

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Fantasy Land: Bravo Head Imagines 'Legacy Plague'

It may have been a **WICT NY** lunch Wed, but it was **NAMIC's** diversity study that set off the fireworks. After decrying cable's results in the study, outspoken **Bravo** pres *Lauren Zalaznick* described her fantasy for achieving more diversity: The large number of "legacy" execs would contract "a horrible cable retirement disease... Challenge yourself with whom you would replace them with in that plague," she declared (she later added that some vets, such as fellow panelist *Italia Commisso Weinand* of **Mediacom**, would have disease immunity). She said everyone shares responsibility for spreading the diversity message. "Be the white guy in the room that brings it up," challenged Zalaznick. The Bravo chief also took on a few of her fellow lunch panelists. When moderator *Rob Stoddard* of **NCTA** asked why more women don't enter the tech field, **Advance/Newhouse** evp, strategy and dev *Nomi Bergman* blamed a difficult work-life balance. Countered Zalaznick: "I think it's crazy to sit in a room full of women and reinforce the negative stereotype of work-life balance." Bergman said she didn't mean to comment negatively, adding, "you have to be willing to jump in and make it work." **SOAPnet** evp, gm *Deborah Blackwell* wondered aloud if some women may feel they don't have an affinity for things technical (even throwing in the caveat that she didn't want to get into trouble for gender stereotyping). Zalaznick noted that the heads of her Website and interactive wireless business are female and said women need to step up with tech ideas and create businesses. She added that innovations like **MySpace**, **YouTube** and **Google** are typically created by men and force women to play catch-up. Panelists agreed, however, that diversity goals must come from the top down. "I can influence by example," said Commisso Weinand, Mediacom's svp of programming and HR, noting that minorities make up 60% of her corporate staff. -- Kudos to Stoddard for taking the luncheon a little off it's future technology course to discuss NAMIC's findings.

Court Departure: *Art Bell* is leaving his post as COO, **Court TV** Sept 22 to pursue opportunities outside the company. "With Court TV well-positioned and performing as part of Turner, Art feels the time is right for him to explore other interests," **Turner Ent** pres *Mark Lazarus* said in an email to employees. "He takes with him our respect, thanks and best wishes." Turner took control of Court in May. *Marc Juris* and *Marlene Dann* will continue in their roles as a new leadership structure for Court's marketing and programming is determined.

Video To Go: The cable operators on **CTAM NY's** Blue Ribbon Breakfast panel didn't appear to be shaking in their boots over possible competition from new mobile video screens. "It's not a substitute product," said **Comcast** svp, marketing and sales *Marvin Davis*. "It's going to be in places where it's either screen or no screen." Video viewing over cell phones has potential, the panel said. Pointing to consumer churn in cell phone handsets, **Advance/Newhouse** vp, strategic initiatives *Arthur Orduna* appeared excited. "This is even better than having to go out and force people to buy HDTVs," he said. **ESPN** sees avid sports fans as early adopters for its mobile service. "The person



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- #1 among persons who have never subscribed**

* June 2006 Beta Cable Subscriber Study - Interest in Emerging/Midsize Ad Supported Networks (Tied for 1st among emerging networks)
** July 2006 Beta Cable Non-Subscriber Study - Interest in Emerging/Midsize Ad Supported Networks
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would likely be divorced if they didn't have the device because they wouldn't leave the house," quipped *John Zehr*, ESPN vp, prod dev. For now, portable DVD players and laptops are the crux of mobile video. **SlingMedia** co-founder *Jason Krikorian* suggested that alternative screens aren't just being used outside the home. "People are using Slingbox to watch cable programming in and around the house," he said. Krikorian made it clear Slingbox would consider cable deals ("we're a company with few religious issues," he quipped), but neither Davis nor Orduna would comment.

No Cease-Fire: **EchoStar** filed Tues in US Circuit Court in FL a notice of objection to **Fox's** proposed order to permanently enjoin **DISH** from transmitting the distant network signals of any of its broadcast nets. The salvo extends nearly a decade of litigation between the 2 parties and claims that "Fox seeks this overboard injunction for its own anti-competitive reasons." Some legislators see merit in this claim (*Cfax*, 9/7). The notice further argues that "because of the post-mandate settlement with 95% of the stations at issue, entry of a permanent injunction would be clearly erroneous and unjust particularly to customers." **ABC, CBS, NBC** and **Fox** affils agreed late last month to a \$100mln settlement for continued carriage of their distant signals, but those of 25 Fox-owned stations are still disputed.

Competition: **Verizon** and Montgomery County, MD, officials on Tues reached a 15-year franchise agreement, ending more than 2 months of legal bickering (*Cfax*, 6/30). If the pact is approved by the County Council, VZ plans to begin early next year offering "FiOS TV" to half of the county's 928K HHs. -- The town council of Vienna, VA, granted VZ a video franchise Tues, as well as a new telephone franchise. -- **BellSouth** and **MDU Comm** signed agreements to provide triple play services (voice, DSL and **DirectTV**) to a pair of Atlanta developments. The separate deals cover a collective 582 units. -- **DirectTV** announced Wed it will use audience measurement capabilities from **TNS Media Research** to gauge consumer usage of its programming and interactive services. Many measurements will focus on the DBS op's interactive sub HHs. -- **Verizon Wireless** subs may now use **CBS Sportsline's** "Fantasy Football Companion" to manage and monitor their CBS fantasy teams for \$4.99/month.

