

CableFAX Daily™

Friday — January 21, 2011

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 22 / No. 013

Under Fire: FCC Headed For An Eventful '11

Chmn *Fred Upton* (R-MI) kicked off the House Commerce Cmte's organizational meeting Thurs with a few remarks about his incipient reign, and while they didn't include rebukes of recent **FCC** actions, it seems certain the 2 camps will be at loggerheads in short order. Cable may not have serious reservations about FCC chmn *Julius Genachowski's* dealings with the major issues of net neutrality and **Comcast-NBCU**—at least not vocal ones—but a slew of legislators and even a pair of commissioners certainly do. Upton has already been openly critical of the Commission's Open Internet Order and seeks to nullify it under the Congressional Review Act, and his caustic assessment of the Comcast-NBCU approval reinforces the notion of Genachowski and the FCC as a cmte bullseye. Along with House Comm Subcmte chmn *Greg Walden* (R-OR) and vice chmn *Lee Terry* (R-NE) this week, Upton characterized the FCC's inclusion of Internet video distribution regulations in Comcast-NBCU as "more of a Chicago-style shake-down than the thoughtful deliberation this transaction deserved." And last month, following approval of the Commission net neutrality regulations, Walden said "the FCC has overstepped its bounds and we intend to put a bridle on them and rein them in." The tenor harkens back to a Dec '08 House Commerce Cmte report that scathed the FCC under *Kevin Martin* and prompted former Rep *Bart Stupak* (D-MI) to call it "an agency out of control." On Wed at a **TechFreedom** event, FCC commish *Robert McDowell* reiterated his strong distaste for the Commission's net neutrality regulations and tactfully intimated that Upton's cmte means business. "Ultimately the FCC's order will fail," he said. Interestingly, McDowell said the pledge Comcast made as part of the NBCU deal to adhere to the Internet regulations whether or not they are struck down in court isn't part of the transaction order at all, but rather was made within a letter of commitment to Genachowski. Already, Rep *Marsha Blackburn* (R-TN) has intro'd The Internet Freedom Act, which seeks to strike down the order and is backed by the majority of Republican members on the House Commerce Cmte. And during the Sat ep of **C-SPAN's** "The Communicators," FCC commish *Meredith Atwell Baker* will say: "I expect to spend a lot of time on Capitol Hill in the next couple of months. As I understand it, the first order of business [for the House Commerce Cmte] is to look at our network neutrality rule." No retaliatory action, however, can be taken before the order is released, which hasn't happened yet. According to McDowell, an end to contro-

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versial FCC issues hasn't happened yet, either. "As we talk about spectrum allocation... I think the FCC's ability to control and regulate the broadcasters will be called into question," he said, noting how a Supreme Court showdown could be in the cards. Of note: the FCC released its Comcast-NBCU Order late Thurs, at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-11-4A1.pdf.

Sundance at Sundance: For the first time, **Sundance Channel** will have a consumer-facing presence at the Sundance Film Festival. A 10K-sq-ft bricks-and-mortar building on Main St in Park City, UT, will be known as Sundance Channel HQ, which will house a café, lounge and be the site where much of the network's Sundance coverage will originate (beginning Fri, 8pm). Hosting Sundance's "10 Days of Sundance" coverage will be *Aamer Haleem* of **VH1** fame. "I think it's really important for all media companies to engage with their audiences in ever new unique ways," said Sundance Channel gm *Sarah Barnett*. "We realized maybe we were missing a chance to engage with consumers who are actually here in Park City... who, we believe, are the target audience for our channel." The HQ will be a marketing tool and "a dynamic experience for people [and sponsors] to come by and really connect with what the channel's doing now," Barnett said. It also will be the site of a season II launch party next week for the channel's Peabody Award-winning "Brick City" doc series (premieres Jan 30, 9pm). In addition to linear coverage, the network will show 2 films each night (beginning Fri, 8pm) associated with the festival. The network's online sites will also be humming, including a collaborative effort with "The Daily Beast." And will it be easier to tout the channel after having won a Golden Globe last Sunday? "It doesn't hurt, it doesn't hurt," Barnett said.

