

# CableFAX Daily™

Friday — April 6, 2007

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 18 / No. 067

## Safe at Home! Cable Gets Stake in MLB as Part of Carriage Pact

**In Demand's** accord with **MLB** to carry the league's out-of-market games package still requires signatures, but the important parameters are set and could benefit cable in a big way. Until Sen *John Kerry* (D-MA) stepped in last week and steered the parties back to the negotiating table, cable was most averse to MLB's insistence on basic digital carriage of its baseball channel when it launches in '09. That dispute was settled, however, when the league agreed to allow channel carriage on digital tiers, which **Cox**, **Comcast**, **Time Warner Cable** and **Bright House** will do, albeit a little differently in line with each MSO's programming protocol. Cable also received a stake in the channel roughly equal to that of **DirecTV**, which sources estimate is somewhere between the 16-20% that has been reported. All told, In Demand and DirecTV will collectively pay MLB an avg of \$100m/yr through '13 for the package, and approx 40m cable and satellite homes will receive the MLB channel upon launch. In Demand pres **Rob Jacobson** said he feels "very comfortable" with the deal's terms and its conclusion, and the MSOs all expressed relief and elation that they can finally play ball. The pact is "important from a public relations standpoint for cable to have stepped up to the plate, so to speak, to ensure that it is delivering a full complement of MLB offerings to its constituents. The underlying message: never underestimate the power of live sports," said **YES Network COO Ray Hopkins**. Kerry, too, is pleased. "All we ever wanted was a victory for the fans, and this outcome is a big step forward," Kerry said in a statement. "I still need to review the details, but I am very encouraged so far." Comcast, Cox and Time Warner Cable are currently offering through Sun a free preview of the package, but the preview period may be extended. Comcast and Cox are offering through Sun an early-bird special of \$160 for the package, which normally retails for \$200. In Demand is now offering the package to other cable ops, who must negotiate separately with MLB for carriage of the baseball channel.

**Ecologically Friendly:** **Discovery Comm** will re-brand **Discovery Home Channel** next year as a 24-hour net devoted to green lifestyle programming, with primary content categories to include eco-design, organic food and green architecture. The net is part of the global initiative "Discovery PlanetGreen," through which \$50m will be spent on new original content across the co's 14 nets, on core genres such as science and technology, transportation and ecotourism, engineering, and organic living. The first major content initiative will be Discovery Channel's "Ten Ways to Save the Planet" (3Q08).

**Discovery Upfront:** **Discovery** put on a glitzy upfront presentation in NYC on Thur, with its new environmental initiative stealing much but not all of the spotlight. In new pres/CEO *David Zaslav's* first upfront speech, he made sure to sell Discovery's flexibility to advertisers as he noted it's one of the few nets that owns all of its programming. "The theme today is going to be 'we own it'," he told the crowd. He said show ownership will help Discovery tackle alternative distribution platforms like VOD, broadband and mobile. To that digital end, Discovery also announced it will

**8** TOURNAMENTS... **7** CITIES... **6** WEEKS...

**Our French Open countdown begins April 14 in Houston, one of the country's most passionate tennis hotbeds. Watch it live on Tennis Channel!**



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launch "Discovery iPremieres" to put its new shows online one week before they debut on linear channels, starting with **Discovery Channel's** "Man vs. Wild" and "Dirty Jobs," **TLC's** "American Chopper" and "What Not To Wear," and **Discovery Kids'** "Bindi: The Jungle Girl." Discovery Channel/**Science Channel** pres/gm *Jane Root* also announced a planned "huge investment" on new original content for The Science Channel. As for new shows, the flagship Discovery Channel will premiere several new series such as "The Net," about the dawn of the Internet, and "Build It Bigger," which goes behind the scenes on big construction projects. -- Highlights: When legendary journalist and now Discovery star *Ted Koppel* took the stage following The Travel Channel's presentation, he paused for a moment and pondered, "Didn't they just sell the Travel Channel?" (In fact, Discovery pres, ad sales *Joseph Abruzzese* told the crowd that the same Travel Channel ad-sales team will sell for **Cox** if that deal goes through). Koppel also addressed an even more important burning question: the origin of his hair. "If I needed a rug, I could afford a better one than this," he joked. *Joan Jett* was also on hand, and belted out a energetic rendition of her hit song "I Love Rock and Roll."

