



**SINCE 1947: THE AUTHORITATIVE MEDIA/MARKETING NEWSLETTER**

**PRIMEDIA STOCK GOING NOWHERE UNDER CONLIN WAS BETTER THAN BEFORE--AND AFTER.**

It closed at \$3.08 per share on October 15, 2003, the day the Henry Kravis-influenced **Primedia** board of directors hired 1995-2002 **International Data Group** president Kelly Conlin to be president/ceo. Last Monday (October 24), when Conlin left concurrent with the board likely to split the company into separately traded "consumer guides" (**Apartment Publications**, etc.) and "special interest" magazine/education (**Hot Rod**, **Motor Trend**, **Channel One**, etc.) units, the stock closed at \$3.05. Obviously, the Conlin-era divestitures of **New York** magazine/**Primedia Business Magazines** (both to Bruce Wasserstein) and **ABOUT.COM** (to **The New York Times Co.**) had zero effect on investors--but last week, post-Conlin, the price hovered around \$2. Meanwhile, per **The New York Times** (October 26), the Kravis-controlled preferred shares held firm. (For more on Conlin, see this week's min's b2b.)

- ◆ Fiscally, Conlin's Primedia record was stellar next to predecessor Tom Rogers. When the **NBC** alumnus succeeded the dismissed Bill Reilly on September 27, 1999, the stock closed at \$13.19. When he left on April 17, 2003, after the overpaid purchases of **ABOUT.COM** and **Emap USA**, the price was \$2.85. Rogers is now **TiVo** chairman/ceo.

**NEXT SEPTEMBER, THERE MAY BE MORE "EVERY DAY WITH RACHAEL RAY."**

The young and newly married food maven now has a **Reader's Digest Association** launched bimonthly to accompany her 11-times-a-day appearances (most taped) on cable's **Food Network**. Next goal for Ray is to have her "kitchen" in broadcast tv living rooms, as Oprah Winfrey's **Harpo Productions** will, with distributor **King World**, be pitching a syndicated **Rachael Ray** daytime talk program for the 2006-2007 season during January's **National Association of Television Program Executives** conference. Ray is a tv favorite of Winfrey's (press release says she will be appearing with Oprah "more frequently"), although they partner with magazine rivals (Winfrey's Q teams with **Hearst**).

**PRE-PARTUM BRITNEY SPEARS "BURSTS" THE OCTOBER "ELLE'S" NEWSSTAND.**

We are told by **Hachette Filipacchi Media U.S.** senior vp/consumer marketing Dave Leckey's office that Spears's "showing" will produce the best October single-copy numbers (specifics to come) in **Elle's** 21-year U.S. history. Editor-in-chief Robbie Myers's timing was excellent, as Spears's September 15 delivery occurred just after the issue's release. (continued on page 4)

**min CONTEST: BE A RUNNER'S WORLD "MARATHON MAN"/"MARATHON WOMAN"**

Only "running" needed to win a pair of the **RW**-designated "top running shoes" is to our contest on page 5. Then, meet the winner of min's Women's Health contest on page 10.

- **THE ATLANTIC AND CIVIL RIGHTS; RADAR IS GIRL (READER) CRAZY.. Page 2**
- **CAREY'S HIRING; CLINTON'S WRITING: THE WEEK'S UK \$\$\$.. Pages 3 and 4**
- **KATRINA RESCUERS ARE W-o-t-Y TO GLAMOUR & HEROES TO PEOPLE... Page 4**
- **PAPAZIAN WRITES OFF RATE BASES; FEIT ON MAG. ME-TOO... Pages 6 and 8**
- **LISA HUGHES'S CNT DECENNIAL; min TRICK-OR-TREAT..... Pages 7 and 10**

GUEST COMMENTARY  
 JONATHON SCOTT FEIT



### A CALL FOR MEDIA CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

The pages in the **Condé Nast** men's magazine were glossy, with every inch filled; the prose was taut and literary; the advertising pages were plentiful and seemed extremely expensive.

It was everything I had come to expect from Gentlemen's Quarterly ...in Men's Vogue.

CN's latest foray into the fashion world is curious beyond redundancy. Not merely because Men's Vogue--which will publish bimonthly in 2006--is directly competitive with GQ; but also because it signals a potential plateau in creativity at one of the world's largest and most famous publishing houses. Even the art direction of the two books is repetitive.

But their plight is neither unique, nor restricted to fashion titles. Across media, and particularly of late in magazines (and I bring several examples to demonstrate), there can be seen a laxity, perhaps even a laziness to be creative and innovate.

The American version of OK! debuted to depressing results, as predicted: Americans just don't worship our celebrities in the same way as the British, so mere replication is a recipe for disastrous sell-through. And on the cover of its October issue, Vanity Fair, the venerable bastion of literary journalism and darling of the **National Magazine Awards**, twice asked the question of whether so-and-so will "find happiness." Perhaps the editors ran out of clichés to fill the space?

Yet The Wall Street Journal, on September 20, reiterated the advent of the digital magazine, the next wave in publishing (**Magazines Further Experiment with Print's Digital Format**).

And in The Advertiser (June 2005), **Ford** global media manager Mark Kaline praised Zinio Systems digital publishing technology "as our first glimpse into the digital newsstand and all its possibilities." Despite the fact that they represent the free-for-all, non-edited, credibility-risking independent media ventures that used to be called "pirate radio," weblogs and podcasts are a lasting move on the part of individual consumers to not only specify, but also shape, the media that makes it through their attention sieves. The seeds of innovation have clearly been sewn--the question is, at what level?

The top-down transmission of the expertise of the industry leaders that are so often featured in min--like Kaline and **Carat**'s David Verklin, who have repeatedly advocated for the incorporation of new trends in technology into both editorial and advertising conceptions--seems mired in rigid tradition. The various industry associations with which we editors, publishers, and advertising marketers affiliate help maintain journalism's integrity. But no one questions their importance.

What needs to modify is the vehement advocacy of "church-state" splits (editorial-versus-advertising and print-versus-online-versus-broadcast) that ignore new integrative technologies and preferences toward *à la carte* receipt of every type of information, wherever and whenever. Pushing of the envelope--in magazines, newspapers, broadcast, and online--should be encouraged; the line shouldn't be so easy, or necessary, to skirt.

That way, the media won't just be the storytellers about the innovation of the 21st century: we'll be its champions, writing our autobiographies.

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