5 Qs with Jennifer Caserta, GM/EVP, IFC: We sat down with IFC's Jen Caserta to talk about the net's evolving comic sensibilities. **Was launching 2 alternative comedies ["Onion News Network" and "Portlandia," premiere Fri, beginning 10pm... Read Seth's review on p5] a strategic choice or were they the 2 best things that came in the door?** It was incredibly strategic. It was a direct result of listening to our audience. About 18 months ago, we embarked on a significant research study. We did a segmentation study followed by an ethnography study... what we found out is that [our 18-49 audience] loved independent film, but loved so many other things as well... there was a huge interest in comedy, particularly alternative comedy... where they felt they were incredibly under-served... We saw real opportunity there. **So IFC's comedy push was directly related to the research?** Here's the beauty of it all, we were on the right track [before the study results arrived]. What we assumed about our audience was in fact true, and we were already making comedies that were slightly off, as our tagline says, like [original series] "Z Rock" and [original mini] "Bollywood Hero." So our next progression along this line was the Monty Python documentary and [the Monty Python] reunion. That catapulted us into this space in a big way. From there [acquisition] "Arrested Development" followed... and we had already been doing [original series] "Whitest Kids You Know." **How important is it for IFC to intersperse its films with original programming?** It's incredibly important because a brand is defined by its shows these days. That's the differentiator. What's important to us is that the original programming and the acquisitions live alongside our films in a very comfortable way... **What will constitute success with these 2 shows?** I think raising our credibility and profile in this space. To be associated with an executive producer [like] Lorne Michaels [Portlandia] and talent like Fred Armisen... and with this unbelievable comedic brand like "The Onion" [we think] it will firmly plant our stake in comedy. That's a huge measurement for success. **What does IFC do next?** We've announced a very, very rich development slate. We have more shows in the pipeline than ever... so what's next is ramping up the slate... we followed up "Arrested Development" [with] "Freaks and Geeks," "Undeclared," "The Larry Sanders Show," "The Ben Stiller Show"... So more brand-defining originals and acquisitions in line with the new IFC.

SCTE Restructuring: SCTE on Thurs announced it will restructure its board, reducing the number of seats to 15 from 19. The SCTE board currently has 12 elected regional directors, 5 elected directors-at-large and 2 appointed directors-at-large. The new structure will subtract 4 regional directors, with 8 remaining. SCTE will remain a 19-member board until Nov '11, after which it will operate under a transitional policy with 15 members until Oct '12. The new structure will then become permanent when the new members are seated just prior to the annual board meeting at **Cable-Tec Expo**.

Congrats and Best Wishes: The cable industry cheered *Laura Linney* Sun night, as she received a Best Actress Golden Globe for her stellar performance as Minneapolis mom diagnosed with cancer in **Showtime** series "The

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Big C.” But if you’re wondering why she wasn’t there to accept the award, it’s because her playwright father *Romulus Linney* died over the weekend. The sad news prompted her to temporarily drop out of her Broadway play “Time Stands Still” as well as miss the Globes. She returned to the stage Tues, and we wish Linney the best as she continues her acting excellence on Broadway and in The Big C.

People: Current Media named *Jeanne Meyer* to the newly-created role of evp, corp communications. -- **CTHRA** elected 2 new members to its board: *Margaret Lazo*, **NBCU Television Ent** evp, human resources, and **ESPN** svp, human resources *Paul Richardson*. In addition, CHTRA extended terms for 2 yrs for board members **Cablevision** svp, compensation & benefits *Mike Butler*, **Harpo** vp, human resources *Tenia Davis* and **greenlightjobs** pres/CEO *Lisa Kaye*. -- *Jennifer Dorian* was named svp, strategy development, for **Turner Entertainment Networks** and **TBS’ Animation, Young Adults & Kids Media** group.

