

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Fear Factor: Stakeholders Reticent to Discuss FEARnet Carriage Losses

Both **Time Warner Cable** and **Bright House** have dropped **FEARnet** from their VOD lineups, potentially cleaving the horror/thriller channel's distribution by more than 20%. A TWC spokesperson said its carriage deal with the net expired Mar 31, prompting the removal of all FEARnet titles, but declined to provide additional information. The deal commenced in Aug. Bright House, meanwhile, failed to respond to inquiries by our deadline, and net co-owner **Comcast** would only acknowledge the drops. A spokesperson for co-owner **Lionsgate**, however, said "great product always wins in the end. We're looking to work out a win-win partnership with Time Warner Cable going forward." A notice at **FearNet.com** encourages subs "to let Time Warner Cable and Bright House know that they want FEARnet back." While TWC declined to elaborate on why it let the deal expire, industry sources told us TWC originally got free carriage on what was understood to be a trial basis. But with carriage fees now part of the equation, the MSO declined to renew FEARnet even though access for TWC customers through set tops grew more than 200% over the deal's life and VOD views continue to increase, sources said. In Feb, FEARnet pres *Diane Robina* told us (**Cfax**, 2/4) that the channel's distribution sat at more than 30mln, including Bright House and TWC, which counts approx 8.6mln digital subs. Current partners beyond Comcast include **Cox**, **AT&T**, **Verizon**, **Insight**, **Bresnan** and **Guadalupe Valley**. FEARnet remains the top free VOD movie channel on Comcast systems and a top 5 VOD option overall.

Stevens Walks: A US District Court judge dismissed Tues the federal corruption charges against former Sen Commerce vice chmn *Ted Stevens* (R-AK), citing misconduct by the **DOJ** during prosecution. In Oct, Stevens was found guilty on all 7 counts of lying on Senate disclosure forms to hide more than \$250K in home renovations and other gifts. The judge also pledged to launch his own criminal probe of the Justice Department's actions in the case, which included withholding key pieces of evidence and falsifying records.

Carriage: Outdoor Channel has inked with **Time Warner Cable** a renewed affil agreement covering the net's SD and HD version plus VOD programming.

In the States: Rentrak has inked a linear measurement deal covering **HDNet** and **HDNet Movies**.

Marketing/Advertising: Tecate has signed on as a multiplatform sponsor of **ESPN's** Spanish- and English-language boxing content, including title sponsorship of the Tecate Friday Night Fights Studio within weekly "Friday Night Fights" telecasts on **ESPN2** and **ESPN Deportes**. As a result of the deal, *Oscar De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions* reached an agreement for 7 Fri night events on ESPN. -- **truTV's** custom promotion of **Universal Picture's** political thriller "State of Play" will be built around a mini-marathon of "Dominick Dunne: Power, Privilege & Justice" (Sun, 12-3pm ET) and feature a 90-sec sneak peek of the film and in-show graphics that integrate a character's im-

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age from the film. -- **Lifetime** and **Vaseline Aloe Fresh** are partnering for a multi-platform promotional campaign to support the net's forthcoming miniseries "Maneater" (May 31-31). Set to begin later this month, the partnership will include product integrations, branded-content vignettes and viral online promotions.

VOD: Charter added prime **NBC** programming including "30 Rock" and "The Biggest Loser" to its on demand lineup, with most eps slated to appear within 12 hours of their original airing.

Online: Sling.com inked deals with the **USTA** and **Tennis Channel** to feature content and highlights from all 4 major tennis tourneys. Tennis Channel gets its own custom branded channel at the site. -- **PGATour.com's** 1Q traffic numbers include a 22% increase in page views (657mln) and a 6% rise in avg monthly uniques (3.4mln)—both 1Q records for the site—plus a 341% surge in streamed videos (54mln), a new record for any Q.

Technology: Motorola bowed an encoder allowing ops to cost-effectively migrate from analog to digital the video content generated and consumed within MDUs. -- **TV Magic** has completed the HD upgrade of **Trinity Broadcasting Net's** production and broadcast facilities in Dallas.

