was left on the table because, during last year's upfront, advertisers were sold a lower rating than FX had been projecting. FX accidentally sold the premiere as a 1.1 and subsequent episodes as 0.6, a full point lower than planned.

Even the show's name has caused trouble. Originally *The Barn*, it was changed to *Rampart*, insiders say, to create buzz and controversy. But the Los Angeles Police Department objected—the title and premise were reminiscent of the city's Rampart-district police scandal of the mid-1990s—and it was renamed again. FX executives assert

that research showed *The Shield* was a more recognizable name anyway.

Still, some advertisers are leery of negative association with the show. A few—like GM, John Deere and Capitol One—pulled out after seeing the first few episodes. OMD USA Director of National Broadcast Chris Geraci says some advertisers, like movie studios and liquor compa-

nies, can tolerate risky content and should be on board early. If the response is positive, buyers say some clients will be willing to test the show.

FX has more acquired series down the road. *That 70s Show* and *King of the Hill* arrive in 2004 or 2005. ABC's *Dharma and Greg*, originally intended for what was then called Fox Family, will now go to FX. ■

MANAGING NEWS
IN TOUGH TIMES



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THE WEEK THAT WAS



Nightline anchor Ted Koppel wrote a *New York Times* op-ed piece refuting an ABC exec's contention the show is no longer relevant and saying the comment was "at best inappropriate and at worst malicious."

THE LATE-NIGHT HYPE

At press time, the flap over ABC's interest in David Letterman and disinterest—or, at least, decreased interest—in *Nightline*, continued to draw criticism and comment, including from Ted Koppel himself, journalist watchdogs Tom Rosenstiel and Bill Kovach, and columnists William Safire (*The New York Times*) and E.J. Dionne (*The Washington Post*).

The pieces were in response to a *New York Times* article quoting unnamed ABC executives calling Koppel's program "irrelevant" (by way of justifying the network's pursuit of David Letterman). Since then, word is that CBS has countered with an offer for Letterman that would include much more on-air promotion, that Howard Stern has been mentioned as a replacement for Letterman if he goes to ABC, and that CNN would like to have Koppel if ABC gets Letterman. Reportedly, ABC also prepared documentation that said, even in this, its bad year,

it is a better place for Letterman; CBS prepared solid evidence that, even if late-news lead-ins stink, its prime time drags in viewers to late-night shows.

We should also note that ABC President Robert A. Iger personally apologized to Koppel for working to land Letterman behind his back but also said that ABC was still working to land Letterman.

At press time, Koppel was still on ABC, Letterman was still on CBS, and surely another pundit was penning a column about the issue.

AT THE FCC

The FCC temporarily halted its review of the EchoStar/DirecTV merger and harshly rebuked company officials for not promptly providing documents the agency needs to review the deal. The 180-day clock will remain at 77 days until the documentation is provided. ...

This week, the commission is slated to propose rules for cable-modem service. The

commissioners are expected to tentatively define it as an "information service," giving them authority but not the obligation to order cable companies to carry rival ISPs on their broadband network. ...

Lingering disputes between FCC commissioners over Northpoint Technology's request to launch a terrestrially delivered pay-TV service squelched plans to settle the issue at the commission's meeting Thursday. Northpoint is vying against MDS America and others for spectrum now used solely for satellite-TV companies. Northpoint says it is entitled to the spectrum for free whereas MDS says the spectrum should be auctioned. ...

The merger of the Mass Media and Cable Services bureaus goes into effect March 25 as the Media Bureau, headed by Ken Ferree, who named former cable competition division chief Deborah Klein as his chief of staff. Former Mass Media Bureau Chief Roy Stewart heads the broadcast licensing office.

TALKING TECH

Broadband VOD company Intertainer introduced Demand E.S.P., which it says will allow a cable operator, broadband provider or content owner to build a complete VOD system based on seven modular components: asset management and production, programming and scheduling, distribution man-

agement, usage reporting, royalty management, IP VOD services, and professional services. Price varies with modules selected. Canadian telecommunications provider Aliant Telecom will use it to provide VOD to nearly 70,000 DSL subscribers. ...

Thomson Multimedia officially closed its acquisition of Grass Valley Group for approximately \$172 million last week after getting approval from regulators in Europe (it received Justice Department approval two weeks ago).

MUCH MORE NEWS

Julia Louis-Dreyfus's new NBC comedy, *Watching Ellie*, dropped off from its debut episode. In its second week, ratings fell 27% in adults 18-49 and by more than 4 million viewers from its premiere. But it improved on its 8 p.m. lead-in by 44% in adults 18-49. ...

MTV's new series documenting outrageous rocker Ozzy Osbourne's home life nabbed a 2.8 rating in its premiere Tuesday, the highest-ever debut Nielsen number for a new MTV show. *The Osbournes* notched a 3.4 rating in MTV's target audience, 12- to 34-year-olds. *The Real World 11* provided a strong lead-in, posting a 3.4 rating. ...

Turner Broadcasting's Jamie Kellner keynotes the PROMAX/BDA confab in Los Angeles June 26-29. Also, for the first time, PROMAX plans sessions about marketing Hispanic TV.

Data 101

Understanding the Power and Responsibility of Using Consumer Demographic Data

By Mark Hodges, Strategic Product Marketer, InfoBase® Data Products, Acxiom® Corporation

INTRODUCTION

Competitive pressures have never been greater. To meet these challenges, companies are constantly searching for ways to increase revenue, while reducing marketing costs. But many businesses continue to rely on expensive mass marketing to achieve that goal. In contrast, a growing number of entertainment companies are achieving success by selectively marketing to prospects whose purchasing habits mirror those of their best existing customers. They are doing this through the intelligent use of *customer knowledge*.

Marketing with customer knowledge is conceptually simple, and in practice is extremely effective. By aggregating data and drawing logical conclusions, marketers can identify the types of individuals who are most likely to purchase their services. This enables them to locate prospects that most closely resemble their "best" customers and target promotions to them. Unfortunately, many companies do not know how to use their existing customer data to do this, much less fill in gaps with external data from a third-party.

To help you find success, this paper will explore the general methodology of understanding and using data.

What is Data?

Data is information in its most basic form. Raw data has only potential and little value until it is put into some kind of a *context*.

Data is like the energy stored in a battery. If a battery sits on a shelf, its potential remains untapped. However, when the battery is plugged into a flashlight, the energy in the battery is tapped for useful things like light. The same concept applies to data.

When you connect *data* with an application, the circle is completed. The data becomes something *valuable* because it now has a *context* in which to operate. Once data is connected into the business, the value comes from the flow of data into decision processes and marketing activities. The flashlight is turned on. The customer is best served.

WHAT CATEGORIES OF DATA EXIST?

To understand the value of data, it's important to know more about what data exists.

Consumer Data versus Business Data

Consumer data is typically information about individual *adult* consumers. Examples include name-and-address, age, income range, occupation, home ownership and other demographic and lifestyle characteristics.

Business data is information about businesses of all sizes. Examples include name-and-address, contact name, phone number, SIC code, number of employees and annual revenues.

Internal Data versus External Data

Internal data refers to the in-house information a company keeps on the businesses and customers with whom it has conducted business. It can consist of consumer data, business data, or both depending on the company's customers. Internal data also includes transactional data about individual customers and is arguably the enterprise's most valuable asset.

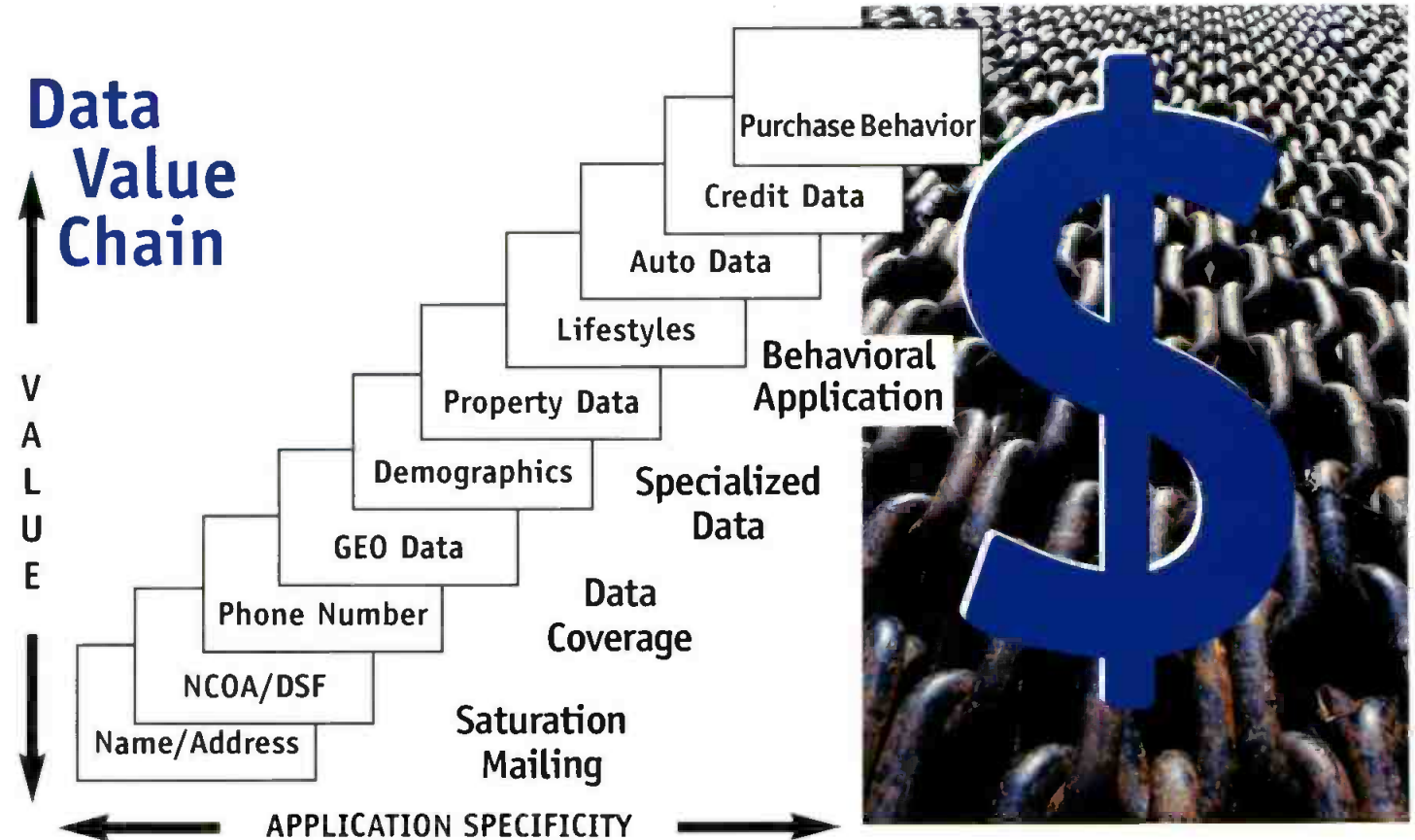
External data refers to augmentation data available for purchase. External data is often referred to as *demographic or lifestyle data*. External data provides information above and beyond internal data.

There is power when internal data is *combined* with external data to create *enhanced data* that is more powerful than internal or external data alone. *Data enhancement* is the process of overlaying (or appending, augmenting) an internal, existing customer record with external data. Companies enhance their internal data with external data to *better understand their customer base*.

WHAT VALUE DOES DATA BRING? THE DATA VALUE CHAIN

A massive amount of data is available on consumers and a growing amount of data on businesses. Name-and-address data is the most common information available. But name-and-address tells you virtually nothing about the consumer, household or business except how to contact them. But when a name and address is enhanced with external data, the value begins to increase. You learn more about the individual consumer or business.

The Data Value Chain shows the levels of external data and how the value increases with each level.



Some data, such as credit data, is valuable but strictly controlled by regulations designed to safeguard consumer privacy. The value chain concept also applies to business customers with firmographic data such as SIC code, annual revenues, number of employees and company start date.

HOW IS DATA USED? DEVELOPING YOUR CUSTOMERS – A DATA-DRIVEN STRATEGY

To be successful, every company must market to the *right* customers and prospects. Good customers must be retained. New customers that resemble the good customers should be identified and cultivated. Companies should have a clear-cut strategy for *growing and expanding* their customer bases.

All companies, no matter what size or industry boundaries, can follow a basic customer development strategy for: Moving as many customers as possible from the lowest level (*suspect* level) toward the highest level (*advocate* level), and identifying and locating leads for candidates who resemble the company's existing *advocate-level* customers.



Suspects

A suspect is an unknown quantity. Little more than a name and an address.

Prospects

A prospect has expressed an interest in your product or displays *an explicit need* for your product.

Customers

A customer has made *at least one purchase* of goods or services, but is rarely profitable with only one purchase.

Clients

A client is a repeat customer who has made multiple purchases of goods and services.

Advocates

An advocate is the most desirable type of customer. Advocates are repeat buyers and cheerleaders for your company.

The overriding benefit of combining internal and external data is that it yields *predictive* information on all levels and types of customers – from suspect through advocates, including non-customers.

For example, Company A knows its best customers (clients and advocates) are married couples aged 45-54 with incomes in excess of \$70,000 who own their homes. Company A must use external data to ensure that it reaches suspects, prospects and customers with the same characteristics as its best customers.

Company A used external data to identify consumers with these traits, and rented a list of married couples aged 45-54 with incomes in excess of \$70,000 who own their homes. Using internal data with external data, Company A significantly increased its chances of having a successful acquisition campaign.

WHAT ARE DATA PRODUCTS?

Purchasing and using data can be confusing. In general, there are two classifications of data usage: marketing use and reference use. When purchasing external data, all data products fall into one of these two classifications. Product use is dictated by the type of data used to build each product. Marketing products and reference products are built using different types of source data. Consequently, it is very important to understand that marketing and reference products are two separate product types which cannot *be used interchangeably*.

MARKETING PRODUCTS

A marketing product is used for promotion to individual consumers and households. Marketing products are built with *publicly available data* and *marketing data*.

Publicly available data includes telephone directories, driver's license information, and other data that is generally available to the public. Marketing data includes private surveys, product warranty cards, magazine questionnaires, and other data collected during marketing processes. Because marketing products are built with public and marketing data, they may not be used for reference purposes.

Data classified as *non-public* cannot be used to build a marketing product. *Non-public data* typically does not reside in the public domain or is governed by privacy regulations such as credit information and Social Security numbers.

REFERENCE PRODUCTS

Reference products are built primarily with *publicly available data* (telephone directories, motor vehicle registrations). As permitted by current privacy regulations, *some* non-public data may also be included in a reference product. However, marketing data cannot be used to build a reference product.

Reference products are most often used for verification and validation purposes. Because reference products are built with public data and non-public data, they may not be used for marketing purposes.



Data Sources:

Marketing Products: Public data; marketing data
Reference Products: Public data; non-public data

Data Uses:

Marketing Products: *Consumer and business-to-business marketing.*
(Direct mail, telemarketing, data modeling.)

Reference Products: *Validation and verification.*
(Loan approval, mortgage lending, skip tracing, insurance underwriting.)



Measurements of Quality Data

It's important to make sure you're using quality data in order to gain the value you want. Not all data is equal. Companies that provide external data vary in the coverage and accuracy of their data. It is important to understand critical measures of data like breadth, depth and precision when purchasing external data.

RULES OF THE DATA ROAD

Data provides the fuel for any highly effective marketing campaign. Because the overall goal is profitability, the new world order demands marketers run profit centers rather than old-style cost centers, and data-driven marketing can help drive that profitability.

Rules to remember when using data-enabled marketing:

- Start with what you have – your internal data is a gold mine of information that you simply cannot purchase.
- Fill in the gaps with external data.
- Use data wisely – consumers like to be approached with offers for things they want. They do not, however, want to be approached with things they do not care for. Meet the customer expectation without intrusion.

These suggestions are presented as a starting point for data-driven marketing. There are many other areas to consider, especially when considering where and how to purchase external data.

Acxiom® Corporation has provided data through its InfoBase® line of data products for more than 16 years and has developed two papers to assist you in learning more about the value and use of data products:

- **Data 101: Understanding the Power and Responsibility of Using Consumer Demographic Data**
- **How to Purchase Information: The ABCs of Data Purchasing**

"Data 101" provides a more extensive explanation about what data is and how you can gain the most value from it. The "How to Purchase Information" paper provides information about best practices to consider when choosing a data provider, including how to structure, perform and interpret the results of a data test.

If you would like to receive a free copy of these papers, please contact us at 501-342-4453 or e-mail us at data101@acxiom.com.



www.acxiom.com/infobase
PRIVACY ASSURED

It's only a patent, XM insists

But NAB fears that new satellite-radio provider aims for local programming

By Paige Albiniaik

XM Satellite Radio says it has no plans to offer local radio programming to its customers, but the National Association of Broadcasters last week discovered that the company has received a patent to do just that.

The discovery confirmed for NAB its worst fears: that XM is looking to horn in on local radio broadcasters' local advertising businesses.

In a letter to FCC Chairman Michael Powell, three FCC commissioners and three bureau chiefs, NAB general counsel Jack Goodman last week urged the commission to disallow XM from using this patent to deliver local programming.

"While XM was telling the Commission that it had no plans to use repeaters other than to fill gaps," Goodman wrote, "it was actively developing technology specifically intended to use repeaters to provide locally differentiated material."

NAB President Eddie Fritts said the revelation shows that the FCC must "put a halt to this ruse of a terrestrial repeater network."

XM Satellite Radio has been mounting hundreds of terrestrial radio repeaters all over the country, saying they are needed to fill gaps in XM's satellite-delivered digital radio service and nothing more. Meanwhile, NAB has been asking the FCC for rules that specifically forbid XM from transmitting any local radio programming. The FCC is still taking comments and has yet to issue final rules on how the repeaters are to be used. A spokesman said the FCC does not comment on ongoing proceedings.

On Feb. 12, the federal government approved an XM patent that would allow the company to insert a code into some of its satellite-radio streams to alert the receiver to pick up and transmit local con-



According to CEO Hugh Panero, XM Satellite Radio had signed up 30,000 customers as of January, surpassing initial sales targets.

tent. A copy of the patent was included in NAB's filing to the FCC.

Though readily admitting that it won the patent, the company denies it plans to use its new repeater network for anything other than filling in transmission gaps.

"The NAB is demanding something that we agree with and that we have consistently agreed with going all the way back to 1997," says XM spokesman Charles Robbins. "We are strictly a national satellite-radio service. Coming up with patents is what scientists do; when they discover something, they patent it."

Robbins said XM scientists came up with the technology by chance while trying to develop other procedures.

But broadcasters don't buy the argument.

Radio broadcaster Bill O'Shaughnessy—who has been fighting hard against XM's attempts to place terrestrial repeaters in Westchester County, N.Y.—said that, if

satellite-radio companies begin to offer local programming, it "could unquestionably have a devastating impact on free over-the-air traditional broadcasting as we know it."

If satellite radio were to offer local programming, 'it could have a devastating impact on free over-the-air broadcasting as we know it.'

— Bill O'Shaughnessy, radio broadcaster

XM Satellite Radio launched last September and began offering nationwide service last November. As of January, the company had signed up 30,000 customers, according to CEO Hugh Panero, more than meeting its initial sales targets. To increase its market share, XM has a deal with General Motors, which, beginning this fall, will offer several models with an option for consumers to purchase XM receiver equipment and then subscribe to the programming service for about \$10 a month.

XM's only competitor, Sirius Satellite Radio, launched in four markets in February—Denver, Houston, Phoenix and Jackson, Miss.—and plans to slowly roll out a nationwide service over this year. ■

Networks forgo March fetes

Broadcast pre-upfront presentations had become glamorous, multimedia events



A brilliant pre-upfront doesn't guarantee success. Jason Alexander's presentation at last year's ABC March meeting spurred excitement over sitcom bomb *Bob Alexander*.

A REALLY UPFRONT GUIDE

Here's an early planning guide to cable and broadcast-network presentations (as of press time). All are in New York except where noted

BROADCAST	DATE
NBC	May 13
The WB	May 14
ABC	May 14
Telemundo	May 14
Pax	May 15
Univision	May 15
CBS	May 15
UPN	May 16
Fox	May 16

CABLE	DATE
Nickelodeon	March 12
TV Guide Channel	March 15
Oxygen	April 4
HGTV/DIY	April 8*
CNBC	April 9
HGTV/DIY	April 9**
MTV	April 10
TNN	April 11
VH1	April 18
Comedy Central	April 23
TV Land/Nick	April 24
HGTV/DIY	April 25***
ABC Family	April 30

*Atlanta **Dallas ***Minneapolis

Source: Cable Advertising Bureau,
BROADCASTING & CABLE

By Joe Schlosser

Normally, in March, 200 top media buyers trek from New York to Los Angeles to get an early glimpse of what the major broadcast networks have cooking in development. The pre-upfront presentations, called the March Screenings, have become glamorous, with multimedia presentations and plenty of stars.

Last year, for example, during ABC's March meeting, Jason Alexander delivered a rollicking 20-minute monologue that excited ABC brass and ad execs about what turned out to be a sitcom bomb called *Bob Patterson*. On the other hand, Sally Field spoke with passion about her new Supreme Court drama, *The Court*, which has yet to be put on ABC's prime time docket but seems a bright prospect.

