

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Playtime's Over: New Net Chief Ready for a Challenge

Named pres/CEO of the as-yet-unnamed **Discovery/Hasbro** JV net (fall '10) Thurs, *Margaret Loesch* said she was drawn to the project mainly by the "really good idea" that has become Discovery Comm boss *David Zaslav's* calling card: how can we improve on a profitable channel? That net is currently **Discovery Kids** (approx 60mln homes), viewers of whom may not be well acquainted with some past Loesch projects such as the "Smurfs" and "Richie Rich." But both classics help comprise an elaborate resume that should effectively serve Loesch, who noted that she's "one of the most competitive people you will ever speak with." Loesch admits that rivals such as **Disney Channel** and **Nickelodeon** have an inherent advantage in historical experience, necessitating a "very comprehensive and creative" approach to the new net. "This channel will be very diverse and eclectic," she said. "We will reach deep into the creative community... kids like variety just like adults." Planned is a mix of acquired, original and movie programming across action/adventure, comedy and education genres, said Loesch, noting Hasbro's ties to brands including "Transformers" and "G.I. Joe." Of the net's under-14 audience, Loesch said it's no doubt growing up quicker than in the "Smurf" days and demands myriad sources for ent—just a couple characteristics of a fickle bunch. "Kids have always been a tough group because they're not particularly patient [or] particularly loyal to any one medium," she said. They do like certain brands, however, and will test new ones to check for attractiveness, said Loesch. Part of the plan to attract and retain viewership is educational programming, which Zaslav remains behind (**Cfax**, 5/1). "We're not going to get away from it," she said. Even with the expected breadth of content, though, Loesch understands—even invites—the typical nature of American entertainment, no matter the target audience. "It only takes one hit to make you or one hit to take the wind out of your sales," she said.

Emmys: **HBO** couldn't quite reach the century mark in **Prime Emmy** nominations, but 99 no doubt suffices for the premium net that posted 2 TV movies, "Gray Gardens" (17) and "Into the Storm" (14), among the top 4 in individual program noms. **AMC's** "Mad Men" earned 16 noms, the most for any drama series, and will attempt to win a 2nd consecutive Best Drama trophy. Also in play for the Drama title are AMC's "Breaking Bad," **Showtime's** "Dexter," HBO's "Big Love" and **FX's** "Damages," which earned 7 noms to pace the net's overall 11. Battling **NBC's** "30 Rock" (22 noms) for comedic supremacy are HBO's "Entourage" (4) and "Flight of the Conchords" (6) and Showtime's "Weeds" (6). **Lifetime's** 5 nods impressively includes a pair each for Outstanding TV Movie ("Coco Chanel" and "Prayers for Bobby") and lead actress in a miniseries/movie (*Shirley MacLaine* and *Sigourney Weaver*). In a Thurs memo, Lifetime chief *Andrea Wong* praised staffers and highlighted the noms as the fruit of net goals to "produce groundbreaking movies" and to "become the home for great roles for female talent." Cable overall totaled 247 noms, up 27 versus '08. Notable YOY improvement among nets: HBO (+14), Showtime (+8 to 29), **Comedy Central** (+5, 13), Lifetime (+4, 1), **Hallmark** (+2, 2) and **Travel Channel** (+3, 3). The big 4 broadcasters garnered 214 noms, 205 in '08.



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In the States: Comcast launched an iPhone app offering subs access to Comcast.net email, visual voice mail, real-time TV listings and movie trailers.

Micro Vision: After shedding TV Guide Net and TVG, Macrovision placed additional emphasis on its digital enablement focus by changing its name to Rovi, the ticker under which the company now trades. In concert, the company announced Liquid, a new media guide due early next year and comprised of 3 integrated content solutions, 1 each for TV, broadband and personal. Rovi is also working to integrate Blockbuster OnDemand content and services through the guide, which is also compatible with Roxio CinemaNow.

Traveling Lighter?: Grab your scotch and cigars, as the popular parlor game centered on Cox's plans for Travel Channel renewed in earnest Thurs with reports claiming the MSO has decided to sell a majority stake in the net through an auction. Unsolicited inquiries led Cox to hire Goldman, Sachs & Co to evaluate long-term strategic alternatives for the 94mln-home net, which it picked up in '07 as part of Travel Channel Media and which includes travelchannel.com. Cox declined to comment on the speculation, but reports pegged Travel Channel's value at \$600mln-\$1bln. Logical suitors include Scripps Nets, former owner Discovery Comm and perhaps Turner. Meanwhile, Travel's search continues for a replacement for pres/gm Pat Younge, who leaves the net in Jan.