Intl: Discovery Comm will launch **Investigation Discovery** this month in Poland, Hungary, Romania and Greece.

Ratings: This weekly item is beginning to write itself, although Apr brings baseball's return and the start of the **NBA** play-offs, so notable changes may yet occur. Last week, though, was more of the same as **USA** established yet another prime victory, this time with a 2.2/2.14mln. The net enjoyed the week's top 5 programs as consecutive hours of **WWE** content averaged a 3.6/3.5mln and 3 eps of "NCIS" averaged a 3.2/3.19mln while all airing at 7pm, or just prior to prime. **Fox News** (1.9/1.80mln) took home the silver, owing largely to "The O'Reilly Factor," and **Disney Channel** earned the bronze with a 1.7/1.68mln. **TBS** (1.4/1.39mln) and **Nick at Nite** (1.3/1.25mln) completed the top 5 nets. -- **Brag Book: YES** is pitching heat so far this baseball season, as the net's opening day coverage of the Yanks-Orioles earned a 5.84 HH rating and 541K total viewers to become the highest-rated weekday, daytime sports event ever on a NY-area RSN. This after the net's Fri coverage of the Cubs-Yanks earned a 4.05 HH rating and 355K total viewers to become the highest-rated and most-watched pre-season baseball game ever on any NY-area RSN. -- **Comcast SportsNet Chicago's** Mon coverage of the Cubs-Astros garnered a 8.14 HH rating, the highest ever for a Cubs season opener on an area RSN. -- **Discovery en Espanol** delivered in 1Q a 23% sequential increase among 18-49s (M-F, 7-11pm) after posting YOY increases in '08 among 18-49s (+14%), men 18-49 (+18%) and women 18-49 (+7%). -- **Animal Planet's** Sun premiere of "River Monsters" garnered a 1.1 HH rating to become the net's best-performing series premiere in history.

Programming: Wed's feature of **CNBC's** "Mad Money with Jim Cramer" marks the series' 1000th ep, a run that includes 672 CEO interviews and 36K sound effects. -- Returning this month for 2nd seasons on **Planet Green** are "Emeril Green," "Focus Earth with Bob Woodruff," "Greensburg," "Renovation Nation," and "Wa\$ted!" The openers headline the net's "Turn Back the Temp: The Coolest Week on TV" special Earth Day celebration, Apr 19-25. -- **Samuel L. Jackson** will host **ESPN's** '09 ESPYs (Jul 19). -- **TV Land** greenlit a 3rd season of "High School Reunion" (3Q).

On the Circuit: The **Assoc of Cable Communicators** will host a comm track during the **FL Cable Connection** (Jun 18-19), a jv of **CTAM FL** and the **FL Cable Telecom Assoc**, and will provide a registration scholarship for up to 30 ACC members to attend events of 1 conference day. Scholarship inquiries to **Steve Jones** at sjones@cablecommunicators.org.



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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Editor's Note: Time is running out to submit your nominees for our "Sweet Sixteen" list of cable's top agencies and corporate marketers. No fee to enter; deadline Apr 10. Info at <http://www.cablefax.com/cfp/awards/sweet16.html>. Or just email your picks to *Michael Grebb* at mgrebb@accessintel.com.

People: *Sam Linsky* was promoted to svp, current programming, **TNT** and **TBS**. -- Formerly of **Bryan Cave, John R. Wilner** joined **Fleischman and Harding**, Washington, as a partner specializing in broadcasting and cable TV law.

Business/Finance: To reduce risk and strengthen its balance sheet, **Liberty Capital** used cash last week to retire various debt, and in 1Q drew down an additional \$1.64mln against derivative positions related to its **Sprint/Embarq** equity position. It also unwound the remaining derivative position related to its **LodgeNet Interactive** holdings, receiving \$41mln in cash. -- **Qwest** expects its 1Q free cash flow and EBITDA to be in line with full-year guidance, and its EBITDA to exceed consensus analyst opinion. The telco also said that 1Q consolidated rev will be slightly lower than consensus estimates.