But that was then, and this is recessionary now. The March Screenings have disappeared since the networks took it on the chin when the advertising market sank alongside the national economy.

"Last year was a difficult year on a lot of different levels, with Sept. 11 and the economy," says The WB Executive Vice President of Sales Bill Morningstar. "The ad community couldn't justify sending people across the country from a financial standpoint, and I think the networks had a tough time justifying the expense as well."

Some media buyers don't think it's such a good idea to scrap the meetings.

"It's always a good idea to show your clients how much money you are investing

and how badly you are looking to improve your position [by showcasing] all of the people that you lined up in front of and behind the camera," says media buyer Paul Schulman, of Advanswers PHID. "I think it's a good idea to plant seeds in the month of March to precede your May upfronts. I think it's really a two-step deal."

The canceled March meetings are just one glaring sign that the relationship between media buyers and the networks was strained by the sluggish 2001 upfront season. The traditional upfront buying season didn't break open until midsummer, and many networks saw double-digit sales declines as they were forced to sell inventory at much cheaper prices than the year before. Coming off three years of record highs and dot-com riches, the broadcast nets didn't know what hit them.

"The numbers that I saw decline in broadcast, cable and syndication across the board were devastating," says the top sales executive at one major network. "I think it was kind of

a watershed season. I think we have learned a number of lessons from the last upfront: Most important, when the networks roll back prices, money leaves the market. People spend less money and keep more in their pockets. So I think all of us know that's not a good idea."

CBS was the only network to hold out last year, refusing to cave in to the lowered upfront marketplace and holding back a considerable amount of scatter inventory. Network executives say the move paid off,

The ad community couldn't justify sending people across the country, and I think the networks had a tough time justifying the expense as well.'

— Bill Morningstar,
The WB

because the network's prime time ratings fared well, the economy picked up, and, perhaps as important, ABC tanked, giving advertisers one less place to put their money.

CBS President Les Moonves says he is ready to do the same thing again this year if the prices aren't right.

Others agree. Says The WB's Morningstar, "I think the sellers are much more prepared to wait this time around because we waited so long last year."

The WB just posted its best fourth-quarter sales results in the network's history, despite slightly lower ratings than the previous season. "I think everybody is looking for indicators right now," says Morningstar, "and so far our indicators have been good."

Media buyers say NBC's deal to keep *Friends* on next season should ensure another strong upfront for the top-rated network. CBS executives say newly inherited UPN is "undervalued" and primed for a strong season with advertisers. ABC, of course, is expected to get the most scrutiny.

The upfronts are scheduled for May 13-17 in New York, with NBC again leading off the pack on Monday, May 13.

Jim McNamara, president of Spanish-language network Telemundo, is looking forward to a very bright upfront season for two reasons: new ownership by NBC and a new census that shows the tremendous growth in the Hispanic population. He expects Telemundo to sell ad time to 30 to 40 new clients during the upfront market. "The census will be huge for us," he says, and the NBC tie-in helps. ■

Better scene is no herd

Cable networks are skipping parties in favor of one-on-ones

By Allison Romano

Less style, more substance. That's the strategy for this year's cable upfront presentations. Many networks are foregoing splashy parties for rank-and-file media buyers, opting instead for intimate meetings with agency execs and their clients.

Last year, cable's upfront take dropped an estimated \$600 million, from \$4.6 billion to \$4 billion. Early predictions peg this year's take at slightly better (up less than 5%) or flat.

Buyers and seller think the deals will get done sooner than last year. They estimate that this upfront could break in late June or early July.

That's still later than the traditional signing period. "The days of the May-June down-and-dirty are over," says Michael Sakin, Game Show Network senior VP of ad sales. "Nobody feels, if they don't jump, they are going to miss something anymore."

But there will be differences from the go-go days. Whereas 2001 was a buyer's market, the advantage could shift to favor networks this year. "Demand is building, and advertisers' wallets seem to be prying open a little more easily," says Thomas Weisel Partners' analyst Gordon Hodge.

Smaller meetings may be easier on network coffers, but ad-sales execs say they are also far more valuable.

"You can't run the risk of doing a 500-person ballroom presentation, hoping 250 people turn out and that they are the right 250 people," says Fox Cable advertising-sales chief Bruce Lefkowitz.

Lefkowitz, who recently defected from Discovery, will instead lead his staff through 150 individual calls for both Fox-partnered National Geographic and FX.

Also taking this approach: Discovery Networks, USA and Sci Fi, Rainbow Network, Hallmark, Game Show Network, and Lifetime. Several will make

upfront presentations to the press as well.

Turner Broadcasting will go door-to-door, too, but TBS and TNT are still toying with the idea of an April event.

Agency execs don't exactly miss the schmooze. "It's one thing to look at programming with a drink in your hand, but, if they have a story to tell, it's a good idea to present one by one," says OMD USA Director of National Broadcast Chris Geraci.

A few big names are still staging parties, notably MTV Networks, Comedy Central and ABC Family. ■

Whereas 2001 was a buyer's market, the advantage could shift to favor networks this year.

THE Time Period Improver!

Austin-KTBC/F M-F 1pm-2pm

GOOD DAY LIVE

+54%

Available Nationally

1.3
Sally Jessy Raphael
Feb '01

2.0
GOOD DAY LIVE
Feb '02



Source: NLS, Growth = WAP Overnight, Feb '02 sweep vs. SNAP Feb '01 sweep, 1H Rtg

Programming

BroadcastWatch

COMPILED BY KENNETH RAY

FEB. 25-MAR. 3 Broadcast network prime time ratings according to Nielsen Media Research

Week	abc	CBS	NBC	FOX	PAX TV	UPN	WB
23	5.5/9	9.6/15	7.9/12	7.1/11	0.9/1	2.5/4	3.6/5
MONDAY	8:00 57. All New Bloopers 5.6/9	21. King/Queens 9.0/14 23. Yes, Dear 8.9/13	31. Fear Factor 7.8/12	35. Boston Public 7.6/12	125. Miracle Pets 0.7/1	95. The Hughleys 2.3/4 93. One on One 2.5/4	71. 7th Heaven 4.7/7
	9:30 63. ABC Monday Night Movie—Practical Magic 5.4/9	4. Ev Lvs Raymnd 14.0/21 12. Becker 11.2/17	39. Third Watch 7.1/11	44. Ally McBeal 6.6/10	118. Touched by an Angel 1.0/1	92. The Parkers 2.6/4 90. Girlfriends 2.7/4	93. Angel 2.5/4
	10:00	36. Family Law 7.3/12	23. Crossng Jordan 8.9/15		114. Diagnosis Murder 1.1/2		
	10:30						
TUESDAY	8:00 68. The Chair 5.0/8	14. JAG 10.9/17	20. Frasier 9.1/14 15. Watchng Ellie* 10.8/16	49. That '70s Show 6.2/10 57. That '70s Show 5.6/8	125. Mysterious Ways 0.7/1	84. Buffy the Vampire Slayer 3.1/5	80. Gilmore Girls 3.5/5
	9:00 30. NYPD Blue 7.9/12	21. The Guardian 9.0/13	11. Frasier 11.4/17 25. Scrubs 8.3/12	57. 24 5.6/8	125. Doc 0.7/1	107. Roswell 1.6/2	76. Smallville 3.9/6
	9:30 46. Philly 6.5/11	18. Judging Amy 10.2/17	25. Dateline NBC 8.3/14		114. Diagnosis Murder 1.1/2		
	10:30						
WEDNESDAY	8:00 42. My Wife & Kids 6.8/11		27. Ed 8.1/13		124. Candid Camera 0.8/1	85. Enterprise 3.0/5	96. Flix Wednesday—Dumb and Dumber 2.2/3
	8:30 54. According to Jim 5.9/9			63. Fox Movie Special—Rush Hour 5.4/8			
	9:00 68. Drew Carey 5.0/7	9. 44th Annual Grammy Awards 11.9/19	13. The West Wing 11.0/16		118. Touched by an Angel 1.0/2	106. Enterprise 1.7/3	
	9:30 75. The Job 4.2/6		7. Law & Order 12.3/20		111. Diagnosis Murder 1.2/2		
THURSDAY	8:00 88. Whose Line Is It 2.9/5	6. Survivor: Marquesas* 13.0/20	1. Friends 17.4/27 4. Leap of Faith* 14.0/21	85. Family Guy 3.0/5 83. Family Guy 3.2/5	121. It's a Miracle 0.9/1	77. WWF Smackdown! 3.8/6	103. Charmed 1.8/3
	8:30 77. Whose Line Is It 3.8/6		8. Will & Grace 12.1/18 17. Just Shoot Me 10.4/16	80. King of the Hill 3.5/5 88. Futurama 2.9/4	121. Touched by an Angel 0.9/1		100. Charmed 1.9/3
	9:00 49. Who Wants to Be a Millionaire 6.2/9	2. CSI 17.1/26	17. Just Shoot Me 10.4/16				
	9:30 42. Primetime Thursday 6.8/11	27. The Agency 8.1/13	3. ER 16.3/27		111. Diagnosis Murder 1.2/2		
FRIDAY	8:00 48. America's Funniest Home Videos 6.3/11	57. First Monday 5.6/10		82. 33rd NAACP Image Awards 3.3/6	129. Weakest Link 0.6/1		99. Sabrina/Witch 2.0/4 103. Raising Dad 1.8/3
	8:30		19. Dateline NBC 9.4/17		129. Encounters With the Unexplained 0.6/1	107. UPN Movie Friday—Batman Forever 1.6/3	90. Reba 2.7/5 100. Maybe It's Me 1.9/3
	9:00 65. Best Commercials Never Seen 5.4/9	67. 51st Annual Miss USA Pageant 5.2/9	16. Law & Order: Special Victims Unit 10.7/19		118. Diagnosis Murder 1.0/2		
	9:30 39. 20/20 7.1/13						
SATURDAY	8:00						
	8:30 79. ABC Bond Picture Show—Diamonds Are Forever 3.7/7	56. Touched by an Angel 5.8/10 71. The Agency 4.7/8 38. The District 7.2/13	47. NBC Saturday Night Movies—U.S. Marshals 6.4/11	70. Cops 4.8/9 66. Cops 5.3/9 54. AMW: America Fights Back 5.9/10	121. Diagnosis Murder 0.9/2 125. PAX Big Event—Miracle of the Cards 0.7/1		
	9:00						
	10:30						
SUNDAY	7:00						
	7:30 41. Wonderful World of Disney—Cinderella 7.0/11	10. 60 Minutes 11.6/19 34. The Education of Max Bickford 7.7/12	85. NBA Basketball Game 2—Indiana vs. Sacramento 3.0/5 74. Dateline NBC 4.3/7	73. Futurama 4.5/8 61. King of the Hill 5.5/9 31. The Simpsons 7.8/12 36. Malcolm/Middl 7.3/11	111. Candid Camera 1.2/2 107. Ooc 1.6/2		110. No Boundaries* 1.5/2 103. Jamie Kennedy 1.8/3 97. Jamie Kennedy 2.1/3 97. Off Centre 2.1/3 100. For Your Love 1.9/3
	8:00		31. Law & Order: Criminal Intent 7.8/12	61. The X-Files 5.5/8	114. Ponderosa 1.1/2		
	8:30 44. Alias 6.6/10	52. CBS Sunday Movie—Crossed Over 6.1/10	49. Dateline NBC 6.2/10		114. Touched by an Angel 1.1/2		
9:00 29. The Practice 8.0/13							
10:00							
10:30							
WEEK	5.8/9	9.1/15	8.9/14	5.2/8	0.9/2	2.5/4	2.5/4
S-T-D	6.5/11	8.1/13	9.2/15	6.2/10	0.9/1	2.8/4	2.5/4

KEY: RANKING/SHOW TITLE/PROGRAM RATING/SHARE
 • TOP TEN SHOWS OF THE WEEK ARE NUMBERED IN RED
 • TV UNIVERSE ESTIMATED AT 105.5 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS:
 ONE RATINGS POINT IS EQUAL TO 1,055,000 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-D = SEASON TO DATE
 • SOURCES: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH, CBS RESEARCH

SyndicationWatch

FEB. 18-24 *Syndicated programming ratings according to Nielsen Media Research*

TOP 25 SHOWS

Rank	Program	HH AA	HH GAA
1	Wheel of Fortune	9.5	9.5
2	Jeopardy	8.1	8.1
3	Friends	7.3	8.5
4	Seinfeld	6.3	6.9
5	Entertainment Tonight	6.1	6.2
6	Judge Judy	5.8	8.4
7	Everybody Loves Raymond	6.6	6.6
8	Seinfeld (wknd)	5.4	6.4
8	Oprah Winfrey	5.4	5.4
10	Friends (wknd)	4.1	4.2
10	Wheel of Fortune (wknd)	4.1	4.1
12	Live With Regis and Kelly	4.0	4.0
13	Judge Joe Brown	3.5	4.7
14	King of the Hill	3.4	2.8
14	Maury	3.4	3.6
14	Entertainment Tonight(wknd)	3.4	3.5
14	Everybody Loves Raymond (wknd)	3.4	3.4
14	Inside Edition	3.4	3.4
19	Frasier	3.3	3.4
20	Divorce Court	3.1	4.1
20	Andromeda	3.1	3.3
22	Just Shoot Me (wknd)	2.8	3.3
22	Jerry Springer	2.8	3.1
22	The X-Files	2.8	3.1
22	Stargate SG-1	2.8	2.9
22	Access Hollywood	2.8	2.8

TOP OFF-NET COMEDIES

Rank	Program	HH AA	HH GAA
1	Friends	7.3	8.5
2	Seinfeld	6.3	6.9
3	Everybody Loves Raymond	5.8	6.6
4	Seinfeld (wknd)	5.4	6.4
5	Friends (wknd)	4.1	4.2

According to Nielsen Media Research Syndication Service Ranking Report Feb. 18-24, 2002

HH/AA = Average Audience Rating (households)

HH/GAA = Gross Aggregate Average

One Nielsen Rating = 1,055,000 households, which represents 1% of the 105.5 million TV Households in the United States

NA = Not Available

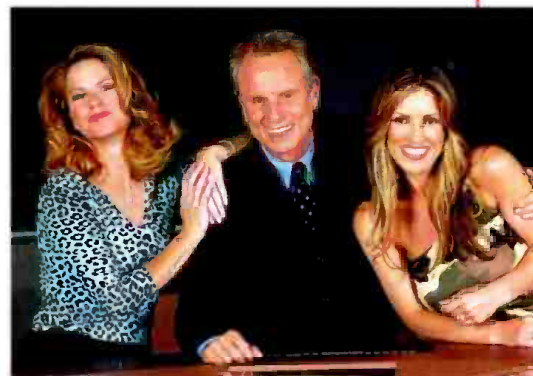
News with an L.A. twist

What started out as a local news show seven years ago is headed into national syndication.

Following a three-month test, Twentieth Television executives announced last week that they are going to distribute daily news-and-entertainment series *Good Day Live* to local stations across the nation next season. The one-hour program, an offshoot of KTTV-TV Los Angeles's quirky morning news program, *Good Day LA*, will be able to call on Fox News resources to cover breaking news, according to a Twentieth executive.

"It's a proven show, not just with the test run of *Good Day Live* but also with the successful years the show has already had as *Good Day LA*," says Paul Franklin, Twentieth TV executive vice president and general sales manager. "It is a well-oiled machine."

The machine is powered by three Hollywood-based anchors: Steve Edwards, a talk-show host or news anchor in Los Angeles for several decades; Jillian Barberie, who hosts a game show on FX, and Dorothy Lucey, an entertainment insider.



Good Day Live is anchored by Hollywood-based (l-r) Dorothy Lucey, Steve Edwards and Jillian Barberie.

Twentieth launched *Good Day Live* on a half dozen Fox stations nationally in December and added another half dozen last month.

President Bob Cook says, "Increased interest from the marketplace and a strong need for something original indicated to us that the time was right to offer the show to stations and audiences across the country."

Twentieth launched court series *Texas Justice* similarly with the Fox stations last year and went national two months ago. The series finished the February sweeps period as the top-rated new daily series in syndication. *Good Day Live* will officially get going on a national basis in January, but many new stations will start airing it as soon as this summer.

—Joe Schlosser



The #1 New First Run Strip!

Fabulous Feb Growth





THE NEW
COURT
LEADER

20th
TELEVISION

Source: NIELSEN, WRAP Oversight, Feb '02 sweep, New First Run Strip w/ Texas Justice, Assault, Eliminate, 5/8 Wheel, Impact, John Edwards, Oliver Holt, Remedy View, Signposts, Weekend Link (09), Growth w/ Feb '02 sweep vs. Nov '01 sweep HH 17%

StationBreak

BY DAN TRIGOB OFF

DIGITAL DISPLACEMENT

A South Carolina low-power station says it was forced off the air by the digital signal of a full-power station.

GE Media President Greg Everett told FCC Chairman Michael Powell he had to let WPDF-LP Florence go dark after it was denied Class A status and Media General CBS affiliate WBTW(TV)'s digital signal displaced its low-power one. Without Class A protection, a low-power must give way to a full-power station.

Everett, who also owns WFXB(TV) in the same market, told BROADCASTING & CABLE he believes that much of the audience for the station's mix of locally produced religious and sports programming and its Family Network offerings is over-the-air, and that continuing as a cable-only channel isn't practical. Local cable carrier Time Warner says it's negotiating with the Family Network for a direct feed.

"I believe this is a scenario that will undoubtedly be played out many times in the coming months as full-power stations launch their digital channels," Everett told Powell.

Washington attorney Peter Tannenwald, counsel to the Community Broadcasters Association, said, "This shutdown resulted from a regulatory structure and not market forces. The preservation of low-power TV stations, which often do far more than their fair share of local



Anchor away

Veteran WCBS-TV New York anchor Dana Tyler (l) will be adding the 11 p.m. *Nightcast* to her 5 and 6 p.m. duties. Angela Rae, who had been anchoring at 4:30, 5:30 and 11, will move to sister station WFOR-TV Miami, where she had spent five years as a reporter and anchor prior to joining WCBS-TV in 2000.

programming, should be a higher-priority agenda item of both Congress and the FCC."

KNTV'S OLYMPIC BOOST

Granite Broadcasting's KNTV(TV) San Jose, Calif., proved that it can garner Olympian ratings, averaging a 22 rating/35 share for the games. Barely a ratings blip before wresting NBC affiliation from KRON-TV, it won in late-night news for February sweeps and was NBC's highest-rated top-10 market in Olympic viewing.

Whether KNTV can hold its Olympic numbers through May sweeps will likely be a challenge for new owner NBC, which is expected to close on the sale April 1. Granite plans to continue its withdrawal from the Bay Area and said it plans to put its WB affiliate there, KBWB-TV, up for sale—along with Detroit WB WDWB(TV). CEO Don

Cornwell said he'd like to swap the WBs for a Big Four affiliate in a midsize market.

KMART NO-SHOW

When corporate-turnaround specialist and new Kmart Chairman James Adamson didn't show up for a press breakfast that was planned well in advance and attended by about 30 members of the local and national media, WXYZ-TV Detroit reporter Steve Wilson sat down and ate breakfast anyway, then interviewed Adamson's empty chair for his story.

Local media suggested that Adamson's unexplained absence might have been partially due to Wilson's three-parter on how the bankrupt company was still spending big bucks on bonuses and corporate travel. "Most of the media has focused on the dishonest behavior associated with the Enron failure," Wil-

son told BROADCASTING & CABLE, but his piece may show that "honest mismanagement can have effects just as devastating."

Following years of litigation against his former employer, Fox Television, over a piece he claimed WTVT(TV) Tampa, Fla., wanted him to slant under pressure from subject Monsanto—the dispute costing him his job, he said—Wilson returned to reporting in Detroit last year. Fox has contested the charge; the mixed verdict is on appeal from both sides.

DOERR EXITS

Steve Doerr, senior VP for news, programming and creative development, at NBC's station group, left the company last week. Insiders said he was frustrated by cutbacks and had hoped for more investment in programming and news. NBC would say only that Doerr had resigned for personal reasons.

IN THE ENEMY CAMP

Allbritton Communications will combine its Washington, D.C., properties, WJLA-TV and NewsChannel 8, into a single organization. The state-of-the-art facility will be located in Rosslyn, Va.'s Twin Towers—former headquarters for Gannett Corp., owner of rival station WUSA(TV).

All news is local. Contact Dan Trigoboff at (301) 260-0923, e-mail dtrig@starpower.net or fax (413) 254-4133

FocusMacon

THE MARKET

DMA rank	122
Population	604,000
TV homes	219,000
Income per capita	\$12,903
TV revenue rank	119
TV revenue	\$28.8 million

COMMERCIAL TV STATIONS

Rank*	Ch.	Affil.	Owner
1	WMAZ	13 CBS	Gannett
2	WGXA	24 Fox	GOCOM
3	WMGT	41 NBC	Morris
4	WPGA-TV	58 ABC	Radio Perry
5	WGNN	64 UPN	Macon Minis.

*November 2001, total households, 6 a.m.-2 a.m., Sun.-Sat.