**Open It Up:** Remember the open-access debate? A coalition of consumer groups wants the **FCC** to use its planned auction of the 700-MHz spectrum to create an open structure "that protects the consumer's right to use any equipment, content, application or service on a non-discriminatory basis without interference from the network provider." The **Save Our Spectrum** coalition—consisting of **Public Knowledge, Media Access Project, Consumers Union, Consumer Federation of America, New America Foundation** and **Free Press**—on Thurs filed comments in 3 700-MHz-related proceedings. "Wireless broadband has not been a useful 'third pipe' and will not be in the near future if this spectrum is auctioned to the very same vertically integrated telephone and cable incumbents that dominate the wireline market," the coalition wrote. The group also urged the FCC to offer the new spectrum at the wholesale level and "either prohibit wireline and large wireless incumbents from bidding, or require them to bid through structurally separate affiliates."

**Competition:** **DISH** launched 7 **Fox** RSNs in HD, including **FSN South, FSN West** and **FSN Midwest**. The sat-caster will also add **Sun Sports** and **SportSouth** in HD later this spring, and **Altitude** in HD this fall.

**We'll Pass, Thanks:** **CAB** will no longer participate in trials or make use of the **eBay Online Media Exchange**, likely putting an end to the proposed online marketplace for buying TV ad time. "Throughout our review it became apparent that the Media Exchange was too narrow an application, had clear connectivity issues related to cable's emerging end-to-end e-business platforms and lacked the provisions necessary for capturing critical strategic and idea-driven intelligence during a buy," said CAB pres/CEO *Sean Cunningham* in a statement.

**Online:** **Travel Channel** and **SideStep** partnered to re-launch **Travelchannel.com**, which now allows visitors to get information on specific travel destinations, watch travel-related video and research and book their trips.

**Programming:** **Fox Sports en Espanol** extended through '13 its exclusive Spanish-language rights to **MLB**, and will offer approx 26 regular season games/year. -- **Nat Geo** will honor Earth Day with content including "Planet Carnivore: Polar Bears" (Apr 22, 9pm) and "Secret Yellowstone" (Apr 23, 9pm).

**On the Circuit:** The **Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences** will host during **NCTA's** The Cable Show '07 the "Cable Game Arena" panel sessions, featuring speakers including **Showtime** GM *Peter Von Schlossberg*; *Jennifer*

**THE TOP 10 NETWORK  
RANKED #1 FOR HIGH-QUALITY,  
FAMILY-FRIENDLY PROGRAMMING**



# BUSINESS & FINANCE

MacLean, vp/GM, games, Comcast; and Ray Starbird, dir, strategy and development, Cox.

**People:** The following were named '07 "Next Generation Leaders Award" winners by NAMIC: Steven Apodaca, vp, operations support, Charter; Barbara Gee, vp, strategic alliances, Comcast; Darrel Hegar, vp/GM, northeast OH, Time Warner Cable; Richard Gay, evp, strategy & business operations, VH1 and CMT; Harold Lewis, vp/GM, radio & newspaper, The Weather Channel; Karen Wishart, evp/chief legal officer, TV One; Lisa Choi-Owens, vp, business development, Fuse; and Sherisse Hawkins, sr dir, STB development, Time Warner Cable. -- Fox News appointed former CNN exec Joel Cheatwood vp, development.

**Business/Finance:** Time Warner Cable's recent debt securities offering includes \$1.5bln principal amount of 5.40% notes due '12, \$2bln principal amount of 5.85% notes due '17 and \$1.5bln principal amount of 6.55% debentures due '37. The MSO plans to use the net proceeds from the issuance, expected to close on Mon, to repay a portion of its outstanding bank indebtedness. -- LodgeNet completed its \$380mln acquisition of On Command, a deal that creates a network delivering interactive solutions to more than 1.8mln hotel rooms throughout the US, Canada and Mexico.

## CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	04/05 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	04/05 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
BRITISH SKY:	44.73	(0.15)	AMPHENOL:	33.94	(0.2)
DIRECTV:	23.51	0.40	ARRIS GROUP:	14.51	0.01
DISNEY:	34.91	0.27	AVID TECH:	35.80	0.20
ECHOSTAR:	44.71	(0.06)	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.77	(0.08)
GE:	35.02	(0.09)	BROADCOM:	32.98	0.13
HEARST-ARGYLE:	27.73	0.30	C-COR:	14.03	(0.08)
ION MEDIA:	1.31	0.00	CISCO:	26.06	(0.04)
NEWS CORP:	24.89	0.02	COMMSCOPE:	43.77	0.72
TRIBUNE:	32.83	0.07	CONCURRENT:	1.50	0.04
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	30.95	0.33	CONVERGYS:	25.96	(0.07)
CHARTER:	2.71	(0.03)	CSG SYSTEMS:	25.02	0.00
COMCAST:	26.61	0.25	GEMSTAR TVG:	4.28	0.01
COMCAST SPCL:	26.02	0.22	GOOGLE:	471.51	0.49
GCI:	14.17	0.18	HARMONIC:	10.75	0.42
KNOLOGY:	16.52	0.18	JDSU:	15.29	0.08
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	111.46	1.05	LEVEL 3:	6.13	0.06
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	34.83	0.50	MICROSOFT:	28.55	0.05
LIBERTY INTERACTIVE:	24.80	0.66	MOTOROLA:	17.59	(0.13)
MEDIACOM:	8.59	0.12	NDS:	50.60	0.70
NTL:	28.22	0.00	NORTEL:	24.47	(0.02)
ROGERS COMM:	34.10	0.40	OPENTV:	2.56	(0.02)
SHAW COMM:	38.02	0.48	PHILIPS:	39.15	0.50
TIME WARNER CABLE:	37.00	(0.1)	RENTRAK:	15.69	(0.31)
WASH POST:	751.79	4.79	SEACHANGE:	8.25	0.12
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
CBS:	31.02	(0.22)	SONY:	52.12	0.34
CROWN:	5.23	0.00	SPRINT NEXTEL:	19.60	(0.04)
DISCOVERY:	19.99	(0.09)	THOMAS & BETTS:	49.26	0.29
EW SCRIPPS:	44.40	0.05	TIVO:	6.41	0.04
GRUPO TELEVISA:	30.80	(0.1)	TOLLGRADE:	12.34	(0.09)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	37.82	0.10	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	28.51	(0.03)
LODGENET:	31.38	0.34	VONAGE:	3.37	(0.25)
NEW FRONTIER:	8.90	(0.08)	VYYO:	7.00	(0.1)
OUTDOOR:	10.58	0.35	WEBB SYS:	0.05	0.00
PLAYBOY:	10.19	0.04	WORLDGATE:	0.67	0.00
TIME WARNER:	21.04	0.43	YAHOO:	31.96	0.34
UNIVISION:	36.23	0.00	<b>TELCOS</b>		
VALUEVISION:	12.23	(0.15)	AT&T:	39.27	0.40
VIACOM:	40.68	(0.47)	QWEST:	9.11	0.13
WWE:	16.08	(0.1)	VERIZON:	38.00	0.38
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
3COM:	3.90	(0.01)	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
ADC:	17.49	0.33	DOW:	12560.20	30.15
ADVANTAGE:	3.82	0.17	NASDAQ:	2471.34	12.65
ALCATEL LUCENT:	12.39	(0.03)			
AMDOCS:	36.61	0.11			



# MASTERS®

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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

**A New/Old Frontier for the BBC**

**BBC America** announced this week a restructured programming schedule and a renewed content focus, leaving the latter portion of its moniker accurate in geography only. Henceforth the net will spotlight British content exclusively, and 7-day programming blocks were instituted to streamline genres. "We want to modernize British programming and try to downplay the bonnets and horses" view that has plagued it in the US, said **BBC Worldwide America** pres *Garth Ancier*. Equally important going forward will be the genre blocks, Ancier said, because when he took the post in early Feb the net's "publicist couldn't figure out what was on every night, and I couldn't either." Also helping to spur the changes were industry colleagues, who while speaking with Ancier expressed concern over the net's haphazard and confusing schedule—in spite of which the net ranked as a favorite digital basic cable net in an '06 **Beta** study. Interestingly viewers weren't polled about the changes, mainly because Ancier wanted them implemented in time for this week's **Discovery** upfront (Discovery handles distribution and ad sales for the net). Still, past experiences with **Fox**, **CNN** and **NBC** instill confidence that the alterations will only serve to increase viewership, said Ancier. Every night (8-10pm) on BBC America now has a name, including "Murder Monday," "Crime Scene Friday" and "Supernatural Saturday," the 3 most intuitive block titles. Also included is Ancier's favorite "Wicked Wednesday," offering the ribald "Footballers Wive\$" and "Hotel Babylon." Of the night's programming, Ancier said "it's not the most high-brow but it is fun." Off-air, BBC America will continue to add co-production credits to American content, adding to **ABC's** "Dancing with the Stars" and **HBO's** "Rome." 3 scripted pilots are underway for **CBS**, including a comedic drama. **CH**

