

# CableFAX Daily™

Friday — November 17, 2006

What the Industry Reads First

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## New Home: Zaslav to Leave NBC for Discovery

What a week for NBCU staffers. First comes the surprising blow that 31-year vet *Randy Falco* is leaving to take *Jonathan Miller's* job as chmn/CEO of **AOL**. And now there's the double whammy that *David Zaslav* is taking *Judith McHale's* spot as pres/CEO of **Discovery**. Zaslav's name was buzzing around **WICT's** Wed night Gala following a Discovery board meeting earlier in the day. By mid-afternoon Thurs, Discovery was scrambling to put together an announcement on the hire. Zaslav's a long-time cable guy, having helped get **CNBC** off the ground. His veteran status undoubtedly played well with Discovery's senior board (which counts **Liberty's** *John Malone*, Discovery founder *John Hendricks* and **Advance/Newhouse's** *Bob Miron* among its members). Zaslav has a bit of Discovery history as well, filling in several years ago while then-gen counsel *McHale* was on maternity leave. Former **BBC'er** *Greg Dyke* was also said to be in the running for the gig; internal talk surrounded sr evp *Mark Hollinger* and Discovery Nets chief *Billy Campbell*. Some had dismissed Zaslav as an option, pointing to the years he had left on his NBCU contract. But *Falco's* departure activated a clause in his contract that allowed him to exit early (and it's possible had *Falco* not left that Zaslav may have tried to get out of it early). With NBCU in the midst of a digital-focused restructuring, chances are good that Zaslav's duties will be reallocated to existing execs. Similarly, there will be no replacement for *Falco*. Zaslav is expected to start at Discovery early next year. *McHale* retires Dec 1, with *Hendricks* serving as interim CEO. **More WICT Chatter:** Now that we're playing moveable executives, an item that was making the rounds Wed night at WICT was former **Court TV** president *Art Bell* re-joining his old **HBO/Court TV** buddy *Henry Schleiff*, now at **Hallmark Channel**. The scuttlebutt had the move likely coming after the holidays.

**Friends Again:** Verizon has signed carriage pacts for **Rainbow's** RSNs—**FSN NY, MSG, FSN New England** and **FSN New England HD**. The multiyear deal, reached Oct 30, prompted Verizon to drop its program access complaint against Rainbow parent **Cablevision** at the **FCC**. Verizon filed the complaint in Mar, claiming that Cablevision was trying to get info on its FiOS TV deployment. Verizon has also agreed to carry Rainbow's national networks—**AMC, WE, IFC** and **fuse**— as well as VOD offerings **Mag Rack** and **sportskool**.

**DTV Doings:** The House Commerce Dems are pressuring the **NTIA** to broaden the scope of the digital-to-analog set-top converter program to include consumers who subscribe to cable/satellite, or who have a DTV but have other analog sets in their home. The members also oppose imposing a means test for program eligibility and believe that the \$5mln cap for consumer education and outreach is "woefully inadequate." In legislation passed by Congress, consumers can apply for up to 2 coupons of \$40 each toward the purchase of a digital-to-analog converter box.

**In the Courts:** Another former **Adelphia** exec was derided Thurs, as US District Court Judge *P. Kevin Castel* found

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former Adelphia exec Michael Mulcahey engaged in "massive fraud" during the MSO's notorious accounting scandal. As part of a civil action brought by the SEC, Castel further found Mulcahey "a critical participant who enabled the fraud. He was not duped. He is knowledgeable, experienced and reasonably savvy." The judge ordered that a permanent injunction against future securities law violations be entered against Mulcahey.

