

Media on Ice (ISE)

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As we have come to experience it the electronic media is able to Inform its public, Shock or startle an audience and much of the time Entertain with varieties and forms of I, S and E imagery and content. The way an individual media stream, channel, event, or program combines these three elements tends over time to help it attract, repel and sort out an audience. Further, the chosen mix will oftentimes help it create and reinforce its brand and identity and thereby sell its message. To the degree that it elects to control its 'Ice' each such channel may mix and match informational content, emotional triggers and entertainment in ways it hopes will optimize its commercial prospects and reputation. But how far can it go, how far should it be allowed to go and what are the proper limits needed to make civil of this game? Herein we explore some aspects of this media puzzle, with an eye on its implications to revenue models, TV advertising and its future. We also address what the various new nonlinear technologies such as the DVR have inserted into the process and how their

"But how far can it go, how far should it be allowed to go and what are the proper limits needed to make civil of this game?"

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'future shock' has altered the media landscape. This approach leads naturally to the challenges and new opportunities the TV media as an industry now faces with its content and its advertising.

Media on Ice and a few hard choices to make, that is the nature of the little current revolution as we all take a ride on the 'E' train (Duke Ellington anyone?).

IN THE TWENTIES

In order to get into the ways of Media on Ice it is helpful to look back at the early days of the electronic media in search of the sources of Ice. When radio and television first came onto the scene generations ago few imagined what these

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"Validating the Middle Ground"



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novel forms of electronic media might evolve into. Or, for that matter, what radio and TV would come to mean viscerally and integrally to the lives of ordinary Americans. This also pertains to the essential role these media came to play for the many commercial institutions and others with a message to sell. During the early days many were of the opinion that the new technologies, and the tricks they could perform to dazzle, inform and entertain, would turn out to be but an amusing passing fancy. Little did anyone imagine! Today we are only too aware of the various benefits and dangers that the electronic media represents. The recent vehement reaction in the US Congress over expanded TV ownership rights serves to illustrate the key importance the political arena places on the perpetuation of an independent electronic media that is beyond the control of the political party in office at any point in time.

Partly because of doubt as to its commercial value, TV and radio services in the early days were offered as free services to listeners and viewers to be funded and sponsored by advertisers, nonprofit organizations and branches of government. No pay to play that was the basic name of the electronic media game. In return, via radio and television broadcasts, the many organizations and commercial interests quickly learned to assert a degree of real power over the public by entering its homes — with little or no controls placed over them to limit, block or filter the message. Thus a gentlemen's agreement was in effect struck between the public, the service

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providers and their clients — which some say turned out to be a Faustian bargain at best. The Shock element came to play a central role, as more and more action, sex and violence became the attention getter — the S in the Ice.

Early on Franklin D. Roosevelt, then President of the United States, was one of the first and most successful public persons to effectively use the power of radio to penetrate and influence the private lives of US citizens in their homes with his message. Others from Bob Hope to General Electric soon learned to play the same game. Over time the purveyors of media and their clients gained a considerable degree of control over a mostly passive ‘lean-back’ public. Let’s face it; those days are going, going, gone.

MEDIA ON ICE

The German philosopher Hegel was right when he asserted that each force or thesis generally leads to the rise of its opposite, or antithesis. As the pendulum does indeed sooner or later begin to swing in the opposite direction, a high degree of real power over its media experience has recently returned to the viewer’s side via the proliferation of new technologies. Consequently media power brokers are again faced with difficult choices and even need to reconsider their basic revenue models. For example, if they fail to make their programming compelling enough, guess what, the public now clicks away with their remote control. Similarly, if they insert the same old out-of-context lengthy advertising pods, surprise

surprise, the public adapts and learns to use DVRs to skip the ads. As to watching an entire program from beginning to end, multi-tasking aided by the pause button, the dual TV tuner and the nearby PC has made such traditional behavior more and more a thing of the past. As to the ever popular uses of shock value to keep viewers tuned in, alert and glandularly connected via action, sex, profanity, violence and loud noises, it seems the public, especially the parents, are beginning to fight back. All in all, the beginning of a media counter-revolution appears in the making.