CABLE/DBS

Cable subscribers (HH)	146,730
Cable penetration	67%
ADS subscribers (HH)**	37,230
ADS penetration	17%
DBS carriage of local TV?	No

**Alternative Delivery Systems, includes DBS and other non-cable services, according to Nielsen Media Research

WHAT'S NO. 1

Syndicated show	Rating/share***
<i>Wheel of Fortune</i> (WMAZ)	19/33
Network show	
<i>Survivor</i> (WMAZ)	20/31
Early-evening newscast	
WMAZ	28/53
Late newscast	
WMAZ	16/45

***November 2001, total households
Sources: Nielsen Media Research, BIA Research



The Macon, Ga., market expects to top \$30 million in revenue this year.

Big dog in small market

The Macon, Ga., DMA sits about 80 miles and more than 110 markets south of Atlanta. The slightly overperforming No. 122 market has one VHF TV station and looks to break \$30 million in revenue this year for the first time.

That lone VHF, WMAZ(TV), is unquestionably the big dog here. The oldest station in the market, it brings in more than twice the revenue of its nearest competitor and, in ratings, is among the top CBS affiliates. The station dominates in local newscasts, and General Manager Don McGuirk expects the Nielsen book to show his station the winner for even the NBC Olympics-dominated February sweeps. Local NBC affiliate WGMT(TV) is still expected to have an excellent February book.

But, in Macon, says one competitor, "if the TV's on, WMAZ gets credit for it."

Even in recent down times, the job market has been stable, due largely to the prominence of the federal government as the key local employer. Automotive, fast food, mobile homes and furniture retailers are key advertisers in what appears to be a growing market. Cellular looked promising, but the reduction in players through consolidation may have limited its advertising potential.

WMAZ may be the dominant station, but WPGA-TV has not given up. Although trailing in ratings, the Radio Perry-owned ABC affiliate grabbed even national attention with a controversial campaign that suggested that it was signing "off." That "off" turned out to be short for "off and running" on behalf of the local Salvation Army. Station owner Lowell Register called it "deceptive ... but not false."

In January, the station revamped its local newscast after trying a fast-paced "action" format both with and without anchors and now focuses on sports—which, Register says, had been the former newscast's strength. Given WMAZ's dominance, he says, he's looking to offer alternative programming.

—Dan Trigoboff



SUPERIOR SWEEPS!

JUDGE HATCHETT Delivers Outstanding Growth Across The Overnight Markets During The February Sweep!

JUDGE HATCHETT

The Judge America's Watching!

3.3 Household Rating!
+18% vs. November '01

www.judgehatchett.com

Source: NSI, WRAP Overnights, M-F, HH wtd. cume rtg, Feb '02 Sweep, Nov '01 = Program Avg



The Leader in Young Adult Programming.
CTDTV.COM

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On March 25 we'll follow the cars and the cash in an in-depth report on one of the most important and influential advertising sectors in television. Automotive advertising dollars impact all areas of broadcasting so get behind the wheel with *Broadcasting & Cable's* special report.

ISSUE DATE

March 25, 2002



AD CLOSING

Friday, March 15



MATERIALS DUE

Tuesday, March 19

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Yvonne Pettus: 212-337-6945 • Rob Payne: 212-337-7022
Classified Advertising & Marketplace Advertising: 866-258-1075
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TV UPFRONT PREVIEW



The broadcast, cable and syndication "upfront season" is the annual ritual when advertisers place their bets on programs and networks sell billions of dollars in advertising. How these upfronts go is a pretty good indicator of the health of the economy. In this special report, *Broadcasting & Cable* looks at how the experts from Madison Avenue to Wall Street to Broadcast Row, see this upfront season. Plus, *Broadcasting & Cable* will take a look at the diverse trends and factors that might make a difference to the advertising bottom line.

Issue Date:

April 15, 2002

Space Close

Friday, April 5

Materials Close

Tuesday, April 9

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March DTV madness

Over 650 stations want waivers; long-term prospects unclear

By Bill McConnell

Stations in many mid-size and smaller markets will not meet the May 1 deadline for launching digital service, and their prospects for getting on the air within the next 12 months are uncertain, several group owners indicated last week.

They were among 650 stations—and counting—that told the FCC they would be missing the DTV on-air deadline of May 1 (that number will probably increase, with the FCC continuing to post waiver applications at press time). The total number of commercial stations that won't make the deadline will also probably be higher because the 160 stations still without construction permits were not required to ask for build-out waivers, though some did.

Almost 45% of commercial-TV operators are seeking permission to delay the build-out of digital facilities, according to waiver applications filed by a March 4 FCC deadline (noncommercial broadcasters have until May 2003). The number is substantially greater than the one-third predicted by an industry-sponsored survey.

Some station operators in less profitable markets are telling the FCC that the uncertain outlook for making money with DTV is impeding construction financing. They include Granite Broadcasting, which bluntly told the FCC it doesn't know when DTV operation will begin at seven of nine stations.

Lack of financing was also Benedek Broadcasting's reason. The company asked for waivers for 26 of 27 stations and told

the FCC that 18 of those have no guarantee of beginning DTV service in 2002. The company did not commit to completing construction by May 2003 either, when currently available waivers expire. Instead, Benedek said it will phase in DTV "on a rolling basis ... as expeditiously as possible in light of financial and other constraints." Benedek blamed the financial problems on the ad downturn and technical default on its revolving-credit facility.

Compounding similar problems at Duhamel Broadcasting, the company said, its KSGW-TV Sheridan, Wyo., facility and satellites will need a delay because of an engineer shortage. Though not suggesting a postponement of more than a year, it warned that the station's engineering staff has been withered by a death, serious health problems and job exits.

3. Facility Information:	
a.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial
b. Community of License:	
City:	NEW YORK
State:	NY
4. Purpose of Application. Applicant requests an extension pursuant to (check one):	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	a permit for a new DTV station
<input type="checkbox"/>	a modification of a DTV construction permit
5. Applicant certifies that construction cannot be completed because of (check one):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	technical (e.g., equipment delays)
<input type="checkbox"/>	legal (e.g., litigation)
<input type="checkbox"/>	financial (e.g., inability to finance)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	other reasons (e.g., natural disasters)
Describe in an Exhibit the specific reason(s) requested by the applicant to solve or mitigate the problem(s).	
6. Has the construction period for this station been previously extended?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. If Yes, describe in an Exhibit the applicant's duty to overcome the circumstance(s) preventing construction.
7. Applicant requests that the time within which to complete construction be extended to:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	a. If applicant is not able to state now when construction is taking to resolve the problem(s), state when it is taking to resolve the problem(s).

has been withered by a death, serious health problems and job exits.



Currently, stations are permitted up to two six-month delays if they can demonstrate problems with equipment, legal fights over zoning or tower siting, inability to obtain financing, and other factors, such as natural disasters.

Big-market stations and even some network O&Os could face continued delays because of zoning fights in such markets as Hartford and Denver. Also, the destruction of the World Trade Center towers has cast doubt on NBC and ABC O&Os and Tribune's WPIX(TV) in New York. "Finding a place for DTV towers in New York City could be a real mess," said Clarke Wadlow, whose firm does legal work for Tribune.

FCC officials said they were not alarmed by the number of requests and quickly granted 114 by late last week. Most of the requests stated that only a few extra months would be needed to complete DTV construction. "If that's the case, I won't be concerned by the sheer volume of requests," said Susan Eid, mass media adviser to FCC Chairman Michael Powell.

The National Association of Broadcasters isn't alarmed either. "The good news is that the requests are primarily from stations in small to medium markets," said NAB spokesman Dennis Wharton, "and most stations think they will be in compliance within six to 12 months."

Paxson, uniquely, already has the right to delay DTV for 19 stations on chs. 52-69. Nevertheless, it needs permission to delay build-outs at 10 stations. Nine other stations are still without digital assignments.

Emmis Broadcasting, with four digital stations already operating, is seeking delays at hub outlets and satellites in 11 markets.

Other major groups seeking delays were Fox, Sinclair, Young, Meredith and Hearst-Argyle, all blaming intractable zoning fights or delays rectifiable in several months.

By the middle of last week, 258 stations were broadcasting in digital, and a few more were expected to be added by the end of the week. ■

IN BRIEF

MEDIA MERGERS TO DOJ

Under a new agreement between the Justice Department's Antitrust Division and the Federal Trade Commission, DoJ will review all entertainment and media mergers, Assistant Attorney General Charles James and FTC Chairman Timothy Muris agreed last week.

In the past, the two agencies fought over which would review what, causing extensive delays in the process. In fact, deciding who would review the AOL Time Warner merger was so contentious that the FTC had to agree not to claim any new expertise as a result of completing that review, Muris said.

DoJ and FTC closed the deal even though Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Fritz Hollings (D-S.C.) hasn't signed off on it. James and Muris delayed the agreement in January after Hollings complained of not being consulted.

"I believe this is in violation of appropriations law, which states that we be consulted," Hollings said last week. He chairs the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee in charge of DoJ and FTC budgets. "We were in the middle of discussions on how to proceed, and they just moved forward on their own. It's a tricky way to forgo consultation. We have our tricks, too."

DoJ and FTC have divvied up mergers since 1948, James said, and Congress has never intervened.

Consumer groups don't like the change. Jeff Chester, executive director, Center for Digital Democracy, says it'll be easier to get mergers through DoJ, which isn't headed by a politically appointed panel.

James and Muris said Hollings' was the sole Congressional complaint on the changes. Sens. Herb Kohl (D-Wis.) and Mike DeWine (R-Ohio), Senate Antitrust Subcommittee chairman and ranking member, respectively, last week sent a letter in support.

Senators balk at big bird

Some maintain that combined EchoStar/DirecTV would violate Clayton Act

By Paige Albiniaik

What song does an 800-pound canary sing? Anything it wants to. That appeared to be the concern of some senators who doubt that EchoStar Communications Corp.'s proposed \$26 billion merger with Hughes Electronics, parent company of DirecTV, can pass antitrust muster.

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist to be highly skeptical of a merger that reduces competition in an industry and creates a monopoly in rural America," Sen. Herb Kohl (D-Wis.), chairman of the Senate Antitrust Subcommittee, told EchoStar CEO Charlie Ergen and DirecTV Chairman Eddy Hartenstein at a hearing on Wednesday.

Several senators pointed out that many rural areas are not passed by cable and not reached by broadcast signals, making satellite TV rural consumers' only choice. EchoStar's proposed merger with DirecTV would eliminate competition in some rural markets between two multichannel providers: DirecTV and EchoStar. That fact alone violates the Clayton Act, antitrust law's guiding principle, and will make it hard for the Department of Justice to approve the merger, said Sen. Mike DeWine (R-Ohio), the subcommittee's ranking member. The Clayton Act proscribes agreements between businesses to control the supply of a product or service.

Nonetheless, Kohl asked Ergen and Hartenstein if they would be willing to accept a six-point checklist that was "legally binding," likely in the form of a consent decree. Both said yes.

Kohl wants the new company to agree to



EchoStar's Charlie Ergen said he would be willing to accept a checklist that was legally binding on the merged company, likely in the form of a consent decree.

deliver local programming into all 210 TV markets within a specified time frame; comply with full local TV-carriage requirements; agree to a national pricing scheme for all consumers; unroll a competitive broadband service; offer high-definition and interactive TV; and provide customers, for free, any new equipment the merger may require them to have.

Kohl also suggested that these requirements be "overseen and enforced by a Special Master," much like the deal that was agreed to by AOL and Time Warner when they merged.

"It doesn't get any better than to condition the merger on something you already do and you already are willing to continue to do because it makes good business sense for you," Ergen told reporters after the hearing.

"That's why we're so willing to agree to be bound by consent decree or by whatever other mechanisms the FCC or the Department of Justice would assign," Hartenstein said.

Even though a merged EchoStar/DirecTV plans to offer local TV signals in all 210 markets, EchoStar plans to ask the U.S. Supreme Court this week to take up its challenge of a law requiring satellite-TV companies to carry every local TV station in every market they serve. Ergen said, "We didn't abandon our principles for the merger."

For its part, DirecTV has not yet decided whether it will join EchoStar's appeal of last December's Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals decision, which went against the satellite-TV provider. ■

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Road to NAB 3: Newsroom Operations	April 1	Fri. 3/22	Tue. 3/26
NAB Convention Issue • Top 25 Television Groups • RTNDA Coverage <small>BONUS DISTRIBUTION AT NAB 2002</small>	April 8	Fri. 3/28	Tue. 4/2
NAB Midweek Issue • Digital Facilities • B&C Technology Leadership Awards <small>BONUS DISTRIBUTION/IN ROOM AT NAB 2002</small>	April 10	Fri. 3/29	Tue. 4/2
NAB Wrap Up Issue	April 15	Fri. 4/5	Tue. 4/9

BROADCASTING  **CABLE**

A light rain, no downpour

Looser rules will lead to more but limited station consolidation, experts say

By John M. Higgins

While cautioning against a land rush that some dealmakers hope for, mid-size TV-station groups signal clear interest in doing deals, given relaxing media ownership regulations.

Station-group executives, some gathered at Bear, Stearns & Co.'s annual media conference in Boca Raton, Fla., last week, generally said they're not interested in selling and would use their new flexibility gradually.

"Consolidation will continue but probably not as fast as some headlines would have you believe," says Tribune Co. CEO Dennis Fitzsimmons.

The exception is Paxson Communications, whose executives are all but jumping up and down screaming, "Buy me, buy me." Having sold 32% to NBC in 1999, Paxson is suing the network for essentially deciding to not buy the rest, opting instead for Spanish-language network Telemundo.

Three weeks ago, a federal appellate court ordered the FCC to overhaul and justify the national cap blocking a single owner from owning stations reaching more than 35% of TV households. The same decision simply knocked down a rule barring a company from owning both a TV station and a cable system in the same market.

The FCC is also looking to revise, probably drop, a similar crossownership rule on TV stations and newspapers in the same market. And Sinclair Broadcasting is making progress on a lawsuit looking to widen rules essentially restricting TV-station duopolies to the largest markets.

Merrill Lynch & Co. media investment banker John Chachas believes relaxation of crossownership rules and the ownership cap isn't enough to spark a dramatic wave of deals. That would take alteration of the

duopoly rules, which create more-dramatic and -immediate efficiencies than owning a cable system and TV station in one market.

The companies expected to sell quickest are those struggling under debt amassed in late-'90s takeover sprees. Topping that list are Sinclair Broadcasting and Granite Broadcasting.

Young Broadcasting could be on that roster. Burdened with an \$850 million takeover of KRON-TV San Francisco last year, Chairman Vince Young is seen as an eager seller. Some dealmakers, though, wonder whether, after unloading KRON-TV, he won't start buying anew.

Cox Communications is most widely expected to take advantage of easing restrictions. The company and parent Cox Enterprises own major-market TV stations, newspapers and cable systems. "Look for Cox to eventually buy a station in Phoenix or San Diego," opines one Wall Street executive.

Lehman Bros. media analyst William M. Meyers argues that, by diversifying, station groups may have sullied their allure to the biggest buyers: the networks. Sure, Hearst-Argyle's eight ABC affiliates look tasty to ABC parent Disney, but will Disney want 10 NBC affiliates and two CBS affiliates?

"Absent a two- or three-way transaction," he says, "we expect the groups to either sell assets piecemeal to the networks or sell their larger station portfolios to a newspaper company or financial buyer."

Tribune Co. is interested in expanding its portfolio, not selling, Fitzsimmons said at

the Bear Stearns conference. It sold its three Denver radio stations in part to raise money to buy more TV stations.

He acknowledged that Tribune's station group is a target for AOL Time Warner, with 22% of The WB and WB affiliates in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. AOL owns only WTBS(TV) Atlanta.

In New York and Los Angeles, AOL couldn't own TV stations without selling local cable systems. "I think they'd like to own their own distribution," Fitzsimmons said, "as every other network would."

But he says no. "We like our position and aren't interested in selling to them. We see ourselves as a consolidator."

E.W. Scripps & Co. has studied how it might buy stations in markets where it owns newspapers or news-

papers where it owns a TV station. "Clearly, there's a lot of value there," says Executive Vice President Rich Boehne, "but it's not easily defined. We have a pretty sober approach. If a frenzy gets going, we will be cautious."

CEO Ken Lowe said Scripps is not particularly interested in selling its TV stations, which reach about 10% of all TV households and have been handy in cross-promoting Scripps cable networks, including HGTV and Food Network.

He's even contemplating localized versions of the networks, which an operator would be able to pull from a video server. The first test is occurring in Knoxville, where the cable network group is based and Scripps owns the local newspaper. ■



Although Tribune Co.'s station group might be a target for acquisition, CEO Dennis Fitzsimmons says, "We see ourselves as a consolidator."



A3 From a radio network to a TV powerhouse

A6 NBC's historic timeline

A14 Bob Wright's triumphant transformation

A20 Tough times for Andy Lack

A22 Station-to-station with Randy Falco

A24 The oldest Peacocks

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THAT MATTER.

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TO **SHOW** FOR THEM.



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RCA President and father of NBC David Sarnoff dedicates RCA pavilion at 1939 New York World's Fair in first-ever TV coverage of a news event.



Always cutting edge

From David
Sarnoff to Bob
Wright, how
NBC grew to
become a giant

It began inauspiciously enough. No major fanfare, no flood of press releases, just a simple newspaper announcement in September 1926. "The day has gone by when the radio receiving set is a plaything," it stated. "It must now be an instrument of service."

The ad, placed by the Radio Corporation of America, heralded the formation of the National Broadcasting Company. Initially a scheme to sell RCA radio receivers, NBC soon set the pace for the coming radio revolution, and later for television.

NBC broke onto the scene in a big way on New Year's Day 1927, when it broadcast the Rose Bowl football game coast to coast. By late 1927, the company was carrying regular national broadcasts on its two radio networks, labeled "Blue" and "Red."

"It was the first and most innovative broadcasting entity in American history," said Tim Brooks, former director of research at NBC-TV, now senior vice president of research at Lifetime Television.

Over the past 75 years, NBC has been at the forefront of the broadcasting industry, boasting a number of firsts. It has also

B Y L E E H A L L



Groucho Marx (r, with sidekick George Fenneman) brought his hilarious asides to *You Bet Your Life* from 1950 to '61.



Few did more for the television business (or cross-dressers) than Milton Berle and his *Texaco Star Theater*.



Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca fronted historic *Your Show of Shows*, which launched such writers as Larry Gelbart, Woody Allen, Neil Simon and Mel Brooks.

stumbled and fumbled some along the way.

NBC might never have come into existence had it not been for the vision of "The General," David Sarnoff, RCA vice president and general manager, who realized that, in order to sell radio sets, RCA had to make sure buyers had something to listen to.

THE SHADOW OF "THE GENERAL"

It was Sarnoff who came up with the idea of stringing together radio stations around the country into a network.

NBC pioneered the serial drama on radio with the debut of *Real Folks* in 1928. A year later, the NBC Blue Network picked up a popular comedy from its Chicago affiliate. *Amos 'n' Andy* went on to become the most popular program on network radio.

In those formative years, almost everything that appeared on the air was performed live. Early transcription equipment was unreliable and rendered poor sound quality, so NBC formally banned the use of recorded material on its airwaves. The prohibition was broken briefly in 1937, however, when newsman Herb Morrison recorded on a Presto disc cutter his eyewitness account of the explosion of the Hindenburg in Lakehurst, N.J.

Although radio ignited the growth of NBC, Sarnoff soon turned his attention to a newfangled toy to be known as television. RCA and NBC began to experiment with TV broadcasts from their tower atop New York's Empire State Building in 1931.

Eight years later, Sarnoff presided over another meaningful moment in broadcasting history: the public demonstration of a prototype television receiver at the New York World's Fair.

"It is with a feeling of humbleness that I come to this moment," Sarnoff told the crowd. "This miracle of engineering skill that one day will bring the world to the home also brings a new American industry to serve man's material welfare. ... [Television] will become an important factor in American economic life."

Within two years, NBC's WNBT had

received the first federal commercial-television license. WNBT carried what was to be the first television commercial later that year, a 10-second spot for Bulova watches. It cost the sponsor \$7.

World War II put a temporary halt to the growth of television. NBC canceled its limited broadcast schedule in 1942. But, when the war ended, television began a growth explosion. RCA introduced a popular 7-inch television set in 1946, selling more than 40,000 units by year's end. It cost about \$400.

NBC's programming was shifting into high gear as well. *Meet the Press*, the longest-running program on television, first appeared in 1947. Other notable premieres that year included *Howdy Doody* and the *Kraft Television Theater*. Milton Berle's popular *Texaco Star Theater* arrived in 1948, as did NBC's first nightly newscast, the 15-minute *Camel News Caravan*, with John Cameron Swayze.

The 1947 World Series stands as the beginning of the modern era of competitive television. As the first televised series, it ran on a consortium of NBC and CBS stations, and the broadcasts proved wildly popular. People who didn't own television sets stood for hours outside the windows of TV stores to watch.

William Paley, the celebrated CBS chairman, had been moving slowly into television. The success of the World Series changed the picture considerably. Paley staged a raid on NBC's top talent in 1948, luring Jack Benny, Red Skelton, and George Burns and Gracie Allen among others. The fight was under way.