**WICT Gala:** WICT's annual DC Gala was a Nick-fueled night, with *Cyma Zarghami* named Woman of the Year Wed. MTVN chief *Judy McGrath* and a teenager with an unmistakable voice introduced her. "Hola WICT Members... can you say Zarghami?" began 16-year-old *Kathleen Herles*, employing the same perky voice she uses to portray Nick's immensely popular "Dora the Explorer." The audience burst into appreciative laughter. A humble Zarghami thanked all the appropriate people, including Herles, who has been at the network for about 10 years. It was fitting, considering that 20+-year vet Zarghami has—as McGrath put it—"empowered a whole generation of diverse and accomplished women" (dating back to the "Clarissa Explains It All" days). Zarghami joked that, "This won't be your parents Nick," but she did promise Nick would be reaching out to parents, promising more details in the months ahead. Cox vp, legal affairs *Robin Sangston* picked up WICT's "Woman to Watch" accolade. Lifetime and WE won programming accolades for "Human Trafficking" and "Tammy Faye: Death Defying," respectively.

**TV Future:** Starz has vacated the cable business, movie business and many others, and has instead adopted an overall focus on "the business of audience aggregation," said chmn/CEO *Robert Clasen* at a Thurs conference held at NYU's Stern School of Business. In light of its Aug purchase of **IDT Ent (Cfax, 8/30)** and its Mon call for "action" at its new movie studio **Overture Films (Cfax, 11/14)**, Starz is now attempting to allay risk by attempting to implement multiple platforms. "With our diverse collection of production and distribution units, we are in a strong position to ensure that whatever programming we create will reach enough eyeballs on different platforms to justify the expense of production," said Clasen.

**On the Hill:** Rep *Chris Cannon* (R-UT) is urging his colleagues not to grant **EchoStar** any relief when it comes to a Dec 1 deadline to pull all distant network signals. "EchoStar violated the law and should not be allowed to use its consumers as human shields in the debate on the legality of its operations," he wrote.

**Coach Wanted:** We were surprised when we saw an email from a Charter CSR to a sub upset over the lack of NFL Net. "... I am glad to inform you that the football matches that were transmitted through the **NFL Network** will henceforth be transmitted through the **ESPN Game Plan** package. To avail of this, you will have to subscribe to the ESPN PPV package," said the missive, signed by someone named Shaun. Of course, ESPN Game Plan consists of college games, not NFL Net's 8-game, Thurs-Sat regular season package. Charter assured us that this is not the message it's sending to customers. "Unfortunately, this appears to be one overzealous care agent who misinterpreted information from the FAQs and crafted his own narrative that included mistakes," a Charter rep said, promising coaching for the CSR.

**VOD:** Comcast and CN8 have aligned with the MD State Police for "Fugitive Files On Demand." The public service initiative offers Comcast digital customers statewide VOD access to police files of wanted fugitives, including photos, physical descriptions and a run-down as to why each is being sought. Viewers with info are prompted to call authorities.

**Mobile:** European mobile operator 3 marshaled Thurs in London an impressive collection of global media giants, including execs from **Yahoo!**, **Google**, **Sling Media** and **Skype**. Even **Ebay** CEO *Meg Whitman* made a video appear-

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# BUSINESS & FINANCE

ance. The reason was 3's "X-Series" handsets, which will provide beginning Dec 1 what stateside firms have yet to purvey: a comprehensive suite of media services on a mobile phone. Imagine pulling from your pocket all of the following features: unlimited text IMs to **MSN**, Skype and Yahoo! customers; Internet browsing on Yahoo! and Google; access to cable and satellite TV programming from Sling Media; and access to your entire PC hard drive from **Orb Networks**. Next month it's reality in the UK.

**Ratings:** Nielsen will launch Dec 11 a service to measure nationally distributed VOD content. It will use the same "National People Meter" sample used to provide TV ratings to programmers, and likewise will offer HH and demo ratings for VOD content.

**Programming:** Showtime greenlight original series "Weeds" for a 15-ep, 3rd season to debut next summer.

**Broadband:** Turner Sports and **PGA.com** will provide iTunes and content from the '06 PGA Grand Slam, a 2-day tourney beginning Tues. Starting Wed, iTunes users will be able to download 25-30min high-light packages for \$1.99 each.

**On the Circuit:** When you make it to "Jeopardy" you've made it. During Wed's "Celebrity Jeopardy," the question was: "In June 2006, what movie channel premiered its first made-for-TV movie, "Broken Trail," starring Robert Duvall?" The answer: **AMC**.

## CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	11/16 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	11/16 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
BRITISH SKY:	41.43	0.53	AVID TECH:	40.11	0.39
DIRECTV:	21.55	(0.04)	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.60	0.13
DISNEY:	33.06	0.37	BROADCOM:	35.05	0.59
ECHOSTAR:	36.35	(0.25)	C-COR:	10.09	0.10
GE:	35.96	0.17	CISCO:	27.15	0.55
HEARST-ARGYLE:	25.63	0.08	COMMSCOPE:	32.00	(0.44)
ION MEDIA:	0.78	0.01	CONCURRENT:	1.79	(0.01)
NEWS CORP:	22.19	(0.01)	CONVERGYS:	23.87	0.31
TRIBUNE:	32.31	0.21	CSG SYSTEMS:	27.77	(0.23)
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	27.89	0.10	GEMSTAR TVG:	3.26	(0.01)
CHARTER:	2.65	0.02	GOOGLE:	495.90	3.97
COMCAST:	40.37	0.10	HARMONIC:	8.34	(0.06)
COMCAST SPCL:	40.02	0.09	JDSU:	17.35	(0.36)
GCI:	14.84	0.19	LEVEL 3:	5.33	(0.11)
KNOLOGY:	10.02	0.00	LUCENT:	2.61	0.05
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	89.78	(0.14)	MICROSOFT:	29.47	0.35
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	27.52	0.01	MOTOROLA:	22.61	0.35
LIBERTY INTERACTIVE:	22.84	0.09	NDS:	49.11	(0.66)
MEDIACOM:	8.32	0.02	NORTEL:	2.06	0.03
NTL:	24.12	(0.44)	OPENTV:	2.60	(0.05)
ROGERS COMM:	58.12	(0.28)	PHILIPS:	37.56	0.03
SHAW COMM:	30.60	(0.1)	RENTRAK:	13.98	0.41
TIME WARNER:	20.33	0.35	SEACHANGE:	9.01	(0.04)
WASH POST:	732.00	2.10	SONY:	39.94	(0.16)
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
CBS:	29.78	0.14	SPRINT NEXTEL:	20.15	0.22
CROWN:	3.71	0.12	THOMAS & BETTS:	53.78	1.02
DISCOVERY:	15.69	0.24	TIVO:	6.32	(0.07)
EW SCRIPPS:	49.85	0.12	TOLLGRADE:	8.37	(0.22)
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	24.81	(0.22)	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	21.48	(0.06)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	33.90	0.24	VONAGE:	7.02	0.29
LODGENET:	23.71	(0.01)	VYYO:	3.30	0.09
NEW FRONTIER:	9.22	0.05	WEBB SYS:	0.05	0.00
OUTDOOR:	12.84	(0.05)	WORLDGATE:	1.42	0.03
PLAYBOY:	12.20	(0.15)	YAHOO:	26.64	(0.51)
UNIVISION:	35.35	0.04	<b>TCLCOS</b>		
VALUEVISION:	13.46	(0.09)	AT&T:	32.40	(0.06)
VIACOM:	39.20	0.70	BELLSOUTH:	42.41	0.05
WWE:	16.05	(0.1)	QWEST:	8.10	0.04
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
3COM:	4.99	(0.07)	VERIZON:	35.94	(0.15)
ADC:	13.88	0.08	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
ADDVANTAGE:	3.96	0.06	DOW:	12305.82	54.11
AMDOCS:	38.78	0.05	NASDAQ:	2449.06	6.31
AMPHENOL:	69.03	0.03			
ARRIS GROUP:	12.57	0.42			