As we have noted on prior occasions in this publication, when a three-party game is in play with only two parties controlling the action, it is the left out third party that usually suffers. In this case it is the TV advertiser who is victim to an unspoken agreement between advertising agencies and networks to continue to play the ad game by the old rules even though the old rules may no longer apply. This charade is likely to continue for some time, in part because former employees of ad agencies and media networks populate the media departments of many large corporations. They too believe that a little tweaking of the system here and there will do the trick and all will be well again — echoes of Mary Antoinette prior to the French Revolution and the guillotine? In truth no more than fifteen or twenty percent of all ads are being watched on linear TV today and that number is declining. To a lesser extent the same may be said of the viewing of programming in its entirety, as viewing

behavior has become more and more segmented, interrupted and parsed. Consequently, it is the advertiser who is often left in a lurch with a big ad budget, few effective metrics to gauge real value and a public that may no longer be getting its message.

If the media industry does not come to grips with the changing modes of viewing it now faces and lets go of its bad habit of pleading for redress and protection from the government at every turn, instead of addressing any of its present challenges, we are in for a very unsettled time in the electronic media business. The other day while awaiting the start of *Starsky and Hutch* at a nearby

movie theater we were treated to an MPAA promotional piece about the unfairness of illegal P2P video file sharing over the Internet — and it can indeed be unfair or criminal. All around in an audience of mostly young middle class adults in their twenties some

began to spontaneously boo and make cat calls. Apparently the popular culture has come to accept the idea that electronic content once captured is truly individually owned. The failure of the motion picture industry to effectively deal with this situation (except in a reactionary manner) is causing great angst and resulting in mindless pleadings for a congressional rescue. Unfortunately in terms of humanistic and marketing values this is probably a wrong-headed way of dealing with P2P and piracy as an all-in-one scenario. In truth the traditional way of looking at content, content ownership and copyright probably needs to be reexamined,

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reconsidered and adjusted to the modern electronic times. By its actions, which in part amount to preventing legal Fair Use on the part of the public, media content owners and service providers are in all likelihood achieving exactly the opposite result of that which they seek, as they are simultaneously alienating and empowering an increasingly hostile public. How dumb is that?

In some perturbation, as yet hidden from view in the mist of an unknown and uncertain future, the use of ISE in new formats within new types and forms of programming will come to the fore to help reposition the media product. This is likely to occur in concert with modified revenue models that better encompass the novel combinations of subscription, sponsored and pay-per-view tools that will surely arise. What is more certain is that the technological means that empower the electronic media will continue to advance and alter the balance of power among content owners, service providers, advertisers and the public. In such new circumstances, the media will need and want the public on its side. In counterpoint many in the electronic media today see the fifteen million college students in America as petty criminals; hardly a recipe for future cooperation and success with the media's most valued demographic group. Little is to be gained by holding on to rigid defensive positions, as all such barriers will be overcome by technology, leaving their defenders in an even more helpless and hopeless position. Also, as in earlier times the survival of the radio and also the bicycle have demonstrated, new gadgets and methods do not necessarily fully replace the old

ways and means, instead they may simply add to the total. Thus, for example, there is little to fear that the present day TV advertising paradigm will soon fail. Instead, newer better more effective ways of bringing out the advertising message may soon in the cauldron of inevitable change be discovered.

NEW QUESTIONS — NEW ANSWERS

The very nature of all of this transformational change pleads for a rational reevaluation of the use of Inform, Shock and Entertain as basic underlying elements in the electronic media's business toolbox. Perhaps even as the basis for a new metric by which to measure the electronic media space.

"The very nature of all of this transformational change pleads for a rational reevaluation of the use of Inform, Shock and Entertain..."