LEAVE IT TO WEAVER

To counter the CBS incursion, Sarnoff recruited Sylvester L. "Pat" Weaver, a top executive at Young & Rubicam, one of the nation's biggest advertising agencies.

The agencies virtually ran television programming in those days, owning the programs and controlling the talent. Arriving at NBC in June 1949, Weaver put his foot down: That practice had to change if the network were to prosper.

"I won't come to NBC just to sell time



BRILLIANCE *in*
BROADCASTING
for **75** YEARS

Congratulations from your friends at





Robert Culp (l) and Bill Cosby were spies in *I Spy* from 1965 to '68. Cosby was first black actor to star in a weekly drama.



Goldie Hawn's body was plastered with hip slogans in groundbreaking comedy/variety show *Laugh-In*, 1968-73.



After CBS raided NBC talent, Sylvester "Pat" Weaver came to NBC to change the way the network did business. He also is the father of the *Today* and *Tonight* shows.

to ad agencies," Weaver told Bobby Sarnoff, The General's son, who had been dispatched to finalize a deal. With Sarnoff's blessing, Weaver set out to snatch control of NBC's programs from the clutches of the ad buyers.

During his tenure (1949-1956), Weaver's creative appreciation brought NBC some of its most rousing successes. Weaver fathered such shows as *Today* and *Tonight*. He staged highly successful prime time entertainment specials known as "spectaculars" and even negotiated the purchase of NBC's West Coast production center in

"Beautiful Downtown Burbank."

"Weaver was a very innovative character, just what television needed," Brooks said. "He understood that TV was a different medium than radio, a visual medium, and he tried to develop it that way."

Within a year of Weaver's departure, CBS had taken the top spot among television networks, thanks largely to the former NBC talent Paley had snared years earlier. CBS rolled out popular long-running programs—including *What's My Line* (1950), *I Love Lucy* and *See It Now* (both 1951)—and stood as the No. 1 network for most of the next 30 years.

NEXT DOOR TO THE CLAMPETTS

The 1960s weren't much better for NBC, as CBS cemented its hold on first place. Walter Cronkite took over the *CBS Evening News* in 1962, and the program was expanded from 15 minutes to 30 minutes a year later. CBS also found "gold in them thar hills," issuing forth a string of hit comedies highlighting rural characters. America loved the Clampetts of *The Beverly Hillbillies*, the Douglasses of *Green Acres* and the whole town of Mayberry in *The Andy Griffith Show*. The biggest of them all, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, proved to be a runaway smash that lasted until 1971. CBS owned Sunday nights with the long-running variety program, *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

75 YEARS ON THE AIR

A B R I E F H I S T O R Y O F N B C

1926: Radio Corp. of America (RCA) announces formation of National Broadcasting Co. to develop programming for emerging radio-receiver market. NBC organizes into "Red" and "Blue" networks.

1928: NBC introduces *Real Folks*, first radio serial drama.

1929: *Amos 'n' Andy* makes first appearance on NBC radio and becomes network's biggest hit.

1931: NBC begins experimental television broadcasts from a tower atop New York's

Empire State Building.



Bob Hope

1933: NBC hires Bob Hope. NBC News division is created.

1933: NBC moves headquarters to "30 Rock" in New York.

1937: NBC radio carries recorded report from newsman Herb Morrison, eyewitness to Hindenburg explosion. It's radio network's first use of recorded material.

1938: W2XBT, NBC's experimental television station, broadcasts warehouse fire in New York, first known TV coverage of "breaking" news.

1939: RCA and NBC demonstrate television at New

York World's Fair.

1941: NBC's WNBT New York is first commercial TV station licensed.

1945: *Meet the Press* is introduced on NBC radio. Show moves to TV in 1947.

1945: Federal government requires NBC to divest one radio network. Blue network is sold to investor group, which later forms American Broadcasting Company (ABC).

1947: *Kraft Television Theater*

Ding ♪ Ding ♪ Ding ♪

(music to our ears)



Paramount

Paramount Television

Proudly Salutes

NBC

On 75 Years

Of Broadcast

History





No show stretched boundaries like *Saturday Night Live*, with an initial cast including Chevy Chase, Jim Belushi and Gilda Radner.



Bochco's *Hill Street Blues* created new style for police dramas, in 1981; NBC stuck with it although it was initially a ratings failure.

NBC hit big with *Bonanza*, medical drama *Dr. Kildare*, and *Julia*, featuring Diahann Carroll, the first black woman to take a starring role in a major television series.

NBC acquired popular *Walt Disney Presents* from ABC in 1961 and used it, renamed *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color*, to market itself as the network that pioneered color telecasts. The Disney program remained a staple of NBC's Sunday-night lineup for 20 years before passing to CBS in 1981. *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In*, a televised special in September 1967, joined the prime time lineup the following January and ranked as the No. 1 program on the air for two seasons.

Still, CBS ruled the roost on most evenings, while upstart ABC established itself with such popular series as *Bewitched* and *The Fugitive*. (ABC also had the decade's biggest fiasco, *Turn On*, a comedy/variety "series" yanked after a single episode in February 1967).

SILVERMAN NO SILVER LINING

NBC offered up many forgettable programs in the 1970s. The network replaced its long-running peacock logo after the 1975 season, but even that effort foundered. After spending \$1 million to develop a new on-air logo—a red and blue abstract letter "N"—NBC found that the Nebraska Educational Television Network had been using a similar symbol. NBC set-

led the resulting lawsuit by donating several hundred thousand dollars worth of broadcasting equipment, but the "N" did little to improve NBC's fading fortunes.

NBC's few hit series in the mid 1970s included *Sanford and Son* and *Saturday Night Live*, born as a weekend replacement for *Tonight Show* reruns. In 1976, the network hit with medical drama *Quincy* and *The Big Event*, an umbrella for specials and movies. A telecast of *Gone With the Wind* was one of the highest-rated broadcasts of the decade.

By 1978, NBC had hit rock bottom, or



At ABC, Fred Silverman was programmer with "the golden gut" for recognizing hits. As NBC president, he was a bomb who almost lost Johnny Carson.

A B R I E F H I S T O R Y O F N B C

and *Howdy Doody* premiere. NBC broadcasts first televised World Series.

1948: Milton Berle has TV's biggest program, *Texaco Star Theater*. The *Camel News Caravan* premieres, NBC's first nightly television newscast, hosted by John Cameron Swayze. Sponsor requires Swayze to have lighted cigarette on the set.

1949: Television begins to siphon off radio's evening audience, signaling demise of network-radio entertainment programs.

1949: NBC hires ad executive Sylvester "Pat" Weaver to lead programming efforts. Considered programming genius, he conceives *The Today Show*, *The Tonight Show*, prime time documentaries and live prime time "spectacular."

1950: Chimes are registered with U.S. Patent Office as service mark.

1951: NBC begins field tests of color broadcasts. *Dragnet* debuts.

1952: *The Today Show*



Garroway (l), Muggs

premieres, hosted by Dave Garroway.

1953: *The Colgate Comedy Hour* becomes first network program broadcast using RCA "compatible-color" transmission.

1954: *The Tonight Show*, hosted by Steve Allen, premieres.

1955: Singer Nat King Cole is first major black artist to host his own TV series.

1956: Chet Huntley and David Brinkley assume co-anchor



Huntley (l), Brinkley



¡WAWA

NBC!



"Felicidades" to NBC on 75 years of excellence. We look forward to being your Spanish-language partner for the *next* 75 years—and beyond.



TELEMUNDO



Ted Danson and Shelly Long were core stars of *Cheers*, which was at first a ratings failure and critical success on NBC, starting in 1982.



The Cosby Show, starring Bill Cosby (c), was keystone of NBC dominance on Thursdays and, eventually, all of prime time.

so it was thought. Surpassed even by perennial also-ran ABC, NBC needed a big hit and took a big gamble to get one, luring ABC program chief Fred Silverman to 30 Rock.

Many television historians see Silverman's brief tenure as an unmitigated disaster, and he never came close to duplicating his ABC success. His less memorable offerings included *The Waverly Wonders*, featuring former football legend Joe Namath in the starring role. The show lasted three weeks. Silverman also devised *Supertrain*, often cited as one of the biggest bombs in television history.

NBC brought back the peacock in 1979, but it didn't help. NBC's fortunes collapsed in mid 1980 when the United States boycotted the Olympic Games to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. NBC reluctantly canceled its coverage, forgoing an estimated \$80 million in advertising revenue. An actors' strike that same year delayed production of many shows until early 1981, further crippling a weakened NBC.

THE TARTIKOFF TURNAROUND

Silverman was gone by the end of the 1981 season, replaced by Grant Tinker. Tinker turned over program development to Silverman protégé Brandon Tartikoff, who had worked for Silverman at both ABC and NBC.

Tartikoff belted out more hits than Mark McGwire and almost as many home runs. Out from under Silverman's shadow, he gave the green light to some of NBC's biggest hit series, among them *The Cosby Show*, *Cheers*, *The Golden Girls* and *Miami Vice*. He also shepherded *Hill Street Blues*, the groundbreaking cop drama, first aired in January 1981, that would jump-start the emergence of NBC's Thursday-night stronghold.

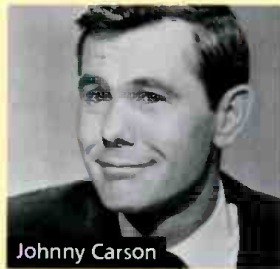
Under Tartikoff's tutelage, NBC began its slow climb up the Nielsen ladder. Anchored by *Cosby*, *Family Ties*, *Cheers*, *Night Court* and *Hill Street*, NBC struck gold on Thursday nights, grasping a first-place position it held for more than 15 years. By the 1984-85 season, NBC had placed eight shows among the top 20 Nielsen-rated programs.

Tartikoff next attacked Saturdays, introducing *Golden Girls*. The 1985-86 season marked the first time in decades NBC emerged as the top-rated prime time network, with nine of the top 20 shows. The following year, it claimed 12 of the top spots. From June 1988 until October 1989—68 consecutive weeks—NBC ruled as the top-rated network.

Tinker and Tartikoff brought a measure of patience to programming, and, by the time General Electric bought the network from RCA and installed Bob Wright as the new president, NBC was solidly on

A B R I E F H I S T O R Y O F N B C

duties, and nightly news program is renamed *The Huntley-Brinkley Report*. Jack Paar takes over *The Tonight Show*. The peacock debuts to herald telecasts in color.



Johnny Carson

1961: *NBC Saturday Night at the Movies* becomes first regular TV-network showing of theatrical films.

1962: Johnny Carson debuts as host of *The Tonight Show*.

1966: Entire prime time schedule is converted to color. Bill Cosby becomes first black actor to star in TV series (*I Spy*).

1968: *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In* debuts.

1969: *First Tuesday* becomes the first of many failed attempts to

establish a franchise news-magazine show.

1970: John Chancellor assumes anchor desk at *NBC Nightly News*.

1971: NBC ceases regular use of chimes on both radio and television.

1975: *Saturday Night Live* debuts. NBC radio pulls the plug on *Monitor* after 20 years.

1976: Peacock logo is dropped in favor of stylized "N" but returns when Nebraska

Educational Television Network sues for trademark infringement. Showing of *Gone With the Wind* draws largest audience to date for entertainment program.

1981: *Hill Street Blues* is introduced, first step toward NBC's dominance of Thursday night.

1982: *Late Night With David Letterman* debuts; NBC will lose Letterman to CBS in '93. Tom Brokaw ascends to the anchor chair at *NBC Nightly News*.

1984: *The Cosby Show* debuts and becomes the most popular

SONY

Congratulations to

NBC

on your

75th

Anniversary

From Your Friends

at Sony



NBC's President Grant Tinker (l) nurtured young Brandon Tartikoff, who became the network's most successful (and beloved) entertainment chief.

top of the ratings pile. Patience paid off for many of Tinker and Tartikoff's shows, including *Cheers* and *Hill Street Blues*, which were not immediate audience hits.

Although Tartikoff departed NBC in 1991 to head Paramount Pictures, his legacy of strong programs kept NBC on top until mid decade.

Although NBC remained strong during the 1990s, there were more than a few fumbles. The ill-fated "Triplecast" venture during the 1992 Olympics cost the network and its cable partner an estimated \$100 million. A year later, *NBC*

Dateline admitted having concocted a story alleging safety problems with General Motors vehicles. NBC apologized and retracted the story after GM threatened to pull its \$150 million advertising budget.

CABLE AND THE FUTURE

Cable began to play a larger role in NBC's fortunes in the late 1980s. After founding CNBC as a consumer/business channel in 1989, NBC delivered MSNBC in 1996, using the Summer Olympics in Atlanta as its springboard. CNBC benefited from the huge run-up in the U.S. stock market to become a financial icon, dwarfing its nearest competitor, CNNfn.

The Internet remains a work in progress. NBC snapped up the portal Snap in 1998 announcing grandiose plans to develop a national consumer brand. Its interactive unit, dubbed NBCi, went public in 1999, and its stock hit more than \$100 per share before collapsing with the rest of the dotcom world. NBC pulled the plug on NBCi last year, taking the company private and giving up its dreams of Internet domination.

NBC is changed from a year ago, but its Thursday night is still a powerhouse. Now it also owns a one-third interest in Paxson Communications, giving it a second television network for repurposing shows. Its purchase of Spanish-language

Telemundo will put NBC in position to cash in on the fastest-growing demographic in the nation. All in all, as it prepares to celebrate its 75 years in a May special, NBC is still just about as pretty as a ... peacock. ■

Hits

- Today, Tonight:** Bookends remain among TV's longest-running shows
- Thursdays:** Comedy, drama combine to keep NBC on top of this crucial night since 1985
- Tartikoff:** The genius behind "Must See TV"
- Weaver:** Early icon laid the foundation for long-term success
- Hill Street Blues:** Groundbreaking cop drama
- Saturday Night Live:** Has entertained three generations of late-night fans
- Cosby:** Tartikoff's first home run, led NBC's surge to No. 1
- CNBC:** Is to financial news what CNN is to breaking news

Misses

- Silverman:** Never hit his stride after ABC success
- Supertrain:** Monumental Silverman train wreck
- Triplecast:** \$100 million Olympics loser
- Sanford Arms:** Spin-off lasted four episodes on 1977
- My Mother the Car:** Well, CBS had *Mr. Ed*, didn't it?
- The Waverly Wonders:** Joe Namath thrown for a loss after three episodes
- Star Trek:** NBC gave up on this classic-to-be after three seasons and missed out on 20 more

A B R I E F H I S T O R Y O F N B C

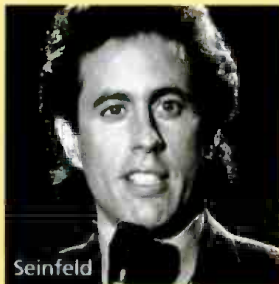
series on television, cementing NBC's Thursday-night supremacy.

1985: NBC concludes its most successful prime time season, with 12 of the top 20 shows and becomes the first commercial TV network to transmit all programming via Ku-band satellite.

1986: General Electric acquires RCA, becoming NBC's parent. Robert Wright is named NBC president and CEO.

1986: NBC wins the prime time ratings race for the first time, anchored by *The Cosby Show*, *Family*

Ties, *Cheers* and *Hill Street Blues*.



1989: *The Seinfeld Chronicles* premieres. Its name later shortened to *Seinfeld*, it becomes the most popular series of the '90s.

1989: CNBC launches, NBC's first big step into cable.

1992: Johnny Carson retires, and Jay Leno takes over as host of *The Tonight Show*. NBC and cable partner lose estimated \$100 million on "Triplecast" Olympics pay-per-view venture.

1993: *NBC Dateline* admits to having concocted a story that alleged safety problems with General Motors trucks. The network issues retraction and apology while GM threatens to pull its \$150 million advertising budget.

1993: *Cheers* final episode nets 92 million viewers and a 45 Nielsen rating. "Must See TV" is born as *Frasier*, *Seinfeld* and *Mad About You* move to Thursday night.

1996: MSNBC launches.

1999: Acquires one-third interest in Paxson Communications for \$415 million.

2001: Andrew Lack is promoted to president of NBC; Wright remains chairman. Neal Shapiro assumes presidency of NBC News. NBC agrees to buy Spanish-language Telemundo for \$2.7 billion.

WILLIAM MORRIS SALUTES

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TALENT AND LITERARY AGENCY



Dinosaurs. That's what the three major networks were being called back in 1986 when General Electric bought NBC and named Bob Wright to run it.

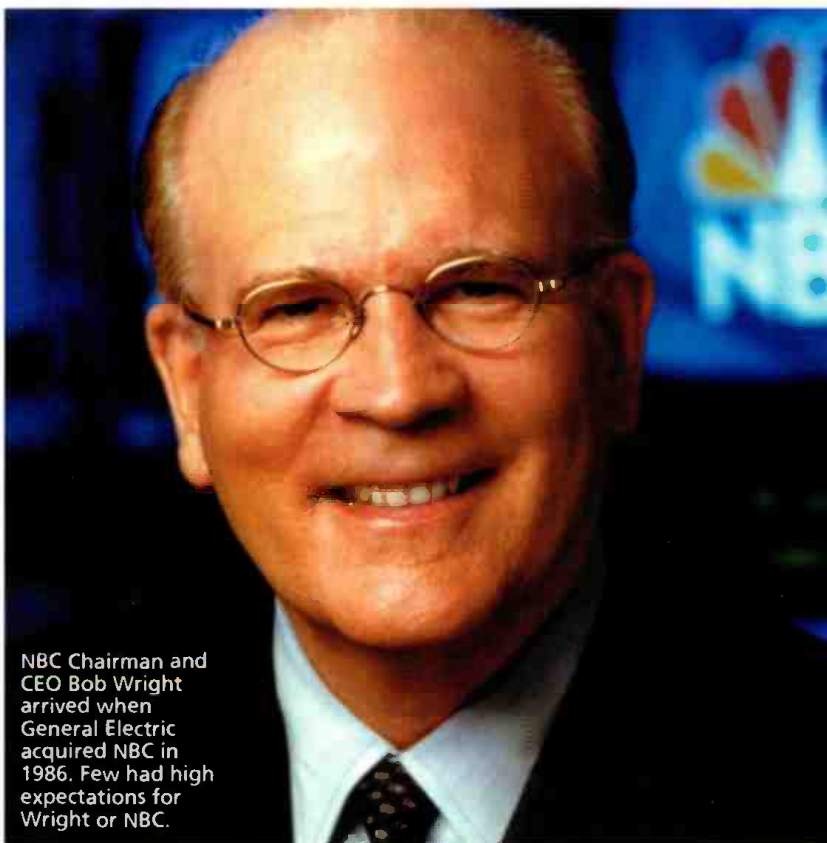
It didn't help Wright's cause that he succeeded Grant Tinker, the widely respected producer-turned-executive who had shepherded NBC to No. 1 after a long dry spell.

At first, Wright was widely dissed by the network's old guard as a clueless meddler who wanted to change things. That's the thing about GE's culture: It thrives on performance and believes that change is the way to get there.

In short order, the old NBC guard was gone, and Wright was bringing NBC into the age of the multichannel universe. Since 1986, NBC has created two major cable networks: CNBC and, with Microsoft, MSNBC. It has invested in a slew of others (among them ValueVision, the Rainbow networks, A&E).

It has also bought a handful of TV stations, has a one-third stake in Paxson and expects to close its biggest acquisition to date, Telemundo, within two months. Wright and NBC have their share of detractors, but no one calls the former clueless or the latter near extinction. Quite the contrary.

As the network celebrates 75 years of making broadcast history, Wright sat down with **BROADCASTING & CABLE** Deputy Editor Steve McClellan to discuss how the next 75 years might unfold. An edited transcript follows.



NBC Chairman and CEO Bob Wright arrived when General Electric acquired NBC in 1986. Few had high expectations for Wright or NBC.

Wright of passage

Q&A with the exec who took NBC into the 21st century

As you prepare for NBC's 75th anniversary celebration, there's a lot of speculation about whether GE will still own NBC by its 76th. Much of the speculation was prompted by the court decision on broadcast/cable crossownership and the 35% ownership cap. How does that decision

potentially change the landscape for the industry in general and NBC in particular? It is not surprising on either count. There is a third case out there, with Sinclair, on duopoly. My guess is that's going to go the same way. But I think this was a perfectly forecastable result. Few



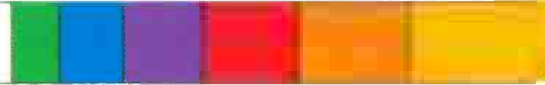
For 75 years, you've enriched American lives.

Informing. Entertaining. Enlightening.

Rainbow warmly congratulates our friends
and partners at NBC.

**RAINBOW**

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RAINBOW SPORTS NETWORKS • RAINBOW AD SALES • WE: WOMEN'S ENTERTAINMENT



industries have any kind of regulation that comes close to the historical regulation that's still left with television.

What do you mean?

The broadcast-television regulation, in many cases, is a product of competitive issues and battles that took place 50 years ago, when there was one or two stations per market. I think the court concluded—in the competitive landscape of video in the home, with satellite television and cable television and [various] forms of over-the-air TV, Internet with full-motion streaming video—that these rules are clearly arbitrary to be enforcing at this point in time.