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

**Retirement Living: TV Grows Up**

What looked like the taping of an ordinary TV show Mon in suburban DC was actually an example of TV being stood on its head—instead of seeking younger demos, this channel wants to get older. The show's topic was the Rubik's Cube known as Medicare Part D, the drug coverage plan that has seniors (and some adult children) mystified. The host was *John Palmer*, late of **NBC's** "Today" show. And there was former **Court TV** svp *Scoot MacPherson*, running things. The studio audience seemed normal, although on closer inspection the collective age made *Lawrence Welk* followers seem spry. The site was an Erickson retirement village, the channel was **Retirement Living TV**, which runs for 4 hrs M-F on **Comcast's** CN8 and just went up on **DirrecTV**. RLTV is negotiating carriage on the Comcast regional network in Denver. The brainchild of retirement community progressive thinker *John Erickson*, it's available on systems at his properties in 10 states. He plans to plow \$4mln of his own money into the suburban DC-based channel during the next 4 years, but while he programs for the retired, it's not for the retiring. The channel is an information portal for seniors, he insists, so its all-original fare includes current affairs, health, and investing shows. "No "Golden Girls" reruns or old war movies. "This is my way of giving back...opening a line of communication for seniors," whom the media neglects, he says. But should this labor of love be profitable? "Well, we think so," he says, noting Madison Ave also neglects seniors. "But guess what? Retirees have more cash at this time in their lives; they can buy bigger cars and take cruises. I think we'll get those advertisers." Expansion? "Our next target is **EchoStar**; after we establish ourselves [and following the digital transition], we'll see if **Time Warner Cable**, **Cox** and other want us." As for the 71-year-old Palmer, "I was quietly retired when [RLTV] called; I can't believe I'm doing this again, but I'm getting a kick out of it." SA

**Highlights:** "The Wire," tonight, 8pm, **HBO**. A chance to see 3 eps of what arguably is cable's best series. – "Desperate Crossing," Sun, 8pm, **History**. Should your subs be concerned about not having enough to talk about on Thanksgiving, drive them to this special, which takes the basic holiday story and adds stuffing in the form of tremendous complications, as well as an Indian perspective. – "Koppel on Discovery: Iran—The Most Dangerous Nation" Sun, 9pm, **Discovery**. Two young Iranian girls were riding on the back of a motorcycle, which was going very fast, defying Iran's few traffic laws, *Ted Koppel* said the other night. Despite their anarchism, both girls had their heads covered, as women must in Iran. This contradiction is typical of Iran and makes the subtitle of this excellent special more provocative than fact. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Queen: A Night at the Opera," Tues, 8pm, **VH1 Classic**. Garth? Wayne? -- "S of Nowhere," tonight, 8:30 ET, **The N**. Spencer's lesbianism is dividing her folks—this is getting good. SA

**Not Reviewed:** "Comic Relief," tomorrow, 9pm, **HBO**, **TBS**.

Basic Cable Rankings (11/06/06-11/12/06)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	ESPN	2.9	2649
2	DSNY	2.1	1912
3	USA	1.9	1717
4	TNT	1.7	1609
5	TBSC	1.6	1433
6	NAN	1.5	1364
7	FOXN	1.3	1217
8	HALL	1.2	921
9	A&E	1.1	1047
9	LIFE	1.1	1036
9	FX	1.1	985
9	CNN	1.1	983
9	TOON	1.1	974
14	FAM	1	893
14	CORT	1	850
16	HGTV	0.9	850
16	SPK	0.9	844
16	HIST	0.9	808
16	AMC	0.9	802
16	CMDY	0.9	775
21	FOOD	0.8	749
21	MTV	0.8	724
21	SCIF	0.8	706
21	DISC	0.8	696
25	TLC	0.7	643
25	ESP2	0.7	634
25	TVLD	0.7	626
25	MSNB	0.7	577
29	BET	0.6	461
29	LMN	0.6	304
31	EN	0.5	470
31	APL	0.5	457
31	BRAV	0.5	428
31	SOAP	0.5	289
35	VH1	0.4	356
35	OXYG	0.4	262
35	WGNC	0.4	247
35	NGC	0.4	229
39	TTC	0.3	292
39	HLN	0.3	278
39	CMT	0.3	228
39	TVGC	0.3	222
39	GSN	0.3	208
39	SC	0.3	192
39	TDSN	0.3	191
39	DHLT	0.3	180

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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