Oops: **Comcast SportsNet CA** and **DirecTV** have not inked a distribution pact but remain in negotiations as the DBS op has agreed to carry the net's Oakland A's games for the time being.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	04/07 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	04/07 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BROADCOM:	21.03	(0.58)	AMDOCS:	18.50	(0.3)
BRITISH SKY:	25.07	(0.29)	AMPHENOL:	28.90	(2.29)
DIRECTV:	23.81	(0.68)	APPLE:	115.00	(3.45)
DISH:	12.35	(0.31)	ARRIS GROUP:	7.94	(0.06)
DISNEY:	19.12	(0.5)	AVID TECH:	9.75	(0.24)
GE:	10.65	(0.54)	BIGBAND:	6.58	(0.36)
HEARST-ARGYLE:	4.23	(0.1)	BLNDER TONGUE:	0.90	0.04
NEWS CORP:	8.20	(0.35)	BROADCOM:	21.03	(0.58)
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	14.53	(0.43)	CISCO:	16.85	(0.68)
CHARTER:	0.02	0.00	CLEARWIRE:	5.17	(0.06)
COMCAST:	14.04	(0.32)	COMMSCOPE:	14.71	(0.02)
COMCAST SPCL:	13.17	(0.46)	CONCURRENT:	3.61	0.11
GCI:	6.39	(0.66)	CONVERGYS:	9.00	(0.13)
KNOLOGY:	4.66	(0.33)	CSG SYSTEMS:	14.47	(0.47)
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	7.99	0.66	ECHOSTAR:	16.06	0.02
LIBERTY ENT:	21.34	(0.68)	GOOGLE:	358.65	(9.59)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	16.00	(1.03)	HARMONIC:	6.51	(0.33)
LIBERTY INT:	3.32	(0.09)	INTEL:	15.45	(0.41)
MEDIACOM:	4.01	(0.37)	JDSU:	3.96	0.07
SHAW COMM:	15.62	(0.19)	LEVEL 3:	0.97	(0.07)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	25.87	(0.86)	MICROSOFT:	18.76	0.00
VIRGIN MEDIA:	5.90	0.07	MOTOROLA:	4.54	(0.15)
WASH POST:	374.87	(16.93)	OPENTV:	1.59	(0.06)
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	4.85	(0.04)	PHILIPS:	15.88	(0.37)
CROWN:	2.19	(0.04)	RENTRAK:	9.71	0.11
DISCOVERY:	16.76	(1.08)	SEACHANGE:	5.95	(0.09)
EW SCRIPPS:	1.85	0.09	SONY:	23.64	(0.19)
GRUPO TELEVISA:	15.01	(0.23)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.35	(0.06)
HSN:	5.14	(0.07)	THOMAS & BETTS:	25.37	(1.41)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	15.84	(0.3)	TIVO:	7.01	(0.32)
LIBERTY:	22.29	(0.61)	TOLLGRADE:	5.83	0.47
LODGENET:	1.65	(0.03)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	18.71	(0.27)
NEW FRONTIER:	1.68	(0.03)	VONAGE:	0.42	(0.01)
OUTDOOR:	6.86	(0.16)	YAHOO:	12.81	(0.42)
PLAYBOY:	1.97	(0.1)	TELCOS		
RHI:	2.60	(0.67)	AT&T:	25.53	(0.65)
SCRIPPS INT:	24.06	(0.9)	QWEST:	3.87	(0.08)
TIME WARNER:	21.25	(0.31)	VERIZON:	31.72	(0.85)
VALUEVISION:	0.64	(0.03)	MARKET INDICES		
VIACOM:	19.53	(0.53)	DOW:	7789.56	(186.29)
WWE:	11.76	(0.3)	NASDAQ:	1561.61	(45.1)
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	3.40	(0.16)			
ADC:	4.81	(0.09)			
ADVANTAGE:	1.37	(0.04)			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	2.04	(0.15)			

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