Business/Financial: Cequel Comm Holdings and subsidiary co-issuer **Cequel Capital Corp** announced that they closed their previously announced private offering to eligible purchasers of \$625mln aggregate principal amount of 8.625% Senior Notes due '17.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	01/20 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	01/20 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
DIRECTV:	42.30	0.20	AVID TECH:	16.84	(0.63)
DISH:	21.41	0.11	BIGBAND:	2.59	(0.05)
DISNEY:	39.17	0.08	BLNDER TONGUE:	2.39	(0.05)
GE:	18.43	0.10	BROADCOM:	45.00	(1.44)
NEWS CORP:	16.35	0.33	CISCO:	20.77	(0.05)
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	34.15	0.42	CLEARWIRE:	5.58	(0.08)
CHARTER:	41.10	(0.4)	CONCURRENT:	4.95	0.01
COMCAST:	23.26	0.16	CONVERGYS:	14.06	(0.15)
COMCAST SPCL:	21.92	0.31	CSG SYSTEMS:	18.57	0.02
GCI:	12.08	(0.34)	ECHOSTAR:	26.87	(0.2)
KNOLGY:	14.40	(0.04)	GOOGLE:	626.77	(4.98)
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	63.20	(0.62)	HARMONIC:	7.96	(0.09)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	37.96	0.94	INTEL:	20.95	(0.06)
LIBERTY INT:	15.83	0.05	JDSU:	16.13	(0.39)
MEDIACOM:	8.57	(0.02)	LEVEL 3:	1.10	(0.05)
SHAW COMM:	20.95	0.01	MICROSOFT:	28.35	(0.12)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	67.09	0.74	RENTRAK:	26.37	(0.24)
VIRGIN MEDIA:	24.25	0.11	SEACHANGE:	8.81	(0.02)
WASH POST:	433.89	10.50	SONY:	35.43	(0.51)
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	20.50	0.29	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.27	(0.01)
CROWN:	2.35	(0.12)	THOMAS & BETTS:	48.24	(0.39)
DISCOVERY:	39.78	0.29	TIVO:	9.62	(0.03)
GRUPO TELEVISA:	24.74	(0.5)	TOLLGRADE:	9.09	(0.05)
HSN:	28.25	0.47	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	26.53	0.49
INTERACTIVE CORP:	28.39	0.07	VONAGE:	3.23	0.01
LIBERTY:	40.04	0.24	YAHOO:	16.23	(0.08)
LIBERTY STARZ:	65.18	(0.66)	TELCOS		
LIONSGATE:	6.40	(0.05)	AT&T:	28.23	(0.1)
LODGENET:	3.50	0.12	QWEST:	6.98	(0.15)
NEW FRONTIER:	1.78	(0.02)	VERIZON:	34.61	0.01
OUTDOOR:	7.54	(0.17)	MARKET INDICES		
PLAYBOY:	6.10	(0.01)	DOW:	11822.80	(2.49)
SCRIPPS INT:	47.81	0.23	NASDAQ:	2704.29	(21.07)
TIME WARNER:	32.37	(0.03)	S&P 500:	1280.26	(1.66)
VALUEVISION:	6.23	(0.12)			
VIACOM:	47.98	(0.11)			
WWE:	13.83	0.11			
TECHNOLOGY					
ADVANTAGE:	3.06	0.04			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	3.24	0.01			
AMDOCS:	28.77	0.08			
AMPHENOL:	52.40	(0.49)			
AOL:	24.38	(0.2)			
APPLE:	332.68	(6.16)			
ARRIS GROUP:	12.15	(0.36)			

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PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