**Highlights:** "The Sopranos," Sun, 9pm and "Entourage," 10pm, **HBO**. This could be the best Sunday night in recent cable history, what with the return of these excellent series, plus ep 2 of "The Tudors" (**Showtime**, 10pm) and 2 installments of **Discovery Channel/Discovery HD's** "Planet Earth" (begins @ 8pm). Sopranos creator *David Chase*, a master, sprinkles possible finale material throughout eps 1 & 2 as the ultimate countdown for "The Sopranos" begins. The tension is so excruciating that a hard belch by Tony spurs alarm, as does a hair-raising story about mother. There are less-serious raisings on "Entourage," as Vince's neurotic agent Ari has been replaced by Amanda (*Carla Gugino*). While this radically changes Entourage's frat house atmosphere, Amanda's addition is handled deftly. Speaking of deft (or is that daft?), a salute to *Kevin Dillon* as Drama for making life as a D-lister such fun.

**Worth a Look:** "PainKiller Jane," Fri, 10pm, **Sci Fi**. It's a dark, dark world that Jane (*Kristanna Loken*) inhabits, but when the writing is on, this series sizzles. — "America's Cutest Puppies," Sat, 9pm, **WE tv**. Remember The Puppy Channel, the televised parking space featuring nothing but frolicking puppies and sweet music? Doggone it, this 10-ep contest is so much more, and surely will grab eyeballs. [For more reviews, including *Jaclyn Smith's* Shear Genius, visit [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)] **SA**

Basic Cable Rankings (3/26/07-4/01/07) Mon-Sun Prime			
1	USA	2.2	2021
2	DSNY	1.9	1721
3	TNT	1.5	1367
4	FOXN	1.4	1289
4	TBSC	1.4	1288
6	TOON	1.3	1166
6	NAN	1.3	1164
8	DISC	1.2	1122
8	A&E	1.2	1072
10	LIFE	1.1	1027
10	CORT	1.1	951
12	ESPN	1	961
12	FX	1	956
12	HALL	1	778
15	CMDY	0.9	852
15	HGTV	0.9	833
15	HIST	0.9	825
15	FAM	0.9	790
19	ESP2	0.8	754
19	SCIF	0.8	746
19	SPK	0.8	737
19	TVLD	0.8	702
19	AMC	0.8	684
24	MTV	0.7	647
24	TLC	0.7	633
26	CNN	0.6	575
26	FOOD	0.6	552
26	VH1	0.6	539
26	BET	0.6	505
26	LMN	0.6	320
31	APL	0.5	437
31	BRAV	0.5	426
31	MSNB	0.5	402
31	NGC	0.5	306
31	SOAP	0.5	270
36	EN	0.4	397
36	TTC	0.4	376
36	HLN	0.4	362
36	WGNC	0.4	280
40	CMT	0.3	246
40	TWC	0.3	237
40	TVGC	0.3	224
40	OXYG	0.3	205
40	SPD	0.3	198
40	GSN	0.3	180
40	TDSN	0.3	172

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

Free Webcast

## Switched Digital Video: Lessons from System-Wide Production Deployments

**BigBand Networks** and **Communications Technology** are presenting a free Webcast on switched digital video. This Webcast will focus on the maturation of switched digital video including tips that cable operator employees have learned from the field.


**Panelists:**  
**Paul Brooks**, Senior Network Architect, Time Warner Cable  
**Biren Sood**, Vice President and Manager of Cable Video Americas, BigBand Networks

**Thursday, April 19; 8 a.m. PST, 11 a.m. EST, 4 p.m. GMT**


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