Should all the ownership rules go away?

“Go away” is not the right term. But I think they all have to conform to the world that we’re in as opposed to a world that existed 50 years ago.

What are the implications for NBC? Is NBC suddenly for sale, or, conversely, would GE consider a huge acquisition, like AOL Time Warner?

I don't think [either is] likely to happen. GE has always been happy with NBC and its performance. But it has never been eager to become substantially bigger in the business, under the theory that it's going to get in a lot of cyclical performance, which is what the movie business is. There's not a lot of interest to being in a business as cyclical as that.

Even if rules are adapted to the current environment as you put it, doesn't NBC have to grow dramatically or sell out?

There is a lot of pressure on NBC, as there is in every business in GE, to have a strong growth path. We've had that challenge all the way along. We have things on our plate now that we're working out. We have Paxson, and we have an investment in ValueVision Television. We have other programming ventures we're involved in.

How much more industry consolidation do you foresee?

These rule changes will bring about a lot more consolidation of one type or another or perhaps other people coming into the business. You'll see more programming and cable companies coming together.

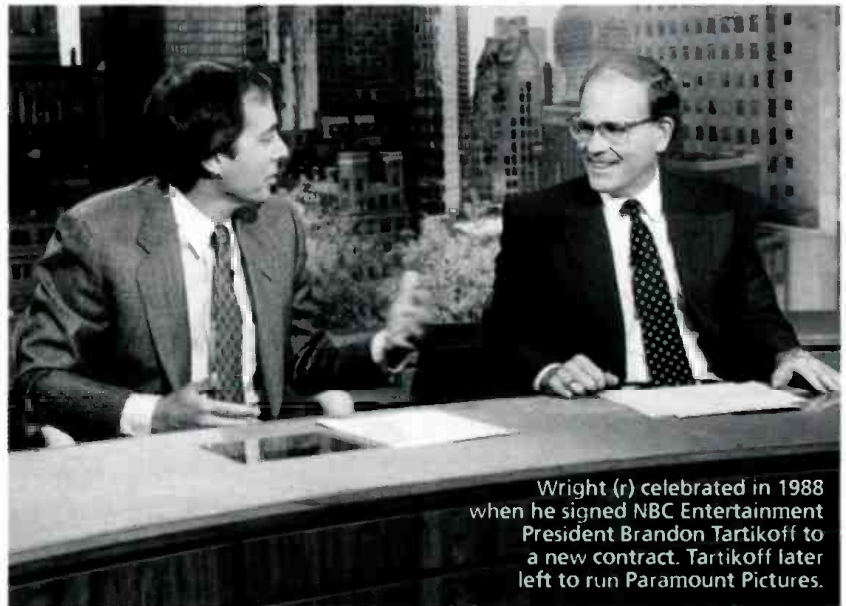
Is there a point in media where bigger is not better?

Sometimes there are synergies because of size that are very compelling, and sometimes there aren't. I think it's a question of the texture and the tone of the com-

ulation that does that. If it was 35% market-share cap, then that's a different story.

So a market-share yardstick would be appropriate?

I think a market-share yardstick would be clearly appropriate. If you buy a stick [TV station] in New York City, a stick without a viewer, you're considered to have captured 8% of the national audience. It's just ridiculous. The market share in cable is 35%. If you had a [national] rule in radio,



Wright (r) celebrated in 1988 when he signed NBC Entertainment President Brandon Tartikoff to a new contract. Tartikoff later left to run Paramount Pictures.

pany involved. Time Warner and AOL have gone through a lot of acquisition and growth pains over the last 15 years, and so the jury is always out on how it's going because they're always going through one of those periods.

The pure-play TV groups point to NBC's hardball tactics in the battle over KRON-TV San Francisco as an example of why the 35% ownership cap should remain in place. Is that a fair argument?

The cap is an inappropriate measurement. It doesn't measure anything that is important anymore. The concept of measuring something against potential viewers as opposed to actual viewers, there is no antitrust or FTC regulation that exists that does that. And there is no other FCC reg-

it'd be 40% more or less of listenership. So I think that there are clearly ways to have rulemaking in this area, but the cap, that concept which was a really late-'40s concept, just doesn't have any applicability anymore.

Of all the changes in the business since 1986, when you first took the reins at NBC, what's the most positive?

The most positive change is the tremendous influx of programming to the home. The availability at home of the volume of programming that exists today was just thought to be impossible 20 years ago or 15 years ago, 16 years ago. People that weren't close to it didn't believe that it was affordable to put on. Who would pay for it, they asked. How could you have all



METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER

WARMLY SALUTES

NBC

ON 75 PIONEERING YEARS

IN ENTERTAINMENT





these channels filled? It's silly, nobody will ever watch. That sort of thing.

So the viewer has benefited.

I think the consumer has been incredibly well treated and rewarded over the better part of the last 20 years with entertainment news, information, sports at home.

If you could change one thing about the business, what would it be?

I do think that my concern from the moment I arrived at NBC, and it's still my concern today, is that broadcast television be given enough flexibility and, occasionally, protection to remain relevant and financially viable because I think it is a unique part of our history and it's free to the viewer.

Is the question "free for how long"?

It's a point that gets lost a little bit because so many people watch it on cable so they feel they're paying for it. But free television programming is clearly under pressure every day.

How surprised are you at all the high-ticket programming that has migrated to cable?

We have seen a lot of very expensive programming moving to cable simply because of the fee structure. And that's disappointing, but it's not shocking.

What's the solution?

I don't know that there is a solution. I think, in some respects, the cable operators have been picking up the tab for most of this stuff. And they've been doing it to grow their own businesses. They have great balances of programming today; they probably don't need a lot more.

But, as long as they are willing to pay for things like the NBA or the NHL or Major League Baseball to go to cable, then they're going to drive up the bills and basically take programming away from the broadcast entities, which are really not the enemies of cable. They should be friendly because it's the service

that has the most viewers that doesn't cost anything.

Isn't that just marketplace competition?

But it isn't really. If you're a cable operator today, your best-viewed shows are all on broadcast television. You're bringing [them] into people's houses as part of your package, and you don't have to pay the broadcasters. It's a wonderful deal. If I was a cable operator, I'd want to see broadcasting keep every program it has because, if it came to me [directly], I'd have to pay for it.

Is the over-the-air television business viable over the long term as a stand-alone business?

It certainly is *if* it can afford the programming. And it's both a creative issue and a cost issue. The creative issue is, you have to have attractive programming that really has appeal. And you should take advantage of the system of broadcasting, which is the local-national connection.

And the cost issue?

You have to be able to afford it, and that's going to be difficult because the fee structure of cable allows it to rely a lot less on advertising than a broadcaster has to. Then, I think, if we're creative, we should be able to do okay.

Affordability gets down to being a victim of your own success when you look at shows like *Friends* and *ER*, doesn't it?

Yes. The history of hits is, you always stay longer than you intended. When something is working well, as a programmer, you don't want to lose it, and you probably become overly conservative at that phase of a program's life.

It's hard to predict. I've had shows in my 10 years where we have stayed too long and it's cost us dearly. And then I've had other examples where we've stayed longer than I thought we would and it's been fine. In that latter category, I would say *Friends* and *ER* are two examples. *Law & Order* has been a wonderful show every year that we've had it.

Then there are some times you just get in the enthusiasm of trying to retain a star or a show, you make a bad deal, and you have to pay the piper for that.

***Mad About You*?**

Mad About You would fall into that category.

What does your gut tell you about the economy and the ad business?

Well, there are positive signs out there. At network level, we've seen good rates. We've seen a good pickup in advertising in the more recent weeks and months leading up to the Olympics. And we had good ratings. So we really are not in a position to complain. But I'd say that's the exception, not the rule.

What about industry-wide?

I think, for the media in general or television, it's been a rough go for about 18 months. The last time we had a period like this was in the 1991-'92 period. That stretched out over two years. I wish I could tell you that it's all over and everything is going to be great, but I think it's still going to be a slow recovery.

For NBC, in terms of revenues and operating profit, is this year going to be a record year?

I don't think it's going to be a record because we had such a great year in 2000. We saw some [downward] pressure on pricing through the upfront last year, and you can't get that back in one fell swoop.

Good year or not-so-good year?

It will be very hard to establish a record, but we'll do very well. I think we'll do extremely well against our traditional competitors and do very well against other media companies in general.

Are you confident that, among Big Four, you'll come out on top in '02 in revenue and operating profit?

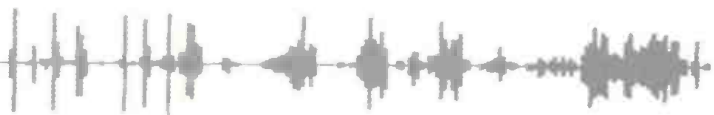
I'm certainly not going to do a financial forecast, but I would say that it looks pretty promising. ■

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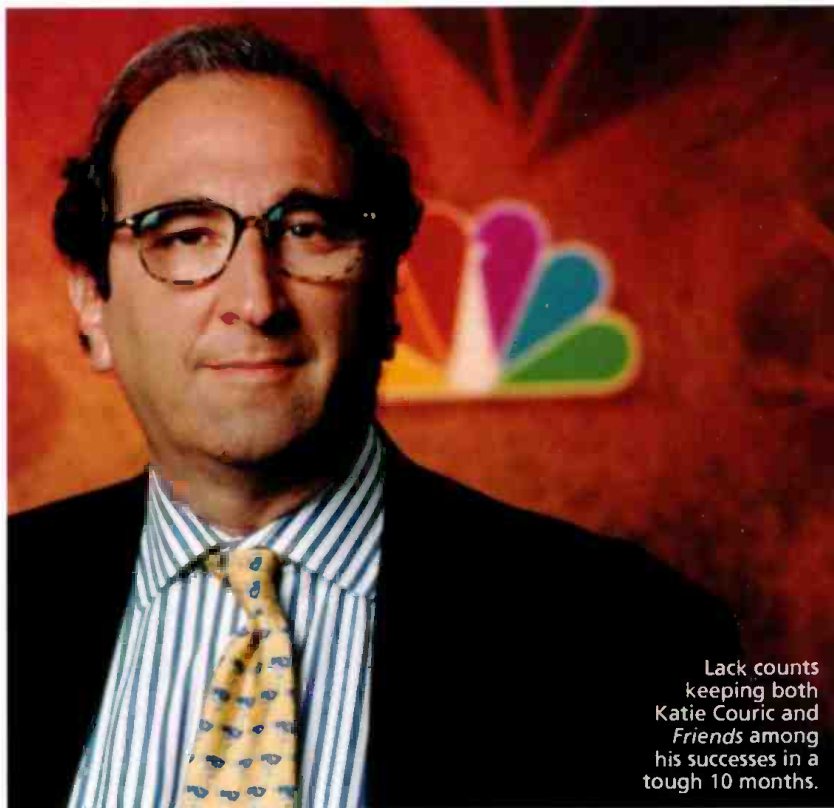


LIBERTY LIVEWIRE



A baptism by fire

Plummeting ad sales, Sept. 11 faced new President Andrew Lack



Lack counts keeping both Katie Couric and *Friends* among his successes in a tough 10 months.

ABOUT 10 MONTHS AGO, Andrew Lack started his new job as president and chief operating officer at NBC. He has had a few challenges since then, not the least of which has been dealing with the worst television ad-sales environment in a decade.

Persuading Katie Couric to stay was a major item Lack was able to check off the to-do list (and would have been "my biggest disappointment" if she had decided not to stay, he says). So was getting through the latest negotiations to renew *Friends*, a must-have for the network's Thursday-night schedule next fall.

Coping with Sept. 11 as both a news story and a business challenge also kept Lack hopping this past year. So did the anthrax scare, working through the NBA talks (and ultimately passing on a renewal), preparing for the Salt Lake City Olympics and installing new executive producers at most of the important NBC News programs.

"If I had it to do all over again, I wouldn't want to take this job in the worst year we've had in a decade," says Lack, who joined NBC as news division president in 1993 after a 16-year stint at CBS News. "On the other hand, it's really been a baptism by fire. I've been forced to understand a lot of really complex issues that affect our business in a marketplace like the one we're in."

Asked what he has learned since taking the new gig, Lack replies, "I learned that I've got some really smart colleagues," who helped him get up to speed quickly in areas that he wasn't too familiar with, including sales, technical operations and local stations.

Looking ahead, Lack sees NBC's greatest challenge as what it has always been: "Making great television programs day in and day out. If you don't have great programs, you don't have a great business. Just go back through the 75 years of NBC's history and in television starting

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with *Meet the Press*, *Today*, Steve Allen, Jack Paar, Johnny Carson, and now with Jay and Conan. You just have to keep reinventing the wheel and make terrific programs with talented people. When you don't, that's when you have problems."

That's also true for prime time, of course, and Lack breathed a big sigh of relief when the *Friends* deal got done. "We needed *Friends* for next season, no question," he says. "We needed to give [NBC Entertainment President] Jeff [Zucker] another season to develop as the new kid on the block."

But he insists that NBC's prime time slate has depth, with Wednesday night, anchored by *West Wing*, in almost as good a shape as Thursday.

Tuesday, he says, has the "linchpins for success" in *Frasier*, *Scrubs* and *Date-line*. "The heart of the week, year after year, is still pretty darn good," he insists.

As for Zucker, Lack gives him an A for his freshman year in Hollywood: "He's had as good a first year out there as anyone." But he also says Zucker's "acid tests are in front of him and he knows that. I feel strongly that he's up to it."

Also on the to-do list is integrating Telemundo into the NBC operation. At \$2.7 billion, the acquisition of the Spanish-language network is NBC's largest single transaction to date.

Lack expects that deal to close in the



Lack breathed a sigh of relief when the deal renewing *Friends* for another year was done. "We need *Friends* for next season," he said. "No question."

next 60 days or so. "It's occupying a good chunk of my time every day," he says, and its integration into NBC will be "my biggest task" leading up to the closing.

Although the Telemundo deal has angered Paxson Communications, which says it violates the terms of its network's alliance with NBC, Lack is hopeful the two will sort things out. "I believe it can be a very valuable asset," he says of Pax-

son, of which NBC owns a third with options to buy control over seven years.

In the future, he says, look for NBC to be a buyer, not a seller. "I think [GE Chairman] Jeff Immelt has made very clear to the analysts that he's a buyer. So I'm just taking my cue from the bosses, and I'm very excited about it. That's what everybody around here wants to hear." ■

Peace, love and affiliates

NBC's Falco says, despite the squabbling, the relationship is 'terrific'



NBC Entertainment President Jeff Zucker (above) gets an A for his freshman year in Hollywood, Lack says, adding that his "acid tests are in front of him."

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF the TV networks, local stations nationwide have formed the core of the network distribution system. And throughout that history, there have been divisive issues putting networks and affiliates at odds with each other.

But one statistic suggests that, despite the squabbling over such issues as the

national television-station ownership cap, station owners truly believe that, though imperfect, the current system is going to remain in place for the foreseeable future: More than 85% of NBC's affiliates have recently renewed or extended their affiliation contracts through 2010 or longer.

"I think the relationship is terrific, I

BY STEVE McCLELLAN

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really do," says NBC Television President Randy Falco. "If you look back just a couple of years ago, there was a lot of uncertainty."

There was even talk that the networks would bypass stations and go to cable. Specifically, comments to that effect were made public by Disney head Michael Eisner and NBC Chairman Bob Wright, although Wright insisted recently that any comments he made on that subject were in response to a hypothetical question and not ever seriously contemplated by network brass.

Falco, too, says the idea of bypassing stations for cable was a notion that made for good headlines but wasn't discussed as a realistic scenario. "While I never fully believed that that would be the case, I think that there was some uncertainty among some station people. But we managed to get through all that and renegotiate deals, and we're together now."

Not that there aren't some issues outstanding.

The FCC still hasn't addressed the



NBC Television President Randy Falco says the idea of bypassing stations for cable was a notion that made for good headlines but wasn't discussed as a realistic scenario.

joint grievance of the Network Affiliated Stations Alliance (NASA) that alleges a number of rules violations on the part of the networks. Among the

charges: that networks illegally restrict program preemptions by stations, that the nets are trying to encroach on digital spectrum, and that they unduly influence station sales.

Network executives believe the NASA petition is long on accusations and short on evidence. They say that most of the complaints are registered by a loud minority. But it's not just Cox and Post-Newsweek that support the NASA petition.

Others do as well, including some of NBC's other large affiliate groups. "It's irresponsible of the FCC not to have addressed the NASA petition a year after it was filed," said the head of one such group. "We need to know what the ground rules are."

Meanwhile, station executives are resigned to the fact that network compensation is going to gradually disappear. Sources say that NBC's total compensation payments will drop from approximately \$260 million just a few years ago to about \$70 million by 2006. Executives at the other networks say they have similar targets in mind.

Falco won't comment on the specific numbers. "Every deal is different," he says, adding that phasing out compensation has been the network's publicly stated goal.

What NBC is doing in many cases, sources say, is getting station groups to extend their current affiliate deals (which may have three or four years left) by another five or more years. At the same time, the network is persuading the groups to spread comp payments owed under the old contracts over the life of the extended deals. Perhaps the network adds a little extra payment, which could be looked at almost as interest for the right to spread the compensation payments over the longer term. But incremental comp dollars are minimal to nil.

And when the next big cycle of contract renewals starts some time after 2010, comp won't be an issue on the table. It just won't exist. ■

THE OLDEST PEACOCKS

Today, NBC has more than 200 affiliates and 13 (and soon to be 14) owned-and-operated stations. Here are the few TV stations that started in the earliest days of NBC as affiliates or owned-and-operated stations and still are today.

CALL LETTERS	MARKET	AFFIL. DATE	SIGN-ON DATE
WNBC (O&O)	New York		7/1/41
WDIV	Detroit	3/31/48	3/6/47
WRC-TV (O&O)	Washington		6/27/47
WLWT	Cincinnati	4/1/48	2/9/48
KSDK	St. Louis	4/15/48	2/8/47
WTMJ-TV	Milwaukee	4/26/48	12/3/47
KXAS-TV (O&O)*	Dallas	9/29/48	9/29/48
WKYC-TV	Cleveland	10/31/48	10/31/48
WAVE	Louisville, Ky.	11/24/48	11/24/48
WMC-TV	Memphis, Tenn.	12/11/48	12/11/48
WDSU	New Orleans	12/18/48	12/18/48
WMAQ-TV (O&O)	Chicago		1/7/49
KNBC (O&O)	Los Angeles		1/16/49
WCMH-TV (O&O)*	Columbus, Ohio	4/3/49	4/3/49
WGAL	Lancaster-Harrisburg, Pa.	6/1/49	3/18/49
KFOR-TV	Oklahoma City	6/6/49	6/6/49

*KXAS-TV and WCMH-TV started as NBC affiliates and were recently acquired by the network

Source: NBC

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Happy Birthday NBC

From one septuagenarian* to another

BROADCASTING CABLE

* Someone or thing whose age is in the 70's.



The legend of the NBC chimes

The origin of the mark depends on who's narrating

B Y L E E H A L L

They are undoubtedly the most recognizable musical sounds in broadcasting, the progression of three notes that make up the NBC chimes. Their use on NBC television and radio to introduce programs and signal station breaks is well documented. What is not clear, however, is precisely where



At least three radio stations and NBC claim to have invented the chimes.

the sounds originated.

WSB(AM) in Atlanta may have been the first radio station to use a musical set to end a program block. WSB, which signed on in 1922 and became an affiliate of the NBC Red radio network in 1927, used a small xylophone early on to close programming segments. Its 1974 history (*Welcome South, Brother: Fifty Years of Broadcasting at WSB, Atlanta, Ga.*, Cox Broadcasting, 1974) says an NBC executive heard the instrument, liked it and obtained the station's permission to use a similar sound to identify network broadcasts. The original xylophone is on dis-

play at WSB's Atlanta studios.

Historians at WCSH(TV), Portland, Me., tell a slightly different tale. WCSH claims to have "the only surviving, original NBC chimes" on display in its lobby. It says the chimes sounding the notes G-E-C were first carried on its radio airwaves in 1929, emanating from a small hand-held chime box.

WGY(AM) Schenectady, N.Y., also lays claim to the idea. In its 50th anniversary celebration in 1972, it reported broadcasting the notes G-E-C on a piano in 1923. The initials stood for station owner General Electric Corp.

NBC maintains that three employees conceived the idea for a program signal in 1926. Using dinner chimes from a New York silver maker and much experimentation, the story goes, they came up with the three-note sequence, first carried on the radio network in late 1929.

"There were a lot of stations using various musical identifications in those days," said radio historian Bill Harris, who operates a Web site devoted to radio history (radioremembered.com). "But we will probably never know who at NBC decided to use the chimes."