Dancing Under the Sun

So, Sarah Barnett, evp/gm, **Sundance Channel**, your net just won its 1st **Golden Globe Award**... are you going to **Disney World**? Actually, no, she went to Park City, UT, for the **Sundance Film Festival**, a notable destination indeed (see "Sundance at Sundance," p2). The net's Globe win for mini-series "Carlos," which impressively marked the net's initial foray into scripted content, could go a long way in helping it gain as much recognition by viewers for original programming prowess as for its historical tie to (and extensive coverage of) the illustrious event. "It's a great opportunity for us to tell people that Sundance Channel, while we still have independent films, also has distinctive, entertaining non-fiction shows," said Barnett. "People find good work." To earn that description, Sundance is focused on credible, authentic and forward thinking content, she said, a thrust underscored by "Carlos." In telling the story of noted terrorist *Ilich Ramirez Sanchez* with creative adherence to those benchmarks, Barnett said the mini-series "validated our scripted strategy," about which more info will emerge in the coming months. And while she declined to divulge how many hours of original content is on tap for '11, she did say the hour total will mark a "significant" increase over the 50 hours that aired in '10. "We're always looking in the TV landscape for areas where the audience is underserved," said Barnett. "There's a real hunger for shows that aren't cynical or superficial and have depth and incredibly urgent appeal." She specifically points to Peabody Award-winning series "Brick City," which kicks off its 2nd season Jan 30 of looking at Mayor *Cory Booker's* quest to make Newark, NJ, into a national model for urban transformation. "It reeks of authenticity," said Barnett. Or "All On the Line," a new series set for debut this year to spotlight *ELLE* magazine creative dir *Joe Zee*. A rise to programming prominence never happens in a straight line, but Barnett believes Sundance Channel is on the right path. *CH*

Highlights: "Big Love," Sun, 9p, **HBO**. Returning last Sun, "Big Love" is charging at full speed in its final season. Sun's ep is reminiscent of "Mad Men," as it cleverly connects plot lines to expose myriad lies the Henrickson clan tells in the aftermath of telling the truth about its polygamous lifestyle. You expect patriarch Bill (*Bill Paxton*) to fib, he's a pol. But 1st wife Barb (*Jeanne Tripplehorn*)? -- "Spartacus: Gods of the Arena," premiere, Fri, 10p, **Starz**. We warily heap praise on a series based on 1 ep, but the prequel to Starz' "Spartacus" franchise is deliciously subtle. Plenty of savagery and sex, too. *SA*

Worth a Look: "An Idiot Abroad," premiere, Sat, 10p, **Science**. Several things hit you after watching this series where *Ricky Gervais*' pal Karl Pilkington visits the 7 Wonders of the World: Karl's a decent soloist; and while it's hard to find science, ep 1 (at China's Great Wall) is interesting and well produced. -- "Onion News Network" and "Portlandia," premieres, Fri, 10p, **IFC**. Cable news receives a great spoof. *Steve Buscemi's* cameo in alternative comedy "Portlandia" is priceless. *SA*

Notable: The 15th Winter X Games start Jan 27 on **ESPN, ESPN2**. -- Hilarious start to season II of "Archer" (Thurs, 10p, **FX**), as the spy protects an underage nymphet. *SA*

Basic Cable Rankings (01/10/11-01/16/11) Mon-Sun Prime			
1	ESPN	3.1	3115
2	DSNY	2.2	2185
3	USA	2	2047
4	FOXN	1.5	1529
4	TNT	1.5	1475
4	FX	1.5	1448
7	A&E	1.4	1376
8	HIST	1.3	1255
9	NAN	1.2	1205
9	TBSC	1.2	1204
11	MTV	1.1	1091
11	SYFY	1.1	1034
13	HGTV	1	1041
13	BET	1	880
15	DISC	0.9	937
15	TLC	0.9	894
15	BRAV	0.9	887
15	ADSM	0.9	878
15	TRU	0.9	853
15	FAM	0.9	841
15	HALL	0.9	765
22	MSNB	0.8	796
22	AMC	0.8	792
22	FOOD	0.8	776
22	TVLD	0.8	761
22	NKJR	0.8	599
22	ID	0.8	542
28	CMDY	0.7	722
28	LMN	0.7	552
30	LIFE	0.6	631
30	SPK	0.6	627
30	CNN	0.6	584
30	HMC	0.6	220
34	EN	0.5	472
34	OXYG	0.5	412
34	NGC	0.5	368
37	APL	0.4	409
37	VH1	0.4	395
37	TRAV	0.4	385
37	GSN	0.4	271
37	WE	0.4	271
42	ESP2	0.3	348
42	HLN	0.3	327
42	CMT	0.3	271
42	TWC	0.3	270
42	OWN	0.3	262

*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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Bill Abbott
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