

# Cablefax Daily™

Friday — December 5, 2014

What the Industry Reads First

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## Washington Senators: Sports Blackouts Debated on the Hill

**Senate Judiciary** finally held its long-delayed hearing on sports TV blackouts—just don't look for anything to happen soon. With Congress about to adjourn, Thurs' hearing was really a fact-finding mission, said Sen *Richard Blumenthal* (D-CT), who co-sponsored the FANS Act with Sen *John McCain* (R-AZ), that would revoke leagues' antitrust exemptions if they don't relinquish the blackout practice. There's another issue that could delay any action. Sen *Charles Grassley* (R-IA), who is expected to head the Judiciary in 2015 when Republicans take control of the Senate, didn't seem convinced the bill was needed. He said he welcomed the conversation but that blackouts need to be minimized while respecting private parties rights to negotiate. Senators' opinions varied, from *Al Franken* (D-MN) who used it to express concern over the sports blackouts that result from retrans disputes (which he parlayed into a diatribe on the proposed **Comcast-Time Warner Cable** merger) to Rep *Mike Lee* (R-UT), who said he wasn't ready to support the bill without taking a close look at the economic implications. In the hot seat was **NFL** counsel *Gerard Waldron* of **Covington & Burling**, who got grilled on everything from the league's TV blackout policy for non-sellout games to the **Redskins'** name. Waldron argued that the current policy is working, with ratings and attendance doing well, no games blacked out this year and only 2 blacked out last year. He offered no info on whether the League might take action on the Washington team's name. Waldron said the NFL did begin discussions on potentially eliminating sports blackouts following an **FCC** ruling against them but offered no status update. As for retrans blackouts, he said requiring broadcasters to show games has serious legal implications. The hearing's other witnesses strongly supported ending sports blackouts, with **Sports Fan Coalition** chmn *David Goodfriend* arguing the rule can prevent those with disabilities from watching a game, and **National Consumers League** exec dir *Sally Greenberg* focusing on the expense—both the cost of going to a game and of sports on television via cable bills. "Consumers are right to be mad they're paying high rates and may not have access to the programming. It's patently unfair," she said. FCC Media Bureau chief *Bill Lake* also testified, but only addressed the FCC's unanimous vote this year to eliminate the agency's sports blackout rule, declining to offer an opinion on what Congress should do.

**At Our Deadline:** **CBS** on **DISH** are still talking, with CBS issuing a statement late Thurs that it "remains on the air with Dish while negotiations progress into the evening." The satcaster's short-term extension for the CBS O&Os had been set to



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expire at 7pm ET Thurs (12/5). CBS and DISH had reached 2 previous extensions to their contract, which expired Nov 20.

**WOW! Layoff:** WOW! is laying off around 3K employees, or 9% of its workforce, through early 2015, a spokeswoman confirmed. "The reduction in force affects all WOW! functions and locations. The company is making this change to compete more effectively and better position itself for future growth," she said in a statement. The move came a day after the company announced price hikes that would up the monthly bills of some video subs by up to \$20 starting Jan 1. The price increase, which includes a \$2 monthly sports surcharge, a \$1 monthly local origination programming fee and a \$5 monthly broadcast TV fee, was 1st reported by KS-based *Lawrence Journal-World*. The MSO went through a top management overhaul earlier this year that saw CEO/board chair *Colleen Abdoulah* turn CEO responsibility over to *Steven Cochran*, who had been pres of the company. She continues to serve as chair. As part of the shakeup, CMO *Cathy Kuo* assumed Cochran's operational responsibilities in her new position as COO.

**#CommActUpdate: House Commerce** Republican leaders plan to start drafting legislation next year to modernize the Communications Act. Committee chmn *Fred Upton* (R-MI) and tech sbcmte head *Greg Walden* (R-OR) announced the initiative last year and have since received input through a series of white papers and a hearing with former **FCC** chairmen.

**STELA:** President *Obama* signed the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act (STELA) into law, before it expires at year-end. Following promises from both sides, the bill passed Senate and House last month.