Business As Usual: Several news outlets reported Wed that **RCN** plans to put itself up for sale and has hired **Blackstone Group** as an advisor to the process. RCN's svp, strategic and external affairs *Richard Ramlall* declined to comment on market speculation. Shares of the \$1.04bln company closed at \$28.16, up \$2.16 (8%) . -- Meanwhile the cable overbuilder announced the launch of music download service "RCN MusicToGo." The \$13.95-per-month service allows "RCN Music" subs to transfer downloads to MP3 players or other portable devices that support Windows Media Player 10.

VOD: **Comcast** will begin Fri offering 100 hours of HD VOD programming, including monthly availability of at least 20 HD movies from **Starz Ent**. The MSO will also offer Fri-Sun a free preview of all the Starz services it offers.

Marketing: **SOAPnet** is implementing an urban marketing campaign this fall in 10 markets (Atlanta, DC, Dallas, Philly, Baltimore, NYC, Detroit, St Louis, Oakland and Richmond, VA). The campaign (Oct 9- Nov 9) is focused on "The Young and the Restless," which has high viewership among African Americans. The net will brand 10 beauty shops in each market with smocks, in shop signage and giveaways. There will also be street teams, email cam-

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

paign, etc.

Broadband: The Horror Channel unveiled Wed a deal with NBCU's broadband arm **nbbc** to connect with distributors, Web publishers and advertisers. The deal also makes content from **NBC**, its affiliates and other nbbc partners available to visitors of HorrorChannel.com. Other nbbc partners include **AETN**, **The Biography Channel** and **CSTV**.

Mobile: MTVN's Music Group and **Universal Music Group** reached an agreement allowing MTVN to create and distribute full-length music videos and original video programming for mobile devices that feature UMG artists. Content featuring artists such as *Bon Jovi* and *Ludacris* will be available via streamed and downloaded on demand formats, including **MTV Mobile**, **VH1 Mobile**, **CMT Mobile** and **LOGO**.

On The Circuit: Another successful Broadway night for **Cable Positive**, which raised \$70K and plenty of goodwill Tues After a short Q&A with the cast, all headed for perhaps CP's best after-party, at Blue Chili, whose excellent service and mounds of sushi enhanced "The Drowsy Chaperone" even more. Thanks to sponsors, such as Lifetime, for the tix.

People: Former **Time Warner** exec *Patricia Armstrong* was named svp, investor relations for **Cablevision**.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	09/13 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	09/13 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BROADCASTERS/DBS/			AVID TECH:	40.64	(0.51)
BRITISH SKY:	42.90	0.46	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.35	0.19
DIRECTV:	19.83	0.06	BROADCOM:	28.03	(0.35)
DISNEY:	30.45	0.24	C-COR:	8.58	0.17
ECHOSTAR:	34.43	0.21	CISCO:	22.65	0.00
GE:	34.84	0.17	COMMSCOPE:	30.94	0.35
HEARST-ARGYLE:	23.71	0.29	CONCURRENT:	1.50	(0.06)
ION MEDIA:	0.88	0.01	CONVERGYS:	20.88	0.18
NEWS CORP:	19.33	(0.12)	CSG SYSTEMS:	27.09	0.20
TRIBUNE:	31.25	0.48	GEMSTAR TVG:	3.32	(0.03)
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	24.10	0.01	GOOGLE:	406.51	14.61
CHARTER:	1.51	0.04	HARMONIC:	6.87	(0.13)
COMCAST:	34.65	(0.36)	JDSU:	2.23	0.05
COMCAST SPCL:	34.66	(0.21)	LEVEL 3:	4.55	0.01
GCI:	12.91	(0.04)	LUCENT:	2.36	0.00
KNOLOGY:	10.21	0.06	MICROSOFT:	25.98	0.05
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	86.30	(0.23)	MOTOROLA:	24.01	(0.33)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	24.96	(0.28)	NDS:	44.95	(0.85)
LIBERTY INTERACTIVE:	19.79	(0.01)	NORTEL:	2.33	0.01
MEDIACOM:	7.00	(0.05)	OPENTV:	2.99	0.11
NTL:	26.63	0.08	PATH 1:	0.63	0.00
ROGERS COMM:	52.05	(0.12)	PHILIPS:	34.62	(0.15)
SHAW COMM:	29.05	(0.67)	RENTRAK:	11.40	0.07
TIME WARNER:	16.98	(0.06)	SEACHANGE:	8.98	0.11
WASH POST:	758.42	3.01	SONY:	42.38	0.29
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	28.77	(0.58)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	16.92	0.19
CROWN:	4.30	0.06	THOMAS & BETTS:	43.76	0.52
DISCOVERY:	13.78	0.07	TIVO:	8.02	0.09
EW SCRIPPS:	46.03	(0.06)	TOLLGRADE:	8.45	0.22
GRUPO TELEVISA:	19.23	0.43	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	19.45	(0.13)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	28.32	(0.15)	VONAGE:	7.80	0.25
LODGENET:	18.26	0.01	VYYO:	4.55	0.02
NEW FRONTIER:	8.65	(0.08)	WEBB SYS:	0.06	0.00
OUTDOOR:	10.71	0.58	WORLDGATE:	1.57	(0.12)
PLAYBOY:	9.35	0.04	YAHOO:	29.17	0.08
UNIVISION:	35.05	(0.35)	TELCOS		
VALUEVISION:	11.70	0.04	AT&T:	31.86	(0.04)
VIACOM:	36.25	0.62	BELLSOUTH:	41.86	0.03
WWE:	16.81	(0.21)	QWEST:	8.92	0.05
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	4.32	(0.1)	VERIZON:	35.75	(0.09)
ADC:	14.21	0.06	MARKET INDICES		
ADDVANTAGE:	3.60	(0.2)	DOW:	11543.32	45.23
AMDOCS:	39.51	(0.29)	NASDAQ:	2227.67	11.85
AMPHENOL:	59.17	0.67			
ARRIS GROUP:	11.87	(0.02)			