Whatever the true story, the chimes play an important role in NBC history. The network obtained the first audible service mark from the U.S. Patent Office in 1950 and used the chimes regularly on television and radio until 1971. It sold its radio network to Westwood One in 1987, and NBC television today uses an electronic version of the chimes infrequently. ■

Defeating the peacock

The bicentennial year brought NBC one of its most embarrassing faux pas. Feeling that the struggling television



**NEBRASKA
ETV
NETWORK**

NBC's expensive logo and a much cheaper original "doodled" for Nebraska educational TV.

network needed a new symbol to replace the tired peacock, NBC executives authorized a reported \$1 million for the design of a new logo and proudly unveiled the creation on New Year's Day 1976. Touting the new symbol as "bold, bright and modern," NBC boasted that the abstract letter "N" was to be the ensign under which the network would build its new corporate image.

The euphoria was short-lived. NBC soon discovered that the icon in which it had invested so heavily bore a remarkable similarity to one already in use by the Nebraska Educational Television Network, which threatened to sue for trademark infringement.

After months of legal wrangling, NBC agreed to settle the dispute by donating \$500,000 worth of broadcasting equipment to the Nebraska network and chipping in another \$50,000 to help the Nebraskans design a new logo for themselves. In return, NBC got to keep its "N," bringing its total investment in this single letter to \$1.5 million. Adding insult to injury, then-NETN Director Ron Hull admitted that his cost-conscious designers had come up with their version for less than \$100; he had doodled it at home.

NBC abandoned the "N" three years later, resurrecting the peacock.—L.H.



Congratulations NBC!

Look forward to

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A&E Television Networks is proud to salute

NBC
on their 75th Anniversary



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Changing Hands

Compos

WSTH-FM Alexander City (Columbus), Ala., and WDAK(AM) Columbus, Ga.

Price: \$2.73 million

Buyer: Clear Channel Communications (Randy Michaels, chairman/CEO Radio); owns 1,212 other stations, including WMLF(AM), WPNX(AM), WAGH-FM, WBFA-FM, WGSY-FM and WVRK-FM Columbus

Seller: Solar Broadcasting Co. (Allen Woodall, president)

Facilities: WSTH-FM: 106.1 MHz, 86 kW, ant. 981 ft.; WDAK(AM): 540 kHz, 5 kW day

Formats: WSTH-FM: country; WDAK(AM): sports

FMs

WRMF-FM Palm Beach (W. Palm Beach-Boca Raton), Fla.

Price: \$70 million

Buyer: Palm Beach Broadcasting LLC (Michael Cutchall, president) It owns no other stations.

Seller: James Crystal Enterprises (James C. Hilliard, president)

Facilities: 97.9 MHz, 100 kW, ant. 1,348 ft.

Format: AC

WWKQ-FM Kissimmee (Orlando), Fla.

Price: \$1.5 million

Buyer: Concillio Mision Cristiano Fuente de Agua Viva Inc (Rodolfo Font, president); owns two other stations, including WKVN(AM) Quebradillas, P.R., but none in this market

Seller: Hispanic Broadcast System (Idalia Arzuaga, president)

Facilities: 89.1 MHz, 1 kW, ant. 535 ft.

Format: Variety

WEGY-FM Pana, Ill.

Price: \$950,000

Buyer: Cromwell Group Inc. (Bayard H. Walters, president); owns 18 other stations, including WQZQ(FM) Nashville, Tenn., but none in this market

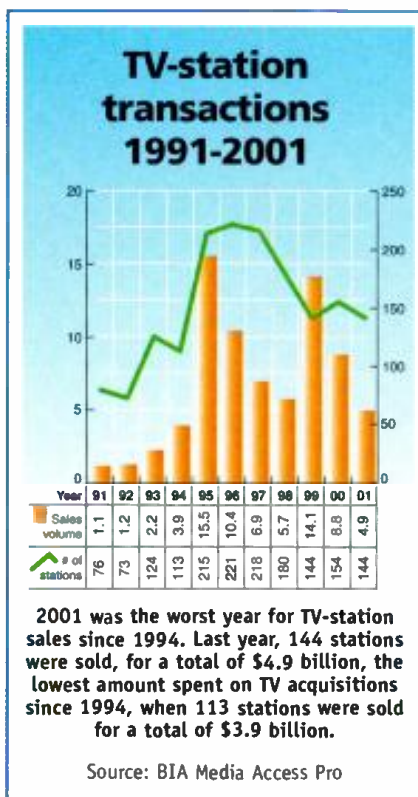
Seller: Miller Media Group (Randal J. Miller, president)

Facilities: 100.9 MHz, 4 kW, ant. 384 ft.

Format: Country

KUKN-FM Kelso, Wash.

Price: In exchange for KLYK(FM) Longview, Wash., plus \$100,000



Buyer: Entercom (David J. Field, president/COO); fifth-ranked group radio operator owns 99 other stations, including eight Boston stations, but none in this market

Seller: Washington Interstate Broadcasting (Joel Hanson, president)

Facilities: 94.5 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 328 ft.

Format: Country

WVGN-FM Charlotte Amalie, Virgin Islands

Price: \$290,000.

Buyer: LKK Group Corp. (Keith Bass, president); no other broadcast interests

Seller: Calypso Communications

(Robert Miller, general partner)

Facilities: 107.3 MHz, 1 kW, ant. 1,565 ft.

AMS

KBYR(AM) Anchorage, Alaska

Price: \$270,000

Buyer: Cobb Communications Inc.

(Thomas C. Tierney, president)

Seller: Northern TV Inc. (Jerry Bever, vice president)

Facilities: 700 kHz, 10 kW

Format: Country

KMJC(AM) Mount Shasta and

KSYC(AM) Yreka, both Calif.

Price: \$300,000

Buyer: JPR Foundation Inc. (Ronald Kramer, executive director)

Seller: Four Rivers Broadcasting Inc. (John Power, president)

Facilities: 620 kHz, 1 kW day

Format: News/talk

KIMB(AM) Kimball, Neb.

Price: \$65,000

Buyer: G&L Investments (Gregory R. Steckline, member); no other broadcast interests

Seller: David S. Young

Facilities: 1260 kHz, 1 kW day, 112 W night

Format: Dark

WRKQ(AM) Madisonville, Tenn.

Price: \$42,100

Buyer: Sloan Radio Inc. (James Q.

Sloan, president); no other broadcast interests

Seller: Monroe Area Broadcasters (James Lee, president)

Facilities: 1250 kHz, 500 W day

Format: Gospel

WIZK(AM) Bay Springs, Miss.

Price: \$31,700

Buyer: Jerome Hughey; no other broadcast interests

Seller: Daniel S. Wilson, receiver

Facilities: 1570 kHz, 3 kW

Format: Gospel

WBTN(AM) Bennington, Vt.

Price: None

Buyer: Southern Vermont College (Barbara P. Sirvis, president); no other broadcast interests

Seller: Bennington Broadcasting Ltd. (Bob Howe, president)

Facilities: 1370 kHz, 1 kW day

Format: News/talk/sports

Terms: Howe is donating the station to Southern Vermont College as part of a tax-deductible charitable contribution; station was sold in 1999 for \$901,000

—Information provided by BIA Financial Networks' Media Access Pro, Chantilly, Va. www.bia.com

Technology

NAB hopes to buck the odds

New presence by RTNDA, advertising uptick may help offset industry's trade-show woes

By Ken Kerschbaumer

For all the questions facing the broadcast-equipment industry, the one that seems to be the hottest has little to do with DTV, consolidation or centralcasting. The question is: How many attendees will be at the NAB conference this year?

Given the woes of the industry's other trade shows, exhibitors and broadcasters would not be surprised if the NAB is significantly smaller than last year's. The convention is slated for April 6-11 in Las Vegas.

"If there's a 10% drop in attendance, I'll think that's a victory," says Chyron Vice President Rich Hajdu. "We certainly expect at least that, although there is no scientific reason for that."

Official NAB numbers put last year's attendance at more than 113,000, but exhibitors (whose estimates are based on the number of people who get their card swiped compared with previous years) and taxi drivers (who judge attendance by driving up and down the strip) put the actual figure somewhere around 90,000.

NAB spokesman Dennis Wharton counters that the NAB numbers are real. "We have the accurate list in terms of who registered so I would take our numbers over the guesses on the part of taxi dri-



Talks with broadcasters have NAB hoping the recent ad turnaround will help fill show's aisles with attendees.

vers," he says.

The numbers game could become a bone of contention. For example, one marketing executive at a major NAB exhibitor believes that the 113,000 number was so far off from his company's estimates that he discredits any future estimates.

NAB makes no predictions on how many will attend the show next month. "We have conservative estimates given what has happened with the advertising economy and the travel issues," says Wharton. "The good news is, we've been getting some good feedback from some of our general managers who plan to send more people than they anticipated

because of the bump they've gotten in the ad rebound the last month or two."

The exhibit itself will likely be smaller. Last year, exhibit space hit 950,000 square feet for 1,400 exhibitors. This year's total currently stands at 835,000 square feet for 1,350 exhibitors, with less than a month before the doors open.

NAB's uncertainty about the convention is reflected in its budget for fiscal 2003, which starts April 1. That budget calls

for a 7% reduction in revenue, to \$54.4 million, principally because of an expected shortfall in convention receipts.

Despite Wharton's optimism, attendance by station executives may be down. The Television Bureau of Advertising has held its annual marketing conference during NAB for the past 10 years. This year, however, TVB will hold the conference in New York on March 26, although it will stage one panel session at NAB. The upshot is that TV-station general managers and sales managers have one less reason to attend NAB.

Helping to offset that loss of attendees

Contrary to popular opinion, Hell is a balmy, climate-controlled 67°

will be the Radio-Television News Directors Association's annual convention. In January, RTNDA accepted an offer to merge its annual convention with the NAB's, canceling the convention planned for Long Beach, Calif., next September. RTNDA was forced to cancel last year's convention in Nashville, Tenn., because it was to have started the day after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. NAB and RTNDA will be together for at least five years.

Because of the quick scramble to incorporate the news directors' show, the RTNDA exhibit will be in the Las Vegas Hilton (next year, it will be in the convention center along with NAB). About 40% to 60% of RTNDA's exhibitors also exhibit at NAB, and some of those have opted for a smaller RTNDA presence. Others, like CNN Newsource, will pass on both. CNN, however, will be exhibiting.

The RTNDA conference will also have fewer sessions, about 36 plus two general sessions and the Paul White Dinner. RTNDA President Barbara Cochran says the reduced number of offerings reflects not only the quick turnaround in preparing for the conference but also the recognition that RTNDA attendees will be attracted to NAB sessions.

Those sessions become more important as technology talked about for years becomes reality. NAB's chief engineer Lynn Claudy says, "We have quite an emphasis on implementation and the practical aspects of operating in a digital world. I think everyone will take something they can use in their day job and not just have an intellectual exercise." ■



BNN's HDTV team (l-r): Andy Bowly, producer; Peter Arnett, chief correspondent, BNN; and Chip Goebert, cameraman.

HD: Rough and ready

Arnett's Afghanistan reports for BNN, HDNet deemed a success

By Ken Kerschbaumer

In the past, when veteran reporter Peter Arnett headed into an area of conflict, the goal was a clear one: Keep safe and get the facts. His recently completed assignment for the Broadcast News Network (BNN) and HDNet added another component: Get pretty pictures.

Well, maybe not pretty. After all, in an area of conflict, beauty is often of a different sort. Nonetheless, because he and the

crew were working with HD gear, Arnett, who filed seven 20- to 30-minute reports for broadcast on HDNet, found the medium's improved resolution made for improved story telling.

"I think this is the way to tell the story," he says. "I truly enjoyed being in this medium. I never looked better, although I look like shit anyway. But I felt I looked good and pretty dramatic. Not quite Clint Eastwood but..."

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Steve Rosenbaum, CEO of news division BNNtv, says he was skeptical going into the HD experiment. He felt that the additional weight and complexity wouldn't warrant what he thought would be only a slightly better picture. But, he says, he may have been proved wrong. And he expects to have BNNtv working in HDTV again—soon.

“What HD news may really mean is the end of MTV-style news editing,” he says.

“With that much detail on the screen, if it cuts too early, it's a little bit like being rushed by paintings in a museum. You find yourself wanting to pay attention to the images in a way that is much more thoughtful than the way we've been trained to look at wallpaper news images.”

Given the landscape of Afghanistan, which Arnett likens to the American landscape used as a backdrop for countless movie Westerns, shooting in HD was a

revelation and a new way to tell a story for TV news. “There's a cast of characters, local people, which are fabulous to photograph,” he explains. “To be able to sit down at the end of the week and be able to tell the story at length over the most fantastic pictures was an enormous thrill.”

The camera used by BNNtv's crew was a Sony HDW-700A (which Sony been discontinued in favor of less expensive HD cameras).

Tapes with each week's program were sent to HDNet's editing facility in Denver, Colo. Once there the programs are transferred from a Sony HDW-500 HDCAM deck onto Rorke Data MaxArray 1-TB servers. A low-resolution version of the program is cut on Macintosh G4 comput-

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‘What HD news may really mean is the end of MTV-style news editing. With that much detail on the screen, if it cuts too early, it's a little bit like being rushed by paintings in a museum.’

—Steve Rosenbaum, BNNtv

ers with Targa CineWave HD cards (for uncompressed HD editing) using Apple's Final Cut Pro editing software. Once editing was complete a high-resolution version was digitized and put back onto HDCAM tape. PixelPower's Clarity HD is used for character generation and an SGI Octane with PowerAnimator for the show's open.

Arnett says the crew treated the camera as if it were a newborn baby, which “was not easy as you bump around the Afghan landscape over the worst of roads.”

But the care did the trick.

“I think we proved that you can cover conflict produced with dramatic pictures,” he says. “It may have taken five days to get to air, but the way we could tell the story made it still valuable.” ■



The impact of the DTV transition on planning and purchasing is clear in the shopping lists of the country's station-groups interviewed for this special report.

The groups—Ackerley, Capitol, Cox, Emmis, E.W. Scripps, Granite and Meredith—are well along in getting DTV on air. And those furthest along seem to have a similar hangover as residents of Salt Lake City. They spent years building and planning to hit a deadline that the entire industry is focused on. Now that they've met their deadline, they head to this year's NAB conference, April 6-11 in Las Vegas, wondering what's next.

Those groups still involved in the final push to get stations on-air find that other station projects are feeling the DTV pinch. Most seem optimistic that they will hit the deadline, though. Even if they don't, their stations will be on-air within the extension period.

There are some unifying areas of interest for all the groups. Like their network brethren, they are giving asset management a close look and investigating centralcasting. DVD also is attracting interest as an archiving tool. And disk-based cameras are on the list as well.

This year's NAB will still reflect the effects of the DTV-transmission transition. Next year already promises to harbingers the spread of digital technologies throughout the rest of the broadcast facility.

—Ken Kerschbaumer

DTV HANGOVER

Station groups head to Las Vegas looking past digital transmission





THE ACKERLEY GROUP

Shopping List:

- ✓ HD-camera peripherals
- ✓ HD monitoring
- ✓ DTV-signal monitoring

A goal-oriented approach

Ackerley looks for solutions, not particular black boxes

When Kelly Alford, vice president of engineering for Seattle-based Ackerley Group, visits Las Vegas for NAB, he won't be toting a catalog of specs to be met by particular black boxes. He'll be carrying a solid understanding of his operation and an open mind as to what can make it better.

"With our proposed merger with Clear Channel, it's hard to say where we're going to be by NAB, so I'm not looking for particular products this year. But that's nothing new," he points out. "My approach has always been to look for means to an end result, not to go looking for the specific pieces of the puzzle."

This year, that means looking at incremental steps in rounding out his DTV vision, advances in asset management, listening for new solutions to tackle the last mile for centralcasting, and creative directions to take new technology.

"Talking to a manufacturer about how they intend a product being used," says Alford, "will lead me to think about how I might use it to tackle a different need."



Kelly Alford
Vice President of
Engineering

Alford's DTV build-out plan is substantially accomplished, which provides the breathing room needed to take a considered approach. But many of the group's DTV-transmission build-outs are on hold, given the possible merger.

"The extensions have allowed us not to be reckless, to follow a strategy," he says. "There's demand for services now, but we don't have to buy with our hair on fire trying to build a skeleton system that may be wildly inefficient and leave us with limited options."

Ackerley's DTV stations will be able to meet the minimum

'We don't have to buy with our hair on fire trying to build a skeleton system that may be wildly inefficient and leave us with limited options.'

requirements in a year, he says, adding that the focus isn't just on reaching the minimum. He plans to use the additional time to follow two tracks toward the future of DTV: investigating new business models and making DTV a profitable one. Those two tracks may run in parallel, according to Alford.

"We have to give people a reason to buy the boxes, and we have to package solutions with the goal of return on investment," he says. "Interactivity will drive adoption. We're really just scratching the surface of what we can do with the channel. I'll be looking for unique

business models that will add value for the viewers and add to the return on our investment in DTV."

Of course, the dotcom shake-out could reduce the number of companies offering novel interactive technology. "I'm curious to see what will be at the Sands exhibition center and if there will be the same kind of turnout from the computer technology companies as in past several years."

As for the new technology that will keep other head engineers busy at NAB—centralcasting—Ackerley has been very active over the past year building out a network that the industry uses as a model, and Alford says he's very happy with the way his network is running.

"We've bought the T-shirt," he says. "I will be listening to people who have new ideas, but we're where we need to be right now."

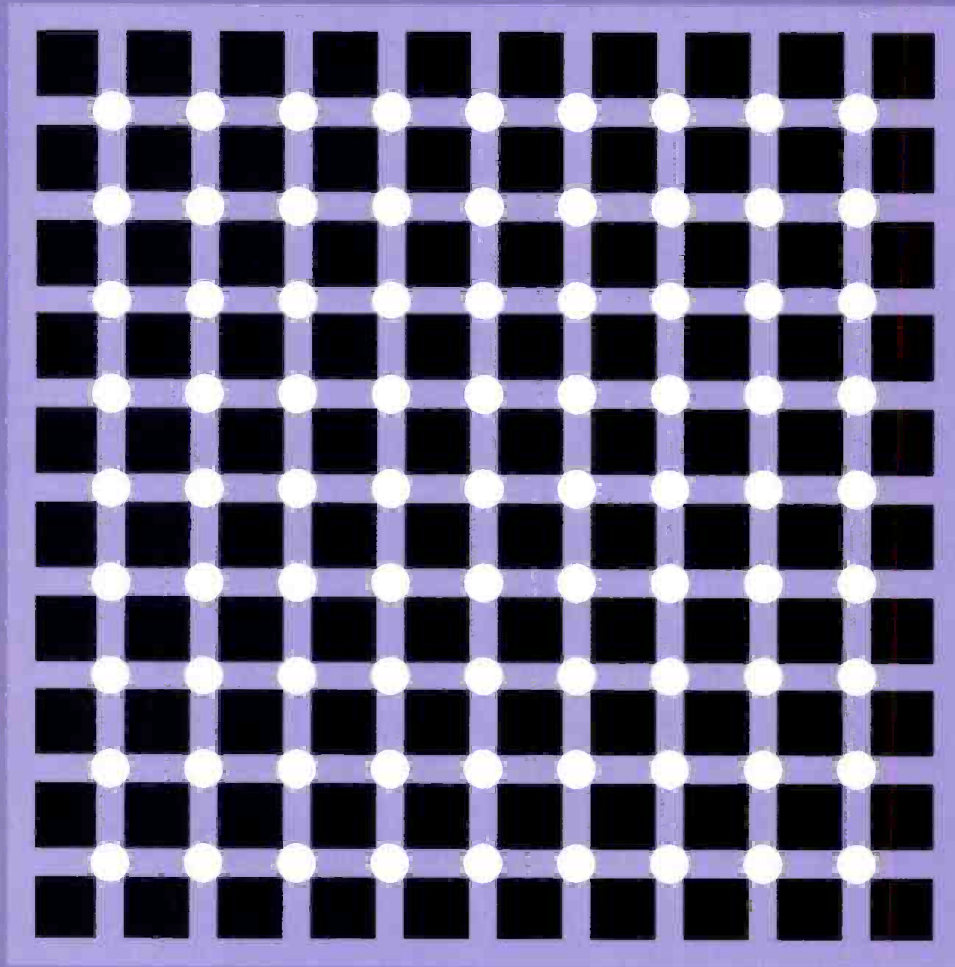
All of this leaves Alford with very few specific needs. He will be shopping for HDTV and DTV encoding and monitoring gear as well as seeking to pick up HD-camera peripherals. "We're just looking to augment what we have for HD and take a look at what's new."

He will also be looking at media and news asset management and software to manage connectivity across the group. "I'm looking for end-to-end systems," he explains. "I don't expect to find everything I need for asset management from one vendor, but I'm hoping someone can show me a system that puts everything I need together."

But that doesn't mean Alford will feel the pressure to buy anything on the floor. "I'll be spending most of my time networking." ■

—Gregory Wind

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Capitol Broadcasting Company, Inc.

Shopping List:

- ✓ HD weather graphics
- ✓ Various odds and ends
- ✓ Digital asset management

gearing up to maintain their reputation as the leader in local news.

"We have the news name and news leadership," Greene says. "The great thing is, because it's a separate entity, we can break away for stories that are interesting enough for intense local interest."

Any products that help improve the quality of local news coverage will no doubt be of interest.

Last year, he spent much of his time at NAB looking for HDTV gear with NTSC functionality, especially in the graphics area. Those needs have been met.