**Retrans Pact: Verizon and Cox Media Group** reached a deal late Wed to restore **WFXT-TV Fox 25** programming to the FIOS TV lineup. In a statement, Verizon said deal terms "are in the best interests of Verizon and our customers." Fox 25 had been off the FIOS lineup in parts of MA and RI since Thanksgiving. "We apologize to our viewers for any disruption that this dispute caused, and we thank Verizon FIOS for its willingness to continue working with FOX 25 to reach an agreement that is favorable for both companies and all of our viewers," the station said on its website.

**Ratings: ESPN** concluded its 15 consecutive hours of college football studio and game programming on Nov 29 with its most-viewed regular-season game on record for Alabama's win over Auburn, averaging 6.27mln viewers and a 3.6 HH US rating. The game was also the net's most-viewed Sat ever during regular season (Aug-Dec). Total day programming (6am Nov 29 to 6am Nov 30) averaged 4.42mln viewers and a 2.6HH US rating. Digitally, the game scored 475K unique viewers and an average minute audience of 119K people on WatchESPN, product records for regular-season viewing. -- As she hit a low in her married life, *Kendra Wilkinson* reached a high in ratings. The finale of her reality show on **WEtv** "Kendra on Top" scored 1.6mln total viewers and more than 1mln 25-54, doubling the show's performance from Season 2 across all key demos. The full season averaged 1.3mln viewers and 800K 25-54.

**Programming: E!** is set to debut its 1st scripted series "The Royals" on Mar 15. The 10-ep, one-hour original features a fictional monarchy in modern times. -- **BBC America** booked a 2nd season of its 1st original comedy series "Almost Royal."

**Music Choice Teams w/ Maker: YouTube** content network **Maker Studios** premieres its original series "CrashPad" Fri across platforms. The comedy series will broadcast weekly on VOD platform **Music Choice** and Maker's web TV platform **Maker.tv** with shortened eps to run on YouTube.

**People: E!** upped *John Najarian* to evp, news and digital, taking on oversight of the net's news division and **E! News** series, while continuing to oversee the net's digital and business development. In addition, the net named *Jen Neal* evp, marketing for **E! Entertainment** and **Esquire Network**, adding oversight of brand strategy and all marketing activity for Esquire to her current responsibilities as head of E! marketing. They will both report to E! Entertainment gm and pres of Esquire *Adam Stotsky*. -- **Starz** upped *Brian Huggins* and *Sue Provan* to vps in finance/planning and accounting, respectively. -- **Cablevision** hired *Mickey Paxton* as svp and exec dir of creative services, effective immediately. He reports to *Matt Lake*, svp of marketing and advertising.

**Over-Under:** The inaugural **Cablefax** Over-Under event, a celebration of cable's overachieving superstars under 30, kicked off with some wise words from CEO and founder of **Half the Sky Leadership** *Grace Killelea*. "Leadership is not about your title," she told the crowd of up-and-comers. It's about your behavior. And it's important to give back, as each of them arrived there because someone chose to champion them. She encouraged each attendee to meet at least 2 overachievers in the room—and ask them why they thought they deserved to be on the list. Killelea's remarks

# BUSINESS & FINANCE

were followed by a few words (and by that we mean 140 characters or less) expressing the best and/or worst advice they've ever received. Some thanked parents, others cited mentors. But most entertaining was the worst advice—from being told that an internship will get you nowhere, that opening a restaurant is a great financial investment and that one should never watch television. The event was DJ'd by the honorees, each of whom added a song to the playlist you'll find on [Cablefax.com](http://Cablefax.com).

**Lustgarten Tops \$2mln:** It was another record-breaking Holiday Rock & Roll Bash to benefit **The Lustgarten Foundation**. The event, hosted by **Cablevision, Madison Square Garden** and **AMC Nets**, raised more \$2.06mln, with 100% going directly to pancreatic cancer research. The event has raised nearly \$19mln since its creation in 2001. More than 1100 guests attended this year's bash at the Hard Rock Café in NYC, which included appearances by the Radio City Rockettes and Santa Claus.

**On the Circuit:** **DirectTV** will host its Super Fan Festival featuring 12 concerts from Jan 28 to Jan 30 at Pendergast Family Farm in Glendale, AZ's sports and entertainment district across from University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale (site of Super Bowl XLIX). The space will be transformed to host DirectTV Super Saturday Night, a Super Bowl party, on Jan 30.

## CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	12/04 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	12/04 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
DIRECTV:	85.23	(0.93)	CONVERGYS:	20.86	(0.1)
DISH:	72.93	(1.49)	CSG SYSTEMS:	25.69	0.14
ENTRAVISION:	6.84	UNCH	ECHOSTAR:	52.40	0.06
GRAY TELEVISION:	10.16	(0.04)	GOOGLE:	537.31	5.99
MEDIA GENERAL:	15.23	(0.08)	HARMONIC:	7.16	0.07
NEXSTAR:	51.21	(0.45)	INTEL:	37.46	0.03
SINCLAIR:	27.10	(1.08)	INTERACTIVE CORP:	65.44	0.48
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	21.11	(0.04)	JDSU:	13.02	(0.1)
CHARTER:	166.50	(1.28)	LEVEL 3:	48.40	(0.3)
COMCAST:	56.38	(0.77)	MICROSOFT:	48.84	0.76
COMCAST SPCL:	56.28	(0.7)	NETFLIX:	350.60	(4.52)
GCI:	12.26	(0.21)	NIELSEN:	42.81	(0.95)
GRAHAM HOLDING:	928.00	20.39	RENTRAK:	81.43	(0.36)
LIBERTY BROADBAND:	54.02	0.45	SEACHANGE:	6.10	(0.91)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	49.80	(0.28)	SONY:	22.12	0.17
SHAW COMM:	26.72	(0.64)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	4.86	0.17
TIME WARNER CABLE:	147.95	(1.54)	TIVO:	12.25	(0.22)
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
21ST CENTURY FOX:	37.63	0.38	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	60.69	(0.05)
AMC NETWORKS:	63.75	(1.15)	VONAGE:	3.31	(0.04)
CBS:	54.85	(0.38)	YAHOO:	50.41	0.13
CROWN:	3.51	(0.01)	<b>TELCOS</b>		
DISCOVERY:	34.43	(0.88)	AT&T:	33.91	(0.09)
DISNEY:	93.23	0.12	CENTURYLINK:	40.05	(0.01)
GRUPO TELEVISIA:	36.13	(0.19)	TDS:	24.84	UNCH
HSN:	71.84	(0.68)	VERIZON:	48.78	(0.01)
LIONSGATE:	34.78	(0.38)	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
MSG:	72.53	(0.23)	DOW:	17900.10	(12.52)
SCRIPPS INT:	79.87	(0.65)	NASDAQ:	4769.44	(5.04)
STARZ:	27.76	(5.42)	S&P 500:	2071.92	(2.41)
TIME WARNER:	84.66	0.79			
VIACOM:	74.78	(0.16)			
WWE:	11.47	(0.41)			
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
ADVANTAGE:	2.57	0.02			
AMDOCS:	48.16	(0.21)			
AMPHENOL:	53.69	(0.01)			
AOL:	45.99	0.42			
APPLE:	115.49	(0.44)			
ARRIS GROUP:	29.00	(0.73)			
AVID TECH:	12.69	0.20			
BLNDER TONGUE:	2.25	0.06			
BROADCOM:	43.48	0.23			
CISCO:	27.77	(0.18)			
COMMSCOPE:	25.57	(0.09)			
CONCURRENT:	6.98	0.17			

