

Opening Remarks  
**PCNY Looks at Sunday**  
July 28, 2004

**USA WEEKEND – Jack Curry, Executive Editor**

Thank you, Peter. I sat next to somebody on the plane who was hacking the whole way up, so this is what you'd call in the medical field rapid onset, I got something already. So I'm sorry if I sound a little choked up to be here, but I am.

So I want to just take my time here to help you to better understand the *USA WEEKEND* and, for that matter, *PARADE* business model. We're distributed by 600 different newspapers across the country, and in a lot of those newspapers we're inserted in what they call what they call the circular bag. It's the plastic bag in which the TV book, the circulars, the coupons and also *USA WEEKEND* appear. In other words, it's a little buried. And what helps us enormously is if the newspapers actually promote what's in our magazine. So we're trying every week to come up with material on a national level that will have a high level of exclusivity and interest for these newspapers, all of whom have their own enterprise sections, all of whom have their own editors saying, "Promote my stuff, promote my stuff!"

Also, what you should know is that I'm in the newspaper business. I'm a magazine and I think like a magazine, but I'm distributed by a newspaper so I have to think about both worlds. Luckily, the newspaper business is finally getting wise to the fact that you've got to promote. You've actually got to tell readers what's in the newspaper and have stuff in the newspaper that they actually want to read. It's not like homework anymore; they have to think more like magazines. There has to be a reward, there has to be something special every week because basically the newspaper business is in a little bit of trouble - no offense, Colleen – Colleen carries my magazine so she's... right on!

So for at least the major stories, a cover story, here's the difficulty: we have to cover things on a national level that A) our competitors are carrying, B) our newspapers are carrying or covering and C) that we have to come up with an angle that's so good, so exclusive, so unique to *USA WEEKEND* that it won't duplicate what the newspapers are doing. It won't be the same as perhaps what *PARADE* is doing. And I'm talking about things like the Super Bowl, I'm talking about things like Christmas or holidays, I'm talking about things like the Oscars. These are the major pop culture events. When you're going into 25 million households you really can't write about *NIP AND TUCK* because *NIP AND TUCK* may be hot but I got 25 million readers and *NIP AND TUCK* would like to have 1/100 of that. So basically I have to, even on the pop culture front it's like with *SPIDERMAN* or *X-MEN*, what can I do for these major pop culture events – and by pop culture events I mean *SPIDERMAN*, the Olympics, Super Bowl but also Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Back-to-School. That's the standard I'm looking for: What is here that is truly exclusive that will break through? I know that in my local newspaper they're going to have wall-to-wall coverage of the Olympics, so what can I offer them that is anything different? For example, three months ago, I'm a swimmer so I knew that Michael Phelps is going to be the man who is going to be the Mark Spitz of this summer's Olympics. Luckily he lives in Baltimore so he was nearby and I thought, "What can we do with Michael Phelps that will be unique to us?" I don't know what

*PARADE* has done, but we got Michael Phelps to pose with the *USA WEEKEND* towel. I know no one else will have that, it's like the poster boy of the Olympics and we're going to have a nice little headline, "Our Man in Athens". And by that we mean "OUR man in Athens!" So we had to think very hard about what we could do exclusively there because we knew the Olympics was going to be a hugely covered event.

We have a Teen Lyric-Writing contest, which is one of our annual programs. We have Make a Difference Day – a good way to pitch *USA WEEKEND* is to know the annual programs that we have. They are our Teen Lyric-Writing contest, a Teen Survey, Make a Difference day is a huge annual project that we have. Those are large projects that have a lot of interest at the community level but we're always trying to elevate it a notch, so we have judges for the Teen Lyric-Writing contest and this year we had Usher. So, I have to be frank, unless you're one of the newspapers that has the winner of the Teen Lyric-Writing contest you may not care about it, but everybody's going to care about having an Usher interview in their paper, so we inject a national level of exclusivity into some of our programs by getting high-level stars.

I was mentioning that every year we have to come up with Thanksgiving stories, Christmas stories - that's one of the perennial editorial challenges. So every year if you want to think about "Oh, God, I have to come up with Christmas stories and Thanksgiving stories," but what you don't necessarily have to come up with Mother's Day stories, Father's Day stories or Fourth of July stories. But if you think of the calendar, that's always going to give us a peg and it'll also help your story from just sitting in some queue. If it's a Christmas story it's got to run roughly between December 1<sup>st</sup> and December 25<sup>th</sup>, so the benefit there is that you're helping us out with content that we need and you're also more assured that it's going to get in the magazine and not just sit in a queue. So showing the kind of level of exclusivity that we're looking for, everybody knows *A Christmas Carol*, so we got Charles Dickens' great-great-granddaughter to write an update for *A Christmas Carol*, so no one else would have that. People might have local takes on *A Christmas Carol* or *A Christmas Carol Peoria-Style*, but I don't think anybody else would have that.

With major movies, we're already talking to Warner Brothers about *BATMAN* for next year. We had a *SPIDERMAN* poster. One of the things we try to do is to use our clout and the fact that we can deliver 25 million readers to get the stars and to get the studios to do something for us that they may not do even for *TIME* or *NEWSWEEK* or certainly for the local paper in which we're carried. We knew *X-MEN* would be big so we got Hugh Jackman to pose for us twice, once as "Wolverine" and once as Hugh Jackman and then we made it into a poster which is something that is very collectable. The newspapers will promote this, they all have *X-MEN* stories, they might have an interview with Jackman but no one will have a poster because it's something that we made exclusively. So it's all about that level of exclusivity. We have to have Oscar coverage because it's we're a national entertainment magazine. A couple of years ago Steve Martin was going to be the host, everybody knows Steve Martin's going to be the host, sis we want just a Steve Martin story? No, because everybody would have that. So we concocted this story because it was the year they moved the Oscars up so it was closer to the Super Bowl than ever, so we came up with a story. They are the two major television events of the year so we decided, "How can we get something unique on the Super Bowl and the Oscars?" So we got Keyshawn Johnson to pose with Steve Martin,

which we knew no one else would have because if you know about deadlines and timing, we had to have both a Tampa Bay Buccaneer ready to go and I can't remember who they played, but literally the day after they won the quarterback went to Disneyland and Keyshawn Johnson came to this photo shoot. We had to have it set up with that kind of timing.

So think of *anything* that can help us to get a national-level story that allows us to serve our newspaper's need to have promotable items. It really has to be national, I've already heard a couple of things pitched to me that I said, "I don't hear a national angle there." If you have a local client of any kind you have to think, "Where is the national aspect to this?"

And just to clear up another mistake that I often hear, and we're our own worst enemies, I know that logo looks like *USA TODAY*. I've probably almost said *USA TODAY* several times. We love to have things that get us on television as well, we like to be on *ACCESS HOLLYWOOD* we like to be on *THE TODAY SHOW*, we've been on all those shows, I can't tell you how many times the clip that we get is Matt Lauer going, because we tell them, "It's *USA WEEKEND!* It's *USA WEEKEND!* Don't say *USA TODAY!*" so I know the producers said it, the tendency is to just to go... We have Matt Lauer going "And here's a segment from *USA* (gag-gag) *WEEKEND...*" It's this logo and it's our own mistake. We have nothing to do with *USA TODAY*, we're all put out by Gannett as is *THE DETROIT FREE-PRESS*, *THE INDIANAPOLIS SUN*, *BASEBALL WEEKLY*, these are all independent entities. *USA WEEKEND* and *USA TODAY*, the only similarity is the logo. So don't think you can double pitch and don't think we bundle take. Basically each one of these entities are separate.

There you go. That's mine!