"Now you can find almost anything that you need for HD," he says. "Eighteen months ago, we were still pushing for graphics equipment. But you can find everything now, and the prices have come down."

There is little doubt that Capitol Broadcasting is on a hunt to come up with the winning DTV business model first. Its DTV Plus service has the group involved in datacasting. WRAL-DT, for example, crams its DTV spectrum with as much programming as it can.

Vice President of Engineering Tom Beauchamp also is looking forward to a fairly shopping-free NAB. He will focus on future technology and asset management.

"We're in the process of trying to originate everything in 1080i and downconvert the whole signal," he explains.

"The only thing holding us back right now," he continues, "is commercials. We've even offered to do them for free so our advertisers can see the visual benefit, even when the HD signal is converted to SD, but there is a reluctance to change from what they've always known." ■

—Ken Kerschbaumer

Filling in the digital gaps

With major purchasing done, a chance to focus on the future

It may happen only once in a lifetime for someone at Capitol Broadcasting Vice President John Greene Jr.'s level, but this year's NAB conference will be less about walking so much that he needs new soles for his shoes and more about discovering new ideas. "We're not really looking for much of anything," he says.

That's a shocking comment for someone whose station group has been a leader in the HDTV transition, but maybe that's the point.

"We spent a bundle last year doing the HD conversion," he says. "Our two Charlotte stations are lined up, and everything is ordered, so we'll make the May 1 deadline. I filed extensions just in case we have weather delays, but I don't think we'll need them."

So this year's NAB will be a bit of a well-earned break after last year's, which Greene best describes as "appointment after appointment and just run, run, run." This year, "we'll walk around, kick some tires and attend some sessions that we usually miss."

There are some odds and ends on his shopping list,



John Greene Jr.
Vice President

'Eighteen months ago, we were still pushing for graphics equipment. But you can find everything now for HD, and the prices have come down.'

including weather graphics. "We're always looking at graphics for HD use, like weather graphics."

He doesn't think the show will be less enjoyable without the added kick of looking for equipment to buy. "I like to walk around and see what's new. There might be things we'll see that we haven't thought about, and it's good to see where the industry is going. In fact," he suggests, "it might be more interesting. Last year, I never had a casual stroll around the exhibit halls."

Actually, Greene will have the leisure to focus on what many

wish they could: making the existing product better.

For example, WRAL-TV Raleigh-Durham, N.C., is using its digital spectrum to broadcast a 24-hour news channel alongside its other digital services. The channel is also picked up on Time Warner's local digital cable system. In a few weeks, there will be another 24-hour news channel in town when Time Warner Cable flips the switch on its latest local-news network. And it will be carried on ch. 14, with WRAL-TV's bounced up to ch. 256.

The potential face-off has Greene, WRAL-TV and Capitol



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Shopping List:

- ✓ Studio and RF testing and monitoring
- ✓ Graphics
- ✓ Switchers

Making it all fit together

Goal is digital gear that works with existing analog gear

Sterling Davis, vice president and director of engineering for Cox Broadcasting, is taking the economical path to digital: a slow, steady migration as each piece of equipment reaches the end of its life cycle. And, as in years past, Davis won't be going to NAB looking to replace analog systems wholesale.

"We never go to NAB with a shopping list," he says. Instead, he'll look for smart ways to integrate digital technology into analog environments.

According to Davis, NAB is not a time for buying but a time for browsing for new solutions. Though in the market for testing and monitoring equipment, he says he'll "spend most of my time on the floor visiting larger vendors to see what they have and make sure we understand where they're going. I'll also visit smaller vendors to find devices that will help us in our migration strategy."

His long-term, piece-by-piece strategy hinges on the ability to link new equipment into existing environments, which is not necessarily the easiest way to go, or the cheapest. "It's easy to do if you've got a lot of money," he



Sterling Davis
Vice President/Director of Engineering

points out, adding, "but we're going to find the cost-effective way."

Cox's studios are 15% to 20% digital, and Davis doesn't expect to finish that transition in the near future. It will be five to seven years before the last of the group's analog gear will need to be replaced.

He has already seen the fruits of his patience, with digital costs falling significantly over the past several years. He has already seen a dramatic drop in prices of such equipment as encoders, multiplexers and upconverters for digital transmission, and he expects that trend to continue.

'The digital plant is where we look for return, which means finding the right interfaces that make our analog equipment retain its usefulness in a digital world.'

"It's also considerably cheaper to build a digital studio now than when we started," he observes. "We're paying 15% to 20% of what it cost to put our first digital studios together."

Davis's strategy for this NAB is to find digital equipment that will easily integrate into the existing studios, along with hardware or software that will add to overall efficiency by reducing time and equipment redundancy.

Handling media in the newsroom and in on-air presentation are two specific areas where manual tasks could be reduced or boxes could perform multi-

ple functions. "In both environments, we have to take the feed, copy it, timecode it, check quality," he explains. "We'll look for equipment that will help us streamline our operation by helping people avoid doing repetitive tasks."

Centralcasting is not part of Davis's plans for NAB next month. Cox currently has a feasibility study under way by integrator Digital System Technology. It should be finished by July.

"We're certainly looking at centralcasting, but I'm not sure if it's an NAB issue. There's no hardware for centralcasting," Davis points out, adding that "it's something we're studying for now."

Similarly, HDTV is not on his agenda for Las Vegas. "It is not a priority, and we don't know when or if it will ever be."

Among areas in which Davis plans to be checking out what's new for 2002: graphics, switchers and digital transmission. Graphics and switchers, he notes, are bought on a station-by-station basis.

With the final eight of 15 stations due to go on-air with digital in May, the RF side is almost complete. The goal then will be to find a way to make the move to digital provide an economic benefit.

According to Davis, that won't be found on the transmission side. "There's no return on investment in transmission. The digital plant is where we're looking for return, which means finding the right interfaces that make it easy to put digital equipment in an analog environment and, as we get more and more digital, to find ways to make our analog equipment retain its usefulness in a digital world." ■

—Gregory Wind



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- ✓ Dolby-E

Perfecting centralcasting

Emmis looks to NAB to help make an existing system better

When Joe Addalia, director of engineering of centralcasting at Emmis, takes the floor at NAB, he'll rely on his experience in bringing three stations to centralcasting this year, with a fourth going online this month, to help point him around the show.

"We've got full play-out from the hub and backup systems in place at the stations in case of emergencies," he says. "We've learned the dos and don'ts."

Addalia will be looking for specific technology to round out the centralcasting operations, and he'll be focusing on eight areas, many of which he finds are specific challenges that arise from the implementation of centralcasting.

Like any group involved in centralcasting, Emmis faces the last-mile dilemma. One possible solution? Microwave links. "You can spend as much money on the last-mile link as you can getting from the hub to the local telco POP," Addalia explains. "The telecom companies are pushing fiber, but we'll be looking at 45-Mb microwave at NAB."

Another big issue in central-



Joe Addalia
Director of Engineering,
Centralcasting

casting is control and monitoring. "We'll be looking for a system that uses SNMP or SNMP and XML combined for both the stations and the hub," says Addalia. "The efficiency of centralcasting doesn't pay off if we don't know everything, which we would [know] if we had someone at the stations all the time."

That need for monitoring also extends out to the transmitter site. According to Addalia, Emmis will be looking for a software/hardware combination that can get data from a box at the transmitter to the hub, not just to a terminal at the station.

'You can spend as much on the last-mile link as on getting from the hub to the local telco POP. Telecom companies are pushing fiber, but we'll be looking at 45-Mb microwave.'

Again, SNMP will be important in sending a page or e-mail out to the engineer.

Weather-alert systems will also be on Addalia's shopping list. Particularly for Emmis stations in Florida, he is looking for a smooth system that can be closely tied to the local weather systems. Adding to the challenge are varying levels of acceptance for running alerts over commercials from market to market.

"Even markets where advertisers accept alerts for real weather emergencies, they don't want a crawl telling viewers to tune in for the five o'clock news,"

Addalia points out. "We need a system that can be located at the hub but tied to the main weather system at the station."

With respect to storage, he will be checking out DVD-ROM archiving because he is not looking for a robotic storage system. "We've had some experience there, and I'm not convinced that robotics is something we want to get back into.

"We need handheld media for longer-form content," he adds, "and DVD-ROM has several advantages over tape. It's nonlinear, and the time code is always the same, which allows us to continually use the same database records over and over."

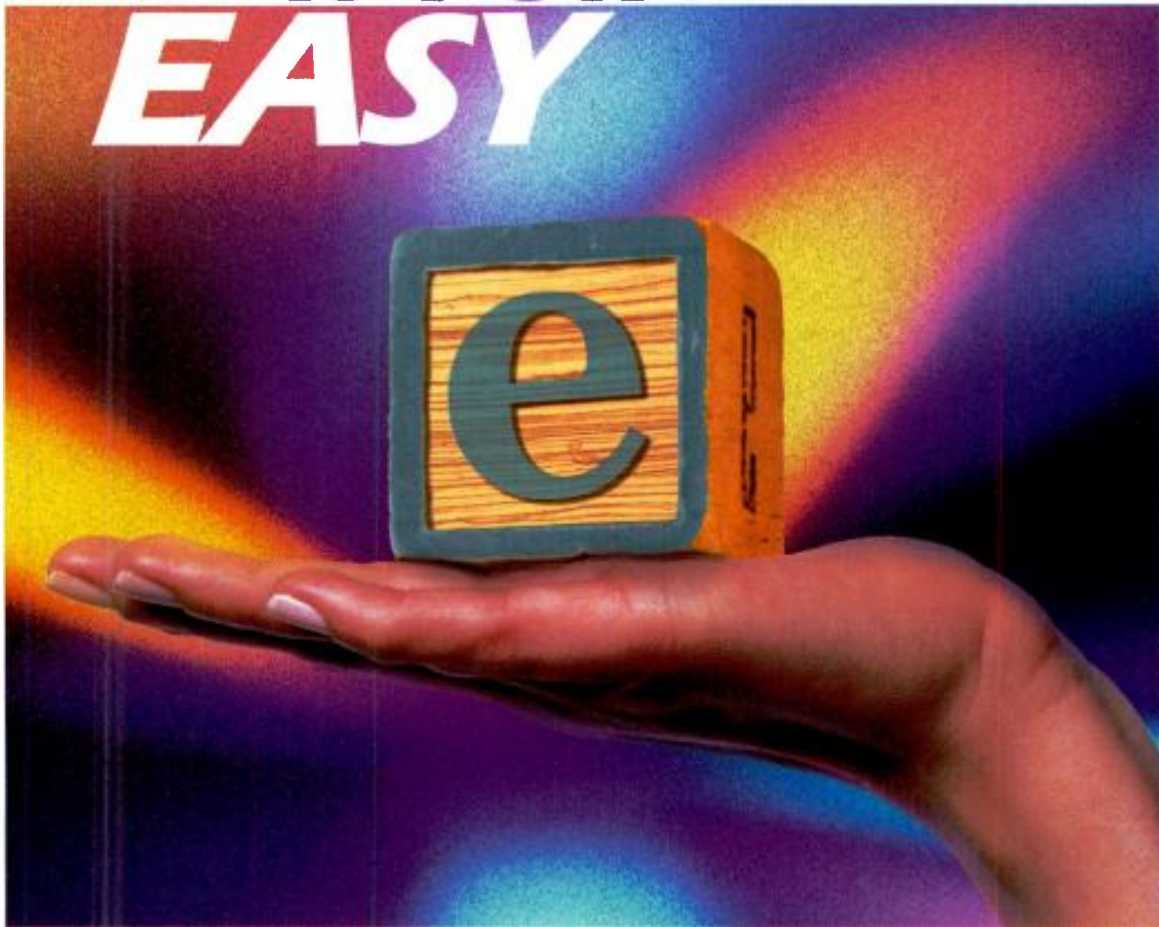
He will be combing the floor at NAB for technology that is not necessarily on his shopping list but is worth investigating. "One major area I'll be looking at is asset management for both news and syndicated programming," he says, pointing out that "we take more than 80 feeds a day off satellite and need to know that the right show is airing on the right station on the right day."

Metadata systems will also be on the list, specifically those that enable server interoperability. "We've got Sony servers, Vibrant news systems and Grass Valley Group MAN servers, and we need them to share information and media," he explains, adding "I'd also like to see what's happening with MPEG 4 technologies and allied services for DTV."

Audio will be a focus, too. Addalia notes that there have been some switching issues with working in 5.1 channels. "We're AES standard, so we're ready for Dolby E. For the Super Bowl, we had to send out a stereo signal on the DTVs." ■

—Gregory Wind

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is less certain and will take careful consideration, according to Harrison: "It's wide open right now, and we'll be looking to set plans so we can buy smart when the time comes."

That time could come as soon as this year, and he will spend the show looking hard at specific areas for growth that he will be able to implement as soon as possible, with a focus on what can be accomplished in the next three years.

One of the most important areas for consideration will be centralcasting. He has heard the buzz and will spend a significant amount of time at NAB looking into solutions that will work on current architecture. While the group has no immediate plans for a move to centralizing content, Harrison says, "it's something we have to look at and determine if it is a practical as well as financially sound alternative. A number of groups have looked at it, but, to date, the results have been mixed and somewhat inconsistent."

That planning would be advanced by cross-platform transportability of media and metadata among different types of servers across the network fabric. Last year at this time, Harrison was looking to tackle the same issue, and he said one of the problems was that vendors were afraid of commoditizing their servers. A year later, he is still looking for flexibility that will allow for servers from different manufacturers to work more closely.

New technology, new trends and matching plans to a moving target of a budget will keep Harrison on his toes this year. In maybe the only holdover from years past, NAB will be the place where those trends and plans come together. ■

—Gregory Wind

Buying in a down market

Granite eyes DV formats, video-server interoperability

Bud Harrison, vice president of engineering for New York-based Granite Broadcasting Group, sees this year's NAB as an opportunity to make sound decisions and plans. After a year of DTV and with capital-expenditure pressures resulting from a down advertising market, this is a year to look for what will improve on-air quality at a reasonable cost.

"Broadcast television will come back, but we don't know when, and it may come back to something less than it was before," he says. "We're seeing increased competition from other mediums, and we will have to find ways to maintain the core assets of the broadcast medium—quality, uniqueness and locality of the product—on less money."

That makes this a time to make smart decisions rather than speeding toward hastily set goals. "We will be working hard at NAB, but it's a different kind of struggle," says Harrison. "This is a year to catch our breath and think."

Even so, specific needs have to be addressed, and he will be looking for particular technolog-



Bud Harrison
Vice President,
Engineering

ical advances. "There are some logical next steps we can take on budget and in tune with our changing financial reality."

Those steps include parts to plug into the group's DTV strategy, supporting on-air presentation with commercial/program servers, networked technology for the newsroom as well as exploiting digital connectivity. "We need to keep moving and accomplish what we can right now," he adds.

For example, he likes much of the technology available based on the DV format, but he is sensitive to the concerns of the professionals using the

'We will have to find ways to maintain the core assets of the broadcast medium—quality, uniqueness and locality of the product—on less money.'

equipment. "We are keeping track of DV so we can move it and when it hits a critical mass of professional acceptance."

Other specific technology purchases will be left to the individual stations. "Switchers, graphics and cameras are purchased on a station-by-station basis," he says, "but, if we can get double duty out of something, we will."

Aside from those specific areas, however, the current technology landscape demands that he spend most of his energy on planning. After several years when the DTV build-out defined needs and plans, the road ahead

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- ✓ Archiving systems
- ✓ Digital playout gear

Quality up, costs down

Meredith is hunting new efficiencies in moving content

Joe Snelson, vice president and director of engineering for the Meredith Broadcasting Group, has one thought on his mind for NAB: finding gear that helps get content in and out as easily as possible.

“All of our stations are part of the major networks, so our local product is news, with some syndicated programming,” he says. “We need equipment that will let us do our job in a cost-effective way without harming the quality of the product.”

Issue number one for Snelson is making progress in the recent trend of getting satellite receivers into the plant.

“Content providers are sending us receivers so they can send us spot and program files from their satellites,” he says, “but that’s just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to getting that content into the plant.”

Snelson says he has talked with others in the industry about emerging products that allow content to get into a facility without human intervention.

While that would ideally mean having one box rather than four or five receiving the feeds, he’s not looking for one dominant player. “I wish there



Joe Snelson
Vice President, Director of Engineering

was one provider that had the lion’s share of the market to streamline the process, but we need to maintain a competitive environment.”

Snelson is also hoping to see advances in traffic systems. They “currently offer only the bare minimum of information. They are powerful systems, but the traffic systems and the servers don’t talk to each other. I want to be able to reconcile the traffic system with the information coming from the server system so I can run queries matching the play list to the play log.”

Again, it’s an issue of delivering quality news and programs as

‘Our stations have mostly converted cameras to DVCPRO. Right now, I’m interested in playout, tying it all together and keeping the content safe from cradle to grave.’

smoothly and as cheaply as possible. “There is too much manual intervention right now. I’m looking for more automation.”

So far, Meredith has replaced spot players with file-server technology in five stations, with transition plans for other stations. “We’re looking at age and condition of equipment to see when a change is needed,” says Snelson.

He will also look to continue transition to digital production.

“Over the past three to five years, our stations have mostly converted field and studio cameras to the DVCPRO format, and some editing is done on [Avid] NewsCutter-type sys-

tems. Right now, I’m more interested in playout, tying it all together and keeping the content safe from cradle to grave.”

Snelson will also address archival systems at NAB. “There is 20- to 30-year old equipment and content in older formats, and we need to keep it relevant in the short or long term. DVD seems to be emerging as the de facto standard.”

A major part of comparing format options is figuring out how to get the archive into a new format. “Stations have hundreds of hours on tape in different formats, and there’s the question of how you do that and then how long is the new format going to be around.”

Centralcasting is not in the immediate future for Meredith, partly because of the company’s geographically diverse station make-up. “It’s difficult to find a cost-effective way for us to approach it, but we’ll be looking hard at what’s out there.”

High definition is similarly on the long-distance radar. “We’re not looking at HDTV on the production level, and we have no immediate plans for transmission,” Snelson says. “It’s a matter of cost and economics.”

Graphics are a station-by-station decision, he adds. “Each station has its own style when it comes to graphics, based on the expectations of each market and the professionals working with the equipment.”

This year’s NAB may give Snelson and other attendees the time and space they need to address all of these issues. “The foot traffic at NAB may be one of those good-news/bad-news situations,” he says. “With less people, you’ll have more of an opportunity to get into the booths and go in depth with the exhibitors than in past years.” ■

—Gregory Wind



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Taking digital further

Scripps extends the technology into newsrooms

The E.W. Scripps stations have been making the move to digital, with seven stations on air in digital and three more due to be up with DTV by the end of the year.

According to Vice President of Engineering Mike Doback, the financial resources committed to the DTV conversion have caused other station projects to be put on hold. But that doesn't mean that he'll be going to NAB without areas to investigate.

For example, the stations have been built for pass-through of DTV signals. Two, WPTV(TV) West Palm Beach, Fla., and KJRH(TV) Tulsa, Okla., also have HD cameras and production capabilities. KJRH recently worked on some HD commercials aired during the Olympics.

"We're replacing obsolescent analog equipment with HD hardware where the price differential is reasonable," says Doback.

Other HD gear that he will be looking for includes editing and graphics equipment.

"We've put in place editing systems that can be converted to HDTV," he says. "We really want to see where things are going in HD, and NAB is an opportunity to talk to our associates



Mike Doback
Vice President of
Engineering

"We're encouraged by the technology used in Detroit. The newsroom system talks seamlessly with master control, and that talks to our commercial-playback system."

from other groups and see what implementations are working."

Scripps also has two digital newsrooms, WEWS(TV) Cleveland and WXYZ-TV Detroit. Doback says, although using different hardware, both are based on TCP/IP transfer architecture.

"We're very encouraged by the technology we've used in Detroit," he says. "The newsroom system talks seamlessly with master control, and that system talks to our commercial-playback system, which is on file servers. They all interconnect nicely with graphics and creative service for file sharing."

WEWS(TV) uses Grass Valley Group Profiles and Vibrant news-editing systems; WXYZ-TV is based on SGI servers, Panasonic NewsByte editors and, recently, Macintosh computers with Final Cut Pro.

One new technology he will be investigating for the newsroom is disk-based cameras. At NAB last year, he saw very promising demonstrations by Sony and Panasonic hopes to see products available soon.

"It does seem to be the market trend. It's a good one because it has a lot of implications down the road for the stations," he says. "That's especially true if it's a

compatible DVD format that could be viewed on office DVD players or DVD jukeboxes that are available and affordable."

With newsrooms making the move to digital, Doback says, inquiries for vendors change to questions of bandwidth or desktop architectures.

"Also, if you're integrating products from a number of vendors, you still run into the problem of tying those systems together," he says. "So it still requires third-party software to keep it running."

The move to computer-based equipment is a double-edged sword, he adds. Broadcasters can take advantage of technology that has been put through its paces by IT engineers.

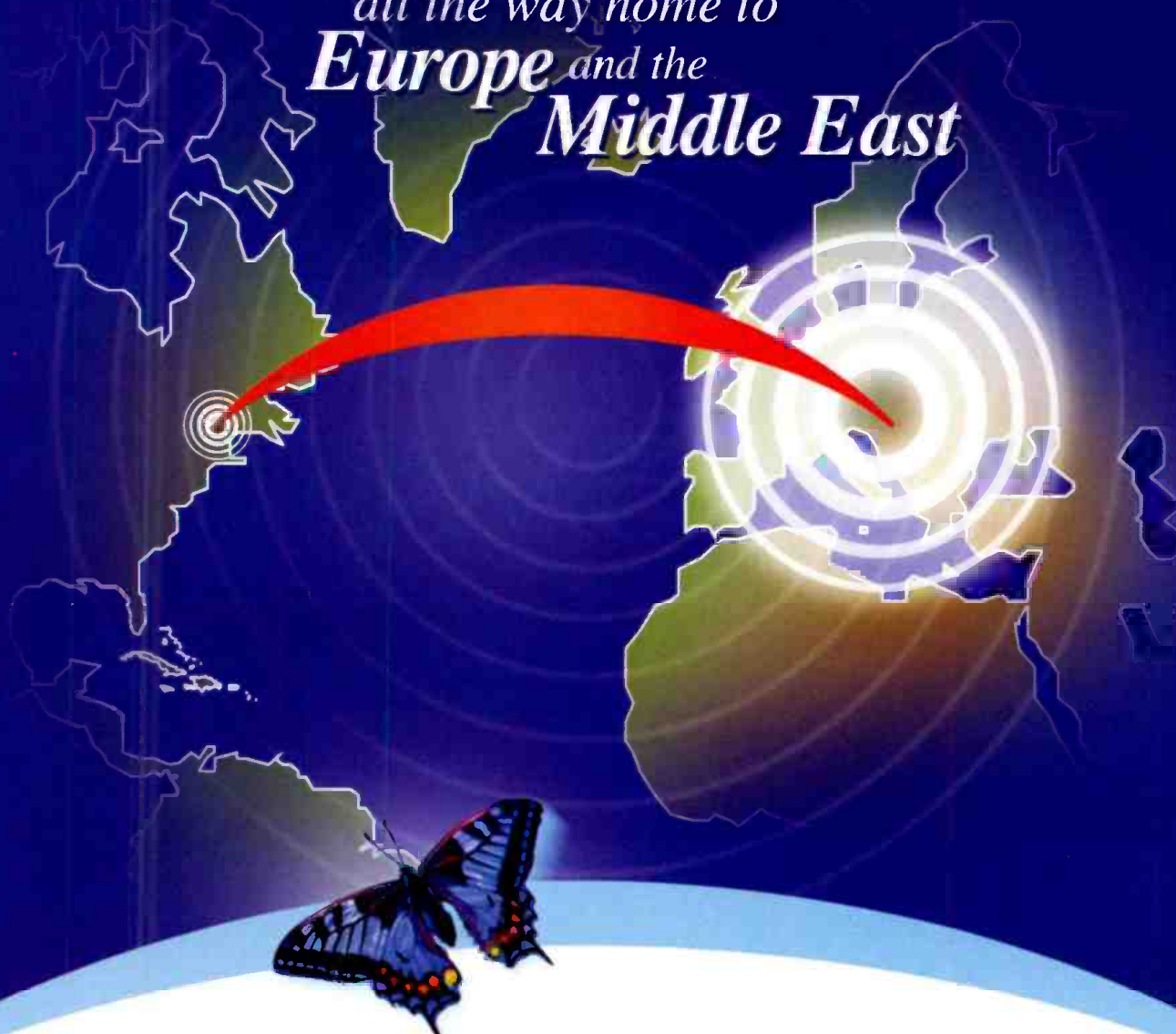
On the other hand, as equipment is increasingly PC-based, broadcasters suffer the problems that people with home PCs deal with. "Unstable platforms and all those issues really impact reliability and how robust our systems are," Doback says.

Among other technologies to be investigated at NAB is COFDM microwave for transmission from news vehicles. Scripps is testing COFDM gear at WMAR-TV Baltimore, and Doback says the group is taking a hard look at what the various suppliers have so that the equipment can be implemented as analog gear needs to be replaced.

Archiving will also get a closer look. "We're interested in cost-effective systems for the stations," he says. "As the cost of storage has come down, the line between nearline and online has really blurred, and the model is changing as far as what we really need for nearline. The DVD jukeboxes are very affordable, and there's a lot of software that can be adapted to run those." ■

—Ken Kerschbaumer

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People

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

Cable TV

Appointments at Time Warner Cable, Stamford, Conn.: **Patricia L. Armstrong**, VP, finance, named senior VP; **Mark Mersky**, managing director, client services, Adlink, New York, appointed VP, operations, advertising sales, Stamford, Conn.

Appointments at Comcast Cable: **James J. Sullivan Jr.**, VP, human resources, Eastern division, Philadelphia, promoted to VP, labor and employment law; **Brian R. Lambert**, VP, operations, MediaOne Northeast, Boston, joins as VP, Eastern Division, Oaks, Pa.; **Fred A. Graffam III**, regional senior director, finance, Comcast, Washington/Virginia region, named VP/GM, Prince George's County system, Md.; **Julie Nelson**, manager, recruitment, Philadelphia, promoted to director.

Jim Holanda, VP, operations, St. Louis region, Charter Communications, promoted to VP, operations, Central region.

Appointments at Insight Communications, New York: **Terry Denson**, director, business development, affiliate sales and marketing, MTV Networks, joins as VP, programming; **Bill Binford**, programming

manager, promoted to director, programming.

Broadcast TV

Bill Parks, GM, WFXL(TV) Albany, Ga., named VP, operations, Waitt Broadcasting, Albany, Ga.

Michael R. Nurse, senior VP, sales and marketing, 24/7 Media Inc., Bethesda, Md., named general sales manager, WKBW-TV Buffalo, N.Y.

Harvey Saxer, general sales manager, KTXH(TV) Houston, named VP/general sales manager, KRIV(TV)/KTXH(TV) Houston.

Scott Brock, research director/account executive, KPTV(TV) Portland, Ore., named local sales manager.

Grover Blazer, operations/traffic manager, WLIO(TV) Lima, Ohio, retired March 8.

Appointments to sales account executive at WTVZ(TV) Norfolk, Va.:

Erin Johnson, marketing coordinator, @Lantec Federal Credit Union, Virginia Beach, Va.; **Becky T. Pickett**,

director, sales, The Ramada Hotel, Virginia Beach, Va.;

Erin A. Ramos, account executive, The United Way of South Hampton Roads, Va.

Obituary

Mary Stuart, daytime-drama actor, died at her New York home on Feb. 28. She was 75.

Best-known for her 35-year role as Jo Gardner on former CBS soap opera *Search for Tomorrow*, Stuart joined the cast of CBS's *Guiding Light* in 1996, playing Meta Bauer.

Stuart was inducted into the Soap Opera Hall of Fame in 1995 and was the first daytime-drama actor—competing against prime time nominees—to receive an Emmy Award in 1962. She celebrated 50 years in daytime television last October.

Stuart is survived by her husband of more than 20 years, Wolfgang Neumann; two children, Jeffrey Krolik and Cynthia Stuart; and two grandchildren.

Donations in Stuart's memory can be made to the Screen Actors Guild Foundation—Mary Stuart Book Fund, 5757 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036.

—P. Llanor Alleyne

Media

Ed Hinshaw, VP, human resources, Journal Broadcast Group Inc., Milwaukee, will retire at the end of this month.

Programming

Paul Eskenazi, senior VP, corporate development worldwide, The Jim Henson Co., Hollywood, Calif., promoted to CFO.

Robert Weiss, consultant, original programming, FX Networks, Los Angeles, joins

VH1, New York as VP, East Coast programming and development.

Brian Donlon, VP, media partnerships and products, iVillage, New York, named VP/GM, iVillage Television.

Ellen Anderson, head, English and Social Studies departments, Hebrew Middle School, Toronto, Canada, joins Turner Learning, Atlanta, as education editor/curriculum writer.

Appointments at A&E



Michael R. Nurse



Paul Eskenazi



Brian Donlon



Marie Schuler

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

Television Networks: **Robert Edney**, VP, advertising sales, planning, New York, promoted to VP, Eastern region; **Brian Janks**, VP, automotive advertising sales, ABC Family, Detroit, joins as VP, Central region, Detroit.

Jama Bowen, director, communications, CMT: Country Music Television, Nashville, Tenn., promoted to VP, press.

Appointments at NBC, Burbank, Calif.: **Erin Lempriere** and **Jacelyn Swanson**, each manager, current series programs, have each been promoted to director.

Amy Salerno, manager, business development, Showtime, New York, promoted to director, business development.

Jeffrey MacDougall, senior account executive, Petry Media Corp., San Francisco, appointed regional sales manager, The WB 100+ Station Group, Sausalito, Calif.

Tess McGrath, producer, *It's Your Call With Lynn Doyle*, CN8, Philadelphia, named coordinating producer.

Liz Koman, senior VP/general sales manager, USA Network, New York, joins AMC/WE: Women's Entertainment National Advertising Sales, New York, as senior VP.

Appointments at TNN Ad Sales: **David Lawenda**, senior VP/general sales manager, Paramount Advertiser Sales, Los Angeles, joins as senior VP, New York; **Karl Lewis**, senior VP, Midwest ad sales, MTV Networks, Chicago, named senior VP, regional ad sales, Chicago.

Radio

John Ryan, VP/market sales manager, Hispanic Broadcasting Corp., Los Angeles/Glendale stations, named GM, KMPC(AM) Los Angeles.

Paul Miraldi, director, marketing, WAXQ(FM) New York, adds WHTZ(FM) Newark, N.J., to his duties.

Eddie Andleman, host, *A-Team*, WEEI(AM) Boston, joins WWZN(AM) Boston, as host, *The Zone*.

Journalism

Joan Barrett, VP, management recruitment and product development, The Broadcast Image Group, San Antonio, joins KWCH(TV) Hutchinson, Kan., as news director.

Alan Murray, bureau chief, Washington, *The Wall Street Journal*, joins CNBC, in the same capacity.

Advertising/Marketing/PR

Appointments at National Cable Communications, Los Angeles: **Tracey Wagner**, account executive, promoted to sales manager; **Joe Feldman**, VP/director, marketing, Effective Media Services, Los Angeles, and **Robb Rothfarb**, senior account executive, Katz Radio Group/Network Dimensions, Los Angeles, both join as account executives.

Broadband

Appointments at nCube,

Portland, Ore.: **Michael J. Pohl**, president, named CEO; **Kyle Christensen**, financial controller, named VP, finance; **Clinton Tripodi**, VP, human resources, Pacific Broadband Communications, San Jose, Calif., joins as VP, workplace resources.

Associations/Law Firms

Marie Schuler, director, government & community affairs, Comcast, Alexandria, Va., named president, Women in Cable Television, Baltimore and Washington chapter.

—P. Llanor Alleyne
palleyne@cabners.com
212-337-7141

Voices

O P E N M I K E

CREEPING CLUTTER

Editor: Your article, "Clutter rules the airwaves" (Feb. 18), as highlighted in a 4As release, just hits the tip of the iceberg. This creeping increase in commercialization was a challenge at TVB, but the wizards that make the ultimate decision to sneak in an extra spot here and there just don't get it. We are constantly in the biz of convincing advertisers that nothing is more effective than television to market a product or a service.

Yet research, albeit old, shows that more non-program content in television erodes advertising effectiveness and, thus, television's value. So what do we have? As commercialization creeps up, the effectiveness niche of television piddles downward. It's winning the battle to squeeze in more ad revenue in the short haul but losing the

war in the long run, because it will send some advertisers looking for alternatives.

In the real world, television advertising prices are determined by supply and demand. If the boys with the green eye shades think this through, they'd realize more advertising revenue at the end of the day because the supply remains constant while demand inches up. When this happens, the value of television stays strong, and ad revenue increases. Adam Smith figured that out in 1776, and he didn't even own a set.

Why does it work? Because television gives advertisers a selling marketplace better than anything ever created on this earth—and our gatekeepers need to keep it that way.

—Ave Butensky, former president, Bureau of Advertising, Los Angeles

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

Representing media

Lawyer Blake is in the middle of sweeping changes in broadcasting

Richard Nixon deserves some credit for Jonathan Blake's 38-year career as a communications lawyer. Blake, who today heads the technology, media and communications practice at powerhouse Washington firm Covington & Burling, committed to communications law as a young attorney when assigned to defend The Washington Post Co. from fallout of the Watergate scandal.

The company's two Florida TV-station licenses were up for renewal in 1972, and a Nixon White House bent on retribution for the newspaper's coverage of the conspiracy engineered challenges to the permits. Several challenges to Post licenses in Miami and Jacksonville by Nixon cronies were eventually dropped, but only after the company spent more than \$1 million defending its operations.

"When I joined the firm in 1964, they had a need in communications, so I did that and other work, too," Blake recalls. "What really cemented me was the Watergate challenges. That was full-time, very important and interesting work. That really made clear

that communications was my niche.

"Being a communications lawyer has been a great choice," he adds, "because it's such a dynamic industry and has such interesting people."

Covington & Burling, which was founded in 1919 to help corporate clients navigate increasingly important regulatory, legislative and tax-policy areas, expanded into communications with the advent of broadcast-industry regulation. Longtime clients include top TV-station groups; the CBS affiliates, for 45 years; and the Association for Maximum Service Television (MSTV), since 1958.

Public-television clients, including PBS, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and

the Association of Public Television Stations, hired the firm after the Johnson White House increased federal support for public broadcasting.

"Our practice has always been weighted," Blake says, "toward government policy and the structure of the broadcasting industry." That plants him in the middle of two of the most sweeping, and contentious, changes to broadcasting: the increasingly combative affiliate-network relationship, and the switch to digital.

With CBS and NBC affiliates and leading station groups as clients, Blake's team is one of two law offices pressing the FCC to end what many TV-group owners call abusive and illegal practices by the net-



Jonathan D. Blake
Covington & Burling

B. June 14, 1938, Long Branch, N.J.; A.B., history, Yale University, 1960; Rhodes Scholar, M.L., Oxford University, 1962; J.D., Yale, 1964; attorney, Covington & Burling, June 1964; president, Federal Communications Bar Association, 1984-85; chairman, firm management committee, 1995-2001; head of technology, media and communications group since Jan. 1; m. Elizabeth Shriver, Dec. 9, 1977; five children

works. Along with a Raleigh, N.C., firm, Covington & Burling represents the Network Affiliated Stations Alliance, which claims the Big Four nets restricted stations' right to preempt network programming, demanded control of DTV channels and interfered with station sales. NASA also wants

the FCC to impose restrictions on "repurposing" of programming on network-affiliated cable channels and the "favoritism" nets allegedly show their O&Os. NASA also intervened against the networks' fight to eliminate the 35% cap.

On behalf of public-TV clients, the firm fought for digital cable carriage rights. It helped MSTV obtain a digital allotment for each TV broadcaster, rather than having the channels assigned by comparative hearings or auction. Thus, TV stations will be able to maintain today's analog coverage areas when they go digital.

"Jonathan has a remarkable way of seeing the full picture, where things might go and how issues might be resolved down the road," says Alan Frank, president of Post-Newsweek Stations and NASA chairman. "He's an invaluable resource."

Although exerting much effort sparring with the nets, Blake has a few digs for the FCC, which he says "walked away from its responsibilities" to aid the DTV transition.

He's glad Congress appears willing to act, perhaps requiring DTV tuners in sets and digital copy-protection standards.

The next fight for broadcasters, he says, will be protecting signals from interference as stations move from ch. 52-69 to the lower channels of the TV core over the next few years. "There are enormous risks of interference. A lot has to be done now to minimize problems later." —*Bill McConnell*

Classifieds

Television

MISCELLANEOUS CAREERS



CORPORATE NEWS STARTUP OPERATION

Sinclair Broadcast Group is starting a group news, weather and sports operation at its headquarters in Hunt Valley, Maryland.

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NEWSCAREERS

NEWS DIRECTOR

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PRODUCER CAREERS

SENIOR EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

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Classifieds

Television

SALESCAREERS

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Editorials

COMMITTED TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Shades of Gray

Gray Communications last week released figures on its financial performance for the year now, thankfully, past. Gray is a midsize TV-group owner, with 13 stations in the South and Midwest. Ordinarily, the results would merit a brief mention elsewhere in the book, but its elaboration of the factors behind that performance seemed to sum up the challenges faced by broadcasters and are, themselves, something of a commentary on the times.

Gray saw broadcast revenues decline about 12% from 2000. The chief culprit: the lack of political ad dollars, which virtually disappeared, dropping from \$9 million in 2000 to only \$287,000 in 2001. Its ad-free coverage of Sept. 11 and the aftermath cost about \$1 million over its 13 stations. It collected \$1.4 million less in network comp for three Texas stations following negotiations with CBS. And it's paying millions to go digital. Although Gray did not break out the cost for 2001, it said its total estimated cost between 1999 and 2002 will be \$31.4 million, of which it had incurred \$10.6 million by the end of 2001. That will put its 2002 DTV expenditures at just north of \$20 million. Gray also could serve as an illustration of the state of DTV conversion: Of its 13 stations, two are on the air with digital, two will make the May 1 deadline, and the rest are in varying stages of not-quite-readiness due to weather, zoning and equipment-delivery problems.

The FCC has so far granted roughly a fifth of the more than 600 applications for delay. It should grant most of them. A look at the fascinating, sometimes troubling stories behind the requests suggests that you can color much of the industry some shade of Gray.

Advertising in moderation

Rather than cave in to Capitol Hill and the enormous pressure it can put on a regulated industry or to the AMA and its scare-tactic ad campaign, NBC is going ahead with its cautious introduction of hard-liquor ads.

The hard-liquor ban has always been a handshake agreement, never a rule or law, and has never made much sense given the ubiquity of beer and wine advertising. Non-deceptive advertising about a legal product whose use in moderation by adults does not pose a health hazard is none of Congress's business. Of course, if any advertising is being targeted to minors, the dynamic changes: The government has a clear interest in curbing the alarming rate of teenage drinking. But trying to keep young people ignorant of the product, instead of informing them of the danger of its misuse, is the wrong approach.

NBC's approach could hardly be more cautious: Advertisers must do a four-month PSA campaign; actors must be at least 30; 85% of the audience must be adults. And those are only three of its 19 points. Even Mothers Against Drunk Driving has said NBC's measured approach should be the model for those who carry hard-liquor ads. We agree.

Broadcasting & Cable (ISSN 0007-2028) (USPS 0066-0000) (GST #123397457) is published weekly, except at year's end when two issues are combined and for one week in April, when it is published semi-weekly, by Reed Business Information, 245 W. 17th St., New York, NY 10011. Broadcasting & Cable copyright 2002 by Reed Elsevier Inc., 275 Washington St., Newton, MA 02158-1630. All rights reserved. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Canada Post IPM Product (Canada Distribution) Sales Agreement No. 0607533. Postmaster, please send address changes to: Broadcasting & Cable, P.O. Box 15157, North Hollywood, CA 91615-5157. Rates for non-qualified subscriptions, including all issues: USA \$159, Canada \$219 (includes GST), Foreign Air \$350, Foreign Surface \$199. A reasonable fee shall be assessed to cover handling costs in cancellation of a subscription. Back issues: except for special issues where price changes are indicated, single copies are \$7.95 U.S., \$10 foreign. Please address all subscription mail to: Broadcasting & Cable, P.O. Box 15157, North Hollywood, CA 91615-5157. Microfilm of Broadcasting & Cable is available from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106 (800-521-0800). Reed Business Information does not assume and hereby disclaims any liability to any person for any loss or damage caused by errors or omissions in the material contained herein, regardless of whether such errors result from negligence, accident or any other cause whatsoever.

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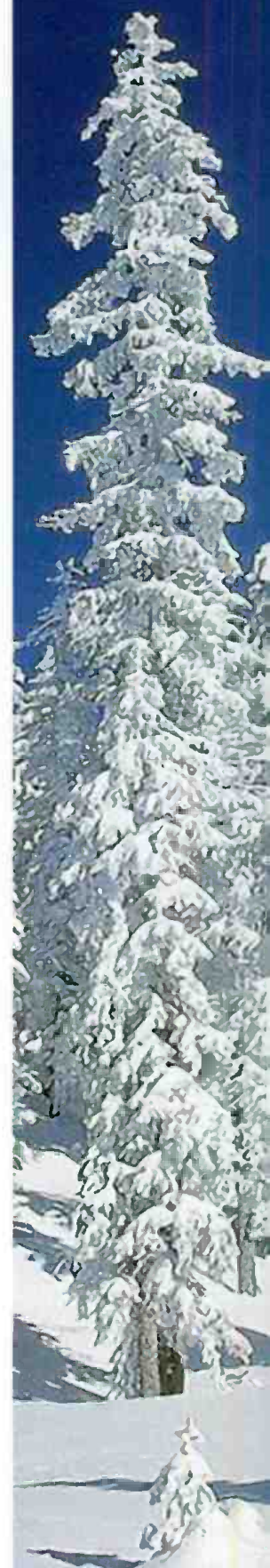
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