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## Twas the Nights of TV

With the holidays upon us, Christmas specials are everywhere... So many, that I challenged myself to take *Clement Clarke Moore's* iconic poem and find its TV mates. It was easier than I thought: Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. (**Animal Planet has plenty of creatures stirring, from baby goats to kittens climbing Christmas trees, in its "Too Cute! #Merrycuteness" special 12/24, 7pm**). The stockings were hung by the chimney with care in hopes that St Nicholas would soon be there. The children were nestled all snug in their beds, while vision of sugar plums dance in their heads. (**Ovation has dancing and sugar plums with its annual "Battle of the Nutcrackers." Viewers favorite viewers will air 12/24, 8pm**). And Mama in her 'kerchief and I in my cap had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap. (**Kerchiefs are so last season. You know who dresses super trendy? The girls of ABC Family's "Pretty Little Liars," who return for a holiday special 12/9, 8pm**). When out on the roof there arose such a clatter, I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter. Away to the window I flew like a flash, tore open the shutter and threw up the sash. (**Can't you see Todd Chrisley doing this hoping to catch his kids sneaking in past curfew? "A Very Chrisley Christmas" premieres on USA, Dec 17, 10pm**). The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow gave the luster of midday to objects below, when what to my wondering eyes should appear, but a miniature sleigh and 8 tiny reindeer. With a little old driver, so lively and quick, I knew in a moment it must be St Nick. (**Wait, knew it? Before he told you his name? Sounds like TLC's "Long Island Medium" which has a holiday ep Dec 7, 8pm**). More rapid than eagles, his coursers they came, and he whistled and shouted and called them by name: "Now Dasher! Now Dancer! Now, Prancer and Vixen! On, Comet! On Cupid! On Donner and Blitzen! To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall! Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!" (**Where's Rudolph? No worries. ABC Family has him playing several times over its 25 Days of Christmas—have a merry one!**). – Amy Maclean

**Reviews:** "The Red Tent," Sun-Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. Nothing succeeds like success. So Lifetime grabs actors from hits "Game of Thrones" (**HBO**) and "Homeland" (**Showtime**) and gives a solid treatment to *Anita Diamant's* historical fiction that riffs on the Old Testament tale of Dinah. Thrones' *Iain Glen* and *Will Tudor* shed armor and boots for robes and sandals in good performances. Homeland's *Morena Baccarin* is convincingly stunning as Rachel, one of Jacob's 4 wives. More important, Red's a story of strong women and female bonding in biblical times. -- "The Game," series finale, Wed, 10pm, **BBC America**. This Cold War-era spy thriller is marred slightly by stereotypes and strongly resembles "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy," but who cares? We'll be sad to see this charmingly low-tech, cigarette- and booze-laden series end with Wed's surprising denouement. And how can you not love a show where the head of spy agency MI5 (a dyspeptic *Brian Cox*) is known only as Daddy? -- "Momsters," Fri, 10pm, **ID**. In a series of silly interstitials, a slim *Roseanne Barr* attempts to lighten the mood between ID's re-enactments of crimes committed by misguided mothers. Barr's antics add little to the strong storytelling. -- "The Newsroom," Sun, 9pm, **HBO**. The short-lived journo saga is packed with tension this week, its penultimate ep; Dec 14's finale is strong, too. – Seth Arenstein

### Basic Cable Rankings (11/24/14-11/30/14)

	Mon-Sun Prime		
1	ESPN	3.3	3136
2	HALL	1.9	1583
3	FOXN	1.6	1546
4	USA	1.4	1326
5	AMC	1.3	1225
5	DSNY	1.3	1214
7	TBSC	1.1	1098
8	CNN	1.0	984
8	DSE	1.0	67
10	HIST	0.9	897
10	HGTV	0.9	891
10	DISC	0.9	859
13	FAM	0.8	782
13	ADSM	0.8	748
13	FX	0.8	723
13	BET	0.8	668
13	ID	0.8	668
18	NAN	0.7	707
18	TNT	0.7	700
18	LIFE	0.7	688
18	FOOD	0.7	655
22	SYFY	0.6	614
22	A&E	0.6	594
22	TLC	0.6	555
22	SPK	0.6	535
22	BRAV	0.6	526
22	DSJR	0.6	422
22	HMM	0.6	308
29	MSNB	0.5	502
29	APL	0.5	478
29	TVLD	0.5	443
29	H2	0.5	331
33	CMDY	0.4	427
33	VH1	0.4	383
33	MTV	0.4	346
33	EN	0.4	343
33	NGC	0.4	324
33	WETV	0.4	300
33	FXX	0.4	274
33	NGWD	0.4	218
41	HLN	0.3	317
41	ESP2	0.3	293
41	DXD	0.3	279
41	CNBC	0.3	279
41	LMN	0.3	277
41	GSN	0.3	258

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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