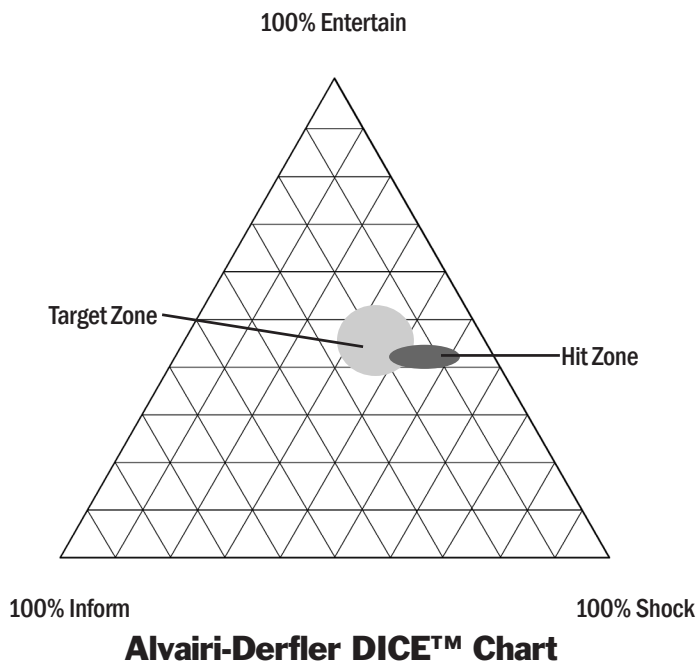
Q1: To what degree do all of the distractions in the home and the multitasking behavior of its residents affect TV viewing behavior and the role of Ice in the programming and advertising space?

Q2: How critical is it to the success of a media channel or program to operate under a high INCA (IN Context Advertising) standard to maintain the viability of TV advertising?

Q3: To what degree must the TV media in its programming and advertising adjust its Media on Ice targeting in order to continue to satisfy a more and more mobile and active audience?

Q4: As Interactive TV begins to populate the TV experience how can it be employed to reenergize and refocus the viewing public to its product, its service and its message?

How by means of an intuitive graphical presentation can one learn to visualize these media design puzzles as a goal oriented activity? Is there an easy way to give imagery to the problem? We think that there is. By combining all of the attention triggers that shock or startle the viewer into paying attention into one umbrella Shock component the multivariate nature of the task can be reduced to a manageable three variable parameter space containing only Shock, Inform and Entertain. When this approach is chosen, one can begin to identify Media on Ice zones of targeting and focus for programming and advertising using a triangular 'pyramid' diagram as the representation, as follows:



Here the top of the pyramid represents the 100-percent Entertain point, that is to say that any piece of media that fits as a point near the top of the diagram primarily contains entertainment such as humor, games and sport. At the bottom left apex of the pyramid is the 100-percent Inform point, that is to say that any point near this extreme represents media with a high degree of factual information, opinion, analysis and the like — which is therefore likely to bore the viewer and cause him or her to click away via the remote control. At the bottom right of the diagram is the 100-percent Shock point, where the media form is mostly devoid of very much informational or entertainment value, as in an electric prod used to move cattle along — a herd imagery that seems to fit the process of prodding the public into paying attention and staying tuned. As real world I, S and E media elements are seldom mutually exclusive but indeed highly interdependent, few if any electronic media programs or even segments ever populate the extremes of this diagram. Instead the 'action' is mostly in the middle regions of the pyramid where target areas for programming and advertising can be established that may suit the specific demographics of a chosen audience. Later on by means of selected metrics, one can by statistical methods compare the target zones to the actual viewing results achieved.

For readers who employ business statistics and are mathematically oriented, it is noteworthy that we are not targeting individual points on this chart as much as looking

for target zones. Indeed, as with so much in human affairs only so-called ‘fuzzy logic’ is appropriate and workable to describe what one may be seeking when it comes to Ice. Certainly a programmer, media buyer or advertiser can generally identify a zone or an area on a Diagram for Ice (Alvairi-Derfler DICE™ chart) to specify his or her intended target for the program or the ad. Later on, after the public views the piece, it may be possible to analyze its perceived impact on the viewer mind and thereby estimate the location and shape of such an actual ‘hit’ zone on the DICE chart — say by interviewing an appropriately selected sample viewer population. This approach may serve as the basis for a useful new metric to measure the degree of success a program or advertisement achieves toward meeting its audience targeting goals. While TV ratings are of the greatest importance, they are also transient and subject to competitive forces that may distort their results. Therefore a complimentary tool for targeting and measuring the success of a show or an ad on a DICE chart may provide an additional measure of achievement that can be incorporated into the overall creative process of: conceptualizing, designing, implementing and measuring the result.

As to the need for **in-context-advertising** (INCA) to hold an audience and keep it away from the remote control and the fast-forward button, the distance on the DICE between the target zone of a show and that of its contained advertising is a powerful measure of the degree to which INCA is achieved. Given that, it

behooves the network, the programmers and the advertisers to plan in advance for a combined impact of a show and its advertising so that compatibility is achieved in a way that is agreeable to its chosen audience demographic. The DICE chart can be a convenient way to work out such targeting.

ROLLING THE DICE

In this examination of how to better visualize the targeting of electronic media material including its programming and its advertising we have reduced the process to the selection of combinations of Inform, Shock and Entertain. This approach, designated herein as Media on Ice (ISE), can help to simplify the task of targeting programming and advertising to specific audiences such as sports fans, children, news hounds, lovers of drama and action and the like. By utilizing a DICE — or

Diagram for ICE — we enable an easy to understand and easy to use approach to conceptualizing, describing and targeting what we are after. By also incorporating the idea of a modulus of distraction set of tools — Alvairi-Derfler

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MOD™ tools — we can illuminate the problem of effectively dealing with the itinerant viewer who channel surfs, records and fast-forwards his or her viewing. Finally, by taking into account the need for INCA — IN Context Advertising — as a proper response for the viewer distraction MOD effect we can achieved a first level comprehensive response to the new technologies. Taken together these are some of the ways that present day changes in viewer behavior can be managed to improve the

effectiveness of TV content and advertising.

The easy to employ DICE chart is a useful tool in the process of redirecting TV content and advertising during this time of very rapid change, as Television struggles to compete in the new multimedia home. It is also helpful when working out the details of some of the new methods for achieving more effective TV advertising described in the CMS NewsLine trilogy:

1. On Advertising Metrics we have: *Making a Good Impression — The Search for New TV Advertising Metrics*, L.B. Willner with R.G. Kalsow, CMS NewsLine, September 2003.
2. On Advertising Context we have: *Inca Sunrise — New Age TV Advertising*, L.B. Willner with R.G. Kalsow, CMS NewsLine, November 2003.
3. On Advertising Remake we have: *Advertising Dressed as Content*, L.B. Willner with R.G. Kalsow, CMS NewsLine, February 2004.

Branded Entertainment by Design

By Stuart Volkow and Leo B. Willner

Branded entertainment has a long and varied history. In the late 1880s Sol Bloom, a teenage entrepreneurial promoter and theatre concession manager, came upon the idea of getting local merchants to pay to have their names inserted into the script of the shows at the Alcazar Theater in San Francisco — a breakthrough in embedded advertising. In 1922 one of the first radio commercials was transmitted in long-form by WEAJ in New York and it ran some ten minutes. In the early days of TV single sponsor programs dominated on shows like *Texaco Star Theater with Milton Berle*, the *Bob Hope Chrysler Hour* and the like. The sponsored programming model thrived throughout the golden age of radio and the early days of television. As the saying

goes: *The end of all our learning is to arrive back at the beginning, as if to see it for the first time.* So it is today with TV advertising now in danger and in flux.

Herein we look at Branded Entertainment as a variety of in context advertising or INCA and as a return to the successful ways of early radio and TV. Nowadays the line between programming and advertising is becoming fuzzier, harkening back to the bygone era of the Single Sponsor and the embedded message. Enter branded entertainment, as sponsored programming that does not flaunt its brand, for example infomercials that are devoid of boorish droll and the annoying hard sell. Promotion disguised as entertainment with seamlessly embedded advertising messages that cannot be

zapped, or TiVo skipped — now that's the ticket.

Media clutter, audience fragmentation, and interactivity, all conspire to change the game, dilute media messaging, and ultimately put more control into the hands of the consumer. At the recent CTAM Digital Broadband confab in LA, Mr. Paul Woidke, VP Technology of Comcast Advertising Sales noted that more than 60-percent of consumers skip the 30-second spot, putting the \$60 billion TV ad business into an awkward dilemma. Such behavior suggests that the current TV advertising paradigm may need to be redesigned or else risk losing much of its audience and its impact.

No media company has grasped the opportunity and the challenge of INCA or **in context** advertising more than the E.W. Scripps Company. It owns The Food Network, Home and Garden Television (HGTV) and now the FINE LIVING channel. All of these networks emphasize 'lifestyle programming'. Fine Living has embraced the totality of end-to-end inexorably integrated programming and advertising. Fine Living breaks the mold of advertising by essentially becoming a wall-to-wall infomercial with its Fine Living Essentials and Fine Ideas and sponsored interstitials. Fine Living promises 'integrated sponsorship messaging' from show openings to original long-form ads as well as short form programming containing 'take away' information for a 'pre-qualified' audience. As stated in their 2002 annual report; "an innovative

format that glides seamlessly from programming to advertising."

Branded Entertainment comes in many forms and is exploding across the media landscape. BMW's foray into short film, which predates Fine Living by two years, promotes its brand using the likes of the Mercedes 2002 faux theatrical trailer *Lucky Star* to sell its message. The success of BMW Films such as *The Hire* (www.bmwfilms.com) spawned a cadre of similar online episodic adventures including one of the most viewed shows on the site www.goarmy.com. Here one can vicariously experience an adrenaline filled high risk-reward day in the life of soldiers. It follows that some viewers may be intrigued enough to look into enlisting in the Army, and so it goes.

There are many other branded entertainment methods by which to get well placed on the Inform, Shock, and Entertainment (ISE) continuum where advertising

and entertainment meet dimension. The Chrysler Million Dollar Film Festival (www.chryslermdff.com) produced by LA agency HYPNOTIC hit the mark by inviting aspiring filmmakers to compete at Cannes in 'Extreme Filmmaking'. The five finalists competed to win a chance at a Universal Pictures contract to produce their own million dollar budget feature. The only requirement was to feature the Chrysler PT Cruiser, or the Chrysler Crossfire. In a groundbreaking deal with TiVo, Chrysler used the TiVo 'Showcase' feature to lure subscribers to record the five finalist shorts, and view 'long-form' video

"Such behavior suggests that the current TV advertising paradigm may need to be redesigned or else risk losing much of its audience and its impact."

clips promoting the 2004 Crossfire. For not much more than the cost of producing and airing a commercial, Chrysler got their message across to a targeted motivated viewership. This strategy seems to have worked since Chrysler is at it again with its sponsorship of NBC's *The Apprentice*.

Ford and its agency J. Walter Thompson have also shown imagination and creativity with branded entertainment. For two seasons they experimented with book ends three minute long-form ads around an interruption-free season premier of the hit show '24'. The ads were made to appear to be a part of the show or at least in context with the content. In another product integration first, Ford went back to the single sponsor model of the 1950s and created the 2002 survivor-like reality series *No Boundaries* wherein 15 contestants were taken on an extreme 2,000 mile trek across North America while using Ford vehicles in all sorts of conditions. In another example, HGTV's Million Dollar Dream Home Giveaway managed to sign up 28 million viewers! As a targeted advertising bonanza this was a great sponsorship opportunity for GMC.

It is always good for business when an advertiser gets TiVo users to record and watch its branded entertaining short films. It is even more helpful when that consumer subsequently gets up off the couch and experiences the branded product first hand. In this way experience marketing brings the process full circle as the brand begins to blur into the ambient reality and become a part of the

lifestyle and experience of the consumer. The effectiveness of such advertising moves along a continuum of consumer involvement from the initial 'leave me alone' to 'I need a new car so show me'. The top-of-mind brands will by these means not only become a part of the media landscape but also a part of the offline experience of the consumer.

That the idea of branded entertainment is exploding is exemplified by the fact that the world's largest advertising conglomerate, Omnicom, has established a branded entertainment group to produce such TV shows for its clients. Under the radar screen of old guard media conglomerates such as Omnicom and IPG, is a growing ecosystem of agencies

"...get well placed on the Inform, Shock, and Entertainment (ISE) continuum where advertising and entertainment meet dimension."

specializing in branding entertainment such as Pier 3 Entertainment, Hypnotic, iTVX, Integrated Entertainment Partners, CocoJambo, A.D.D. Marketing, Premier Entertainment Services, and Moosylvania. These agencies are beginning to shape the next generation of advertising on and off the screen, embedded, seamless, and branded and mostly in context. Telling is A.D.D. Marketing's professed use of so called 'street teams' for college campus marketing where they "carefully select schools, create materials, and then carpet bomb them until you have an awareness level and penetration that will make your competitors heads spin."

Enough about branding. How about joining us for a Bacardi Limon and Coke at the FOX Sports Bar while we watch some Visa NASCAR Races on ESPN?

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(Leo Willner, Greg Kalsow and Stuart Volkow contributed to this issue. In order to discuss any of these points with the authors, please e-mail them at: leo@ad-assoc.com, greg@ad-assoc.com, stuart@ad-assoc.com)

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—Georgia Pech, Editor]

KALSOW'S BACK-CHANNEL: *"Validating the Middle Ground"*

■ Free No More — As Comcast now seeks to acquire Disney and thereby also gain control over ABC News, more and more folks are alarmed by the fact that ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX news are all under the hegemony of vast corporate conglomerates — while the needs and interests of a free public may at times appear an orphan. The often maligned comments of Ralph Nader about excessive corporate power may indeed echo the frustrations of a perpetual outsider, but perhaps they also resonate some truth as they warn of a takeover of Washington DC by corporate interests. If the electronic press were indeed a captive, then the printed media would be the only 'free' and 'independent' press that remains. With the likes of News Corp and The Tribune working to meld their printed media arms and electronic press outlets into common empires, will this continue to be the case for much longer? Indeed, what is the truth about the survivability of an independent American press, and can any democracy long survive without a free and unencumbered press? It seems fair to note that many among those who worry about such things feel that the US press coverage of the war in Iraq shows marked differences in apparent bias and in the comprehensiveness of coverage versus that found in the English and German press. Such a difference has been noted in the reporting of civilian casualties and collateral damage. Is it simply that the US media giants have reason to fear for their broadcast licenses — or what?

■ Privacy A Vagrant — All in all, as the electronic gateway into the sanctum sanctorium that was the home — and thereby into the personal lives of the people — was swung open by new media an amazing transformation took place in the lives of the people. Many no longer recall that such a notorious and famous person as Howard Hughes would travel alone incognito throughout the country for months on end

without a driver's license or credit card — try that trick today with Big Brother watching and the entire commercial community keeping track of your every move.

Prior to that time no one but a friend, invited guest or a family member dared invade the privacy or sanctity of the home — that is without a search warrant as authorized and limited by the provisions of the 4th Amendment to the US Constitution. Even the US Mail was left outside the door. No trespassing meant no trespassing and a person's home was truly his or her castle to live in in privacy and in peace beyond the unwanted reach of all persons — but no more. That very idea now seems lost in the mist raised by so much revolutionary change, a vagrant in the fog of time, an anachronism devoid of its former meaning. How dare any in the public imagine that it has the right to block unwanted advertising, telephone calls or other intrusions into the home? Or even, via Internet invasions, the private letters and communications of individual persons. No search warrant needed here, just a little software to straddle the firewall, and bingo you are into someone else's Pandora box.

As famously expressed, the media is now indeed the message and it has powerful ways to penetrate the sanctity of the home — like it or not. The heck with the public if it does not choose to respect any banner, poster, video or other message paid for with hard cash by media company advertisers and clients. These folks claim the right to invade the home whenever and however they see fit — after all, they pay for the privilege and intend to use it. Although many electronic device users don't appreciate popup ads on their PC screens and endless mindless advertising pods on their radios and TVs, few among the media providers really care how others may feel about it. The same goes for some public and private institutions and their newfound means of invading and violating the privacy of the citizenry? Locking the barn door will not work, as the electronic gate is quite porous and open to those who choose to play the game. The idea of an omnipresent 'peeping Tom' is becoming an empowering benefit for commercial interests and government snoopers who choose this route. Furthermore, few with the power to do anything about it seem highly motivated to stop such incursions into the 'private' affairs of people. Even the likes of a Senator John McCain may at times seem soft on this issue.

[Your mileage may vary. —RGK]

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Georgia Pech, Editor
CMS NewsLine