In the Courts: Charter filed in NY bankruptcy court an amended version of its reorg plan, which now provides consideration for additional debt holders and increases to \$138mln from \$72mln the amount planned for the MSO's new preferred stock. On Mon, a judge will consider ratifying the plan. -- DISH inked with 46 state attorneys general a deal that resolves complaints over the DBS op's alleged failure to disclose all service terms to customers. Released from any violations or wrongdoing, DISH agreed to implement undisclosed enhancements to its customer processes and pay approx \$6mln. -- A CA judge ruled that a class action suit against DirecTV for imposing unlawful cancellation fees may proceed. Claimants allege the DBS op often debits consumers' credit cards or bank accounts for the fees without permission.

On the Hill: Science Channel gm Deborah Adler Myers touted the net's commitment to expanding knowledge of the genre during testimony before the House Subcmte on Space and Aeronautics Thurs. At issue was the relevance of space to address national needs, a response to Pres Obama's Apr call to action to underscore science in America. "The cliché we struggle against is that science is boring and dry," read Myers' written testimony. "The key to developing a larger audience is igniting people's imaginations and encouraging them to be endlessly curious because science is creative." Noting the net's rally around the president's wish, Myers said that "when we cut back on space coverage, we hear about it immediately from our viewers."

Advertising: According to a MTVN study, a 5-sec pre-roll combined with a 10-sec lower one-third ad unit are the most effective and audience-friendly ad products for short-form online video. The 30-sec pre-roll finished second. -- Sonic again signed on to sponsor TBS' "The Bill Engvall Show," returning Sat. The chain will sponsor the show's microsite at TBS.com and integrate its products within certain eps.

VOD: Comcast said its Red Sox On Demand service garnered more than 100K program views in its 1st month, making it the top category of locally-produced VOD programming in New England.

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Ratings: Climbing has always been a key strength for *Lance Armstrong*, who has notably helped lift **Versus' Tour De France** ratings through 10 stages with his 1st participation in the event since '05. The net's morning telecasts have achieved 67% growth in HH ratings, 77% in avg viewership, 132% among men 18-49 and 98% among men 25-54. --

SNY's 1st-half Mets coverage averaged a 3.2 HH rating to set a record for the time period.

Programming: Animal Planet's docu-drama "Jockeys" returns Aug 21 with a new 1-hr format and 2 additional subjects. -- **Science Channel** and *Popular Science* partnered for "Popular Science's Future of" (Aug 10), the premiere ep examining how humans might spend leisure time in the future.

Online: TNT rolls out this month on-line games based on series "Leverage" and "Dark Blue," respectively at **LeverageHQ.com** and **DarkBlue-Undercover.com**.

Editor's Note: This time we really mean it... Yes, Fri (July 17) is really, really, really the final deadline to submit nominees for the **Cable-FAX 100** list of the most influential people in cable. Really. We have no shortage of nominations, so the competition is already fierce to make the vaunted list. Don't be left out of consideration—and don't forget about our Regional 25 list of the most powerful regional execs.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