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Retranstennas

That's short for retransmission consent antennas. Seems to me it's about time we started thinking about those things again. The world has changed, and it's about to change even more. The idea that some broadcaster can hold you up for excessive retransmission consent fees just doesn't make much sense any more.

This "new world" means it won't be too long before broadcasters shift over to the exclusive distribution of their over-the-air signals by digital transmission. The legal date is now officially set at February 17, 2009. Why, you might ask, that strange date? Well, it has to do with the fear that an end-of-year analog TV turn-off just before the Super Bowl would create even more of a political howl than the Janet Jackson episode. Regardless, that's the so-called "hard cut-off" date, and the broadcasters even agreed to it.



Steve Effros

Now we all know that getting an "agreement" from broadcasters may not mean much, so the speculation is that when the time comes, the broadcasters will once again insist that the date be extended, that they are not ready, that the television consuming public will storm Capitol Hill, etc. They may be right. But I am one of the few "pundits" now willing to predict a better than 50-50 chance that the date will stick.

As with most things in Washington, the best advice is to always "follow the money." In this case, the money trail seems to trend toward digital for several reasons: for one thing, the cable, satellite and consumer electronics industries have all found that consumers really like digital signals, particularly HD. We all make money delivering those signals, and consumers want them.

The broadcasters have yet to figure out a business plan

to make money on their additional free digital spectrum, particularly by "multicasting." But they cannot help but notice that the higher-end audience is starting to tilt toward digital, and the younger high-end demographic is definitely tilting toward HD. So sticking with analog makes less and less economic sense. Why run two transmitters when you could actually convert to digital-only within the time-frame dictated by the Feds and save money in the process, so long as your signal is still available to anyone who wants to see it?

And that's the trick. The signal has to be available. Cable customers will have no problem getting the signal. We are helping the broadcasters. But how do they react? Well, the broadcasters are sending very mixed messages. On the one hand they want their signals available to everyone, and on the other they demand sometimes outrageous fees for us to deliver those very signals, threatening to block access otherwise. Schizophrenic? You bet. Nothing new.

The solution is to design all our new equipment with an input for a digital home antenna. If we can't reach a reasonable agreement with the local broadcaster, just supply an antenna to our customer and pick up that digital "free, over-the-air" feed. We could then integrate it with the cable digital feed in the home, going to the consumer's set. This is not a new idea. The satellite guys did it with analog local signals. But now, with a digital signal, the consumer will not see any visual degradation, and the broadcasters will finally understand what the term "free TV" (their favorite battle cry) really means.

Steve

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**CableWorld's Top 50 Influential Women in Cable
Nomination Form**

Who are cable's most influential women executives? Help us decide by nominating the executives you think should be on our list of the Top 50 Most Influential Women in Cable. We will rank the Top 50 in the Nov. 6 issue of *CableWorld*. Nominations are open to all cable operators, programmers, vendors and trade associations.

Deadline for nominations: **Sept. 22, 2006**

Submit by fax: 212-621-4895

By email: attach form or paste in email and send to Shirley Brady at sbrady@accessintel.com

By mail: Shirley Brady, *CableWorld*, 110 William St., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10038

PLEASE FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING:

Nominee Information

Name _____
Title _____
Company _____
Address _____

Email _____
Phone _____

Nominator Information

Name _____
Title _____
Company _____
Address _____

Email _____
Phone _____

Why should this person make our list? (50 words max)

Does this person make/break deals? (50 words max)

Does this person's influence extend beyond his/her company? (50 words max)