| Company | 07/16 Close | 1-Day Ch | Company | 07/16 Close | 1-Day Ch |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------------------|-------------|----------|
| BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS | | | | | |
| BRITISH SKY: | 32.51 | (0.01) | AMPHENOL: | 33.59 | (0.36) |
| DIRECTV: | 24.77 | 0.04 | APPLE: | 147.52 | 0.64 |
| DISH: | 16.04 | 0.43 | ARRIS GROUP: | 12.40 | 0.20 |
| DISNEY: | 24.79 | 0.71 | AVID TECH: | 12.42 | 0.24 |
| GE: | 12.40 | 0.16 | BIGBAND: | 4.91 | 0.05 |
| HEARST-ARGYLE: | 4.50 | 0.00 | BLNDER TONGUE: | 1.40 | 0.04 |
| NEWS CORP: | 10.75 | 0.33 | BROADCOM: | 26.97 | 0.14 |
| MSOS | | | | | |
| CABLEVISION: | 18.73 | 0.04 | CISCO: | 20.12 | 0.31 |
| COMCAST: | 14.16 | 0.06 | CLEARWIRE: | 6.37 | 0.03 |
| COMCAST SPCL: | 13.68 | 0.07 | COMMSCOPE: | 26.24 | 0.84 |
| GCI: | 7.14 | 0.16 | CONCURRENT: | 5.27 | 0.00 |
| KNOLOGY: | 8.14 | 0.09 | CONVERGYS: | 9.13 | 0.26 |
| LIBERTY CAPITAL: | 13.44 | 0.24 | CSG SYSTEMS: | 13.83 | 0.15 |
| LIBERTY ENT: | 26.45 | (0.03) | ECHOSTAR: | 15.84 | (0.08) |
| LIBERTY GLOBAL: | 17.73 | 0.99 | GOOGLE: | 442.60 | 4.43 |
| LIBERTY INT: | 6.00 | 0.23 | HARMONIC: | 5.98 | 0.09 |
| MEDIACOM: | 4.68 | 0.20 | INTEL: | 18.50 | 0.45 |
| SHAW COMM: | 16.66 | 0.12 | JDSU: | 5.63 | 0.14 |
| TIME WARNER CABLE: | 31.03 | (0.12) | LEVEL 3: | 1.52 | 0.01 |
| VIRGIN MEDIA: | 10.49 | 0.30 | MICROSOFT: | 24.44 | 0.32 |
| WASH POST: | 374.68 | (0.32) | MOTOROLA: | 6.33 | (0.28) |
| PROGRAMMING | | | | | |
| CBS: | 6.75 | 0.19 | OPENTV: | 1.31 | (0.04) |
| CROWN: | 1.76 | 0.15 | PHILIPS: | 20.54 | (0.06) |
| DISCOVERY: | 23.61 | 0.04 | RENTRAK: | 18.26 | 0.85 |
| EW SCRIPPS: | 2.44 | (0.03) | SEACHANGE: | 8.44 | 0.11 |
| GRUPO TELEVISA: | 17.85 | (0.37) | SONY: | 24.79 | (0.44) |
| HSN: | 10.17 | 0.41 | SPRINT NEXTEL: | 4.66 | 0.03 |
| INTERACTIVE CORP: | 16.92 | 0.21 | THOMAS & BETTS: | 28.97 | 0.92 |
| LIBERTY: | 27.56 | 0.08 | TIVO: | 9.75 | 0.10 |
| LODGENET: | 3.61 | 0.19 | TOLLGRADE: | 5.15 | 0.02 |
| NEW FRONTIER: | 2.25 | (0.15) | UNIVERSAL ELEC: | 20.18 | 0.41 |
| OUTDOOR: | 6.30 | (0.02) | VONAGE: | 0.34 | (0.01) |
| PLAYBOY: | 2.49 | (0.1) | YAHOO: | 16.19 | 0.48 |
| RHI: | 2.56 | 0.06 | TELCOS | | |
| SCRIPPS INT: | 29.84 | 0.63 | AT&T: | 23.71 | (0.26) |
| TIME WARNER: | 26.60 | 0.89 | QWEST: | 3.93 | 0.07 |
| VALUEVISION: | 1.86 | 0.09 | VERIZON: | 29.50 | 0.16 |
| VIACOM: | 24.05 | 0.62 | MARKET INDICES | | |
| WWE: | 13.61 | 0.28 | DOW: | 8711.82 | 95.61 |
| TECHNOLOGY | | | | | |
| 3COM: | 4.02 | (0.08) | NASDAQ: | 1885.03 | 22.13 |
| ADC: | 7.31 | 0.03 | | | |
| ADVANTAGE: | 1.69 | (0.06) | | | |
| ALCATEL LUCENT: | 2.52 | 0.07 | | | |
| AMDOCS: | 22.84 | 0.49 | | | |



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PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

Curtain Call

Perhaps I am a rabbit's foot, horseshoe or 4-leaf clover. In the 3 yrs I've been at **Cfax**, the industry has witnessed a remarkable ascent by original cable programming to breadth and, most importantly, quality. The latest evidence, of course, came Thurs in the form of 247 **Prime Emmy** nominations for cable programming, up 27 versus '08. And make no mistake: the noms aren't chiefly for set design or make up, but rather include numerous chances at the big prizes with "Best" in the title. Remember, **AMC's** "Mad Men" and **FX's** "Damages" delivered last year cable's 1st-ever wins for Best Drama, Best Actress and Best Supporting Actor. Given those superlatives, cable would be hard pressed to repeat such a smashing performance, though it's reasonable to expect more wins than last year's 55. Herewith, a few observations concerning the nods:

If you can't beat 'em: Kudos to **WGN America** and **Comedy Central** for recently scooping up the off-net rights to **NBC's** "30 Rock," which as a truly great comedy led all individual projects in noms (22).

Critical Chasm: Whether regarding movies or TV shows, there often seems to be a disconnect between critical acclaim and popularity, and the relative lack of noms for **USA** (4) bears that out. The net's originals slay and deserve more recognition. Meanwhile, only 1 nom for **TNT's** "The Closer" ??? No disrespect to *Glenn Close*, but *Kyra Sedgwick* deserved the Best Actress in a Drama award last year and she deserves it again in '09.

Zip It: Whoever started the chatter (or for that matter believes it) that **HBO** is slipping, please button your lips. The net may be better than ever with respect to content, whether it be series or original movies. At least the **Academy** recognizes. *CH*

Highlights: "Dance Your Ass Off," 10pm, Mon, **Oxygen**. Reactions will vary regarding this new series that asks 11 seriously overweight contestants to lose fat while attempting routines that you've seen on "Dancing With The Stars." And like *DWTS*, contestants are paired with professional hoofers for a weekly studio performance. Some will say the show is cruel, pointing mostly to costumes that often feature layers of flab. Others will claim it exploits heavy people. We applaud the series' supportive nature, starting with the judges, and think some viewers will be inspired to dance and diet. Regardless, it's downright entertaining. -- "Nurse Jackie," Mon, 10:30pm, **Showtime**. Season 1's final eps have begun, and while you could have predicted trouble for Jackie (*Edie Falco*), what with her drug abuse, adultery and quick fuse, the *Steve Buscemi*-directed eps move well to the finale's denouement. While we'd quibble with the story arc involving Jackie and Dr Cooper (*Peter Facinelli*), the humanization of ultra stoic (but hilarious) Dr O'Hara (*Eve Best*) is promising. *SA*

Worth a Look: "The Game 365: Reggie! Reggie! Reggie!" Sun, 10pm, **MSG**. In this sanitized, corporate era, it's gutsy to carry a show that attacks another series you're running. **MSG's** doing that. This ep of "365" has Jackson blasting "The Bronx is Burning," the **ESPN**-made drama about the '77 Yanks. Reggie says Bronx makes him out to be "a blowhard, a buffoon...." He also says certain events Bronx portrays "never happened." -- "Most Popular," Sun, 10pm, **WE tv**. This game show, where the audience chooses the most popular of 7 female contestants, might be the definition of mindless entertainment. On the up side, it's a chance to see *Graham Norton*, who's a terrific host. *SA*

Notable: "Gospel Dream," Wed, 10pm, **Gospel**. The talent search winds down as contestants belt out inspirational songs. -- "Design Star," Sun, 10pm, **HGTV**. Season IV starts in Hollywood with 11 contestants vying to become an **HGTV** host. This season, the 3 judges will decide the winner. -- "Wake Up With Al," M-F, 6am ET, **Weather**. Can you say synergy? *Al Roker* co-hosts news, weather, lifestyle daily. *SA*

| Basic Cable Rankings (7/06/09-7/12/09) Mon-Sun Prime | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------|----------|
| 1 | USA | 2.4 2407 |
| 2 | DSNY | 2.2 2135 |
| 3 | TNT | 1.8 1757 |
| 4 | FOXN | 1.7 1654 |
| 5 | FAM | 1.3 1275 |
| 5 | SYFY | 1.3 1226 |
| 7 | NAN | 1.2 1170 |
| 7 | FX | 1.2 1127 |
| 9 | TBSC | 1.1 1101 |
| 9 | CNN | 1.1 1052 |
| 11 | HIST | 1 963 |
| 11 | ESPN | 1 953 |
| 11 | HGTV | 1 937 |
| 14 | DISC | 0.9 917 |
| 14 | LIFE | 0.9 903 |
| 14 | FOOD | 0.9 892 |
| 14 | A&E | 0.9 885 |
| 14 | TLC | 0.9 868 |
| 14 | HALL | 0.9 751 |
| 20 | TOON | 0.8 793 |
| 20 | TRU | 0.8 736 |
| 20 | AMC | 0.8 716 |
| 20 | BET | 0.8 699 |
| 24 | SPK | 0.7 724 |
| 24 | MTV | 0.7 643 |
| 24 | MSNB | 0.7 626 |
| 27 | CMDY | 0.6 607 |
| 27 | EN | 0.6 542 |
| 27 | NOGG | 0.6 447 |
| 27 | LMN | 0.6 445 |
| 31 | HLN | 0.5 511 |
| 31 | VH1 | 0.5 475 |
| 31 | BRAV | 0.5 466 |
| 31 | NGC | 0.5 332 |
| 35 | TVLD | 0.4 430 |
| 35 | APL | 0.4 404 |
| 35 | CMT | 0.4 363 |
| 35 | SOAP | 0.4 312 |
| 35 | OXYG | 0.4 311 |
| 40 | TRAV | 0.3 310 |
| 40 | ESP2 | 0.3 270 |
| 40 | DXD | 0.3 251 |
| 40 | WGNA | 0.3 247 |
| 40 | GSN | 0.3 225 |
| 40 | WE | 0.3 224 |
| 40 | TVGN | 0.3 222 |
| 40 | VS | 0.3 216 |
| 40 | DHLT | 0.3 195 |
| 40 | NKTN | 0.3 168 |
| 40 | HI | 0.3 160 |
| 40 | TV1 | 0.3 157 |
| 40 | ID | 0.3 157 |
| 53 | SPD | 0.2 172 |
| 53 | TWC | 0.2 159 |
| 53 | STYL | 0.2 136 |
| 53 | BIO | 0.2 132 |
| 53 | DSCI | 0.2 122 |
| 53 | THEN | 0.2 119 |

*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney