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CLOSURES OF "ELLEGIRL"/"MPH" MEAN MORE BAD LUCK FOR CHRISTINA KELLY/BOB FRITZE...

Although they do not personally know each other, both give a 2006 definition (albeit less tragic) to Rabbi Harold Kushner's 1981 classic *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. Last Tuesday (April 4) Ellegirl editor-in-chief (since July 2005) Kelly found herself out of a job when **Hachette Filipacchi Media U.S.** chairman/ceo (since June 1999) Jack Kliger closed the 600,000 circulation magazine (name remains electronically on the Internet and cell phones, with a twice-a-year print version that will be part of Elle Accessories). Decision came 27 months after Kelly ended a 2½-year stint as YM editor-in-chief after being lied to by the then-Dan Brewster-led **Gruner + Jahr USA Publishing** hierarchy about circulation (YM was subsequently folded by Brewster successor Russell Denson, and G+J USA was dissolved last June; see story below). "What Jack did was a business decision that he regrets as much as me," Kelly says. "What happened at G+J was far worse." Kelly is highly respected (now-Justine merchandising director Pat Cantor speaks highly of her expertise of the teen market from their being late-1980s colleagues at Sassy), and further proof of her character is on page 10. (text continues on page 4; more on Kelly on page 10)

...WHILE SUE GERAMIAN, WHO HAD BAD LUCK, GETS GOOD LUCK.

When she became **Gruner + Jahr USA Publishing** vp/corporate communications in 1997, the names *Dan Brewster* and *Rosie O'Donnell* were far removed from the company. Their subsequent connection, and their being the centerpiece to much (but not all) of the G+J chaos in 2002/2003/2004/2005, proved Geramian's mettle. But on May 24, 2005, Geramian--like everyone at G+J USA from president Russell Denson (Brewster's successor) on down--was surprised by German parent **Bertelsmann AG's** firesale of the unit to **Meredith** (Child/Family Circle/Fitness/Parents and **Mansueto Ventures** (Fast Company/Inc.)), and a month later she was out of a full-time job. (continued on page 4)

Guest Commentary, by Jonathon Scott Feit:

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TARGETING THE READER COMES FROM THE GUT.

In January 2005, John Huey, then **Time Inc.** editorial director (now editor-in-chief), met with me in his office. Though I was then the 23-year-old editor/publisher of up-start Citizen Culture, I had a bevy of formal and informal encounters with top executives (Time Inc. chairman/ceo Ann Moore, then-Wall Street Journal publisher Karen Elliott House, etc.), so my knees were not shaking when Huey greeted me.

- ◆ Then, I showed Huey the third issue of Citizen Culture, and after offering a few comments on content and design, he shook my core:

When I started Southpoint [1990], it went nine issues. You've got six more to go.

(continued on page 5)

- **BOOKS BY EVANS & NOVOGROD; 15 YEARS OF WELLS & ALLURE. Pages 2 and 3**
- **RUNNER'S WORLD & JILL CARROLL; MONEY & H'SE BEAUTIFUL. Pages 3 and 4**
- **DANA COWIN & CINDI LEIVE DEFINE CLASS; UH-O (COVER)... Pages 3 and 7**
- **MAXIM "MOBILE"; MEET THE BRIDES; GENDRON'S OVERTIME... Pages 6 and 9**
- **KELLY AND PARSONS MULL "MAKEOVERS"; PREVENTION WINNERS..... Page 10**

GUEST COMMENTARY
JONATHON SCOTT FEIT



"GUT" MARKETING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE MAGAZINE BUSINESS
(continued from page 1)

John Huey's words clanged against my business sense. I was determined to publish nine issues...and more. I refused to become a statistic: *mine would not be one of the 90-plus percentage of magazine launches that fail each year.*

Five months later, the print version of Citizen Culture went on hiatus. The June 20, 2005, min first reported our announced December 2005 re-launch as an all-digitally delivered consumer magazine. The decision had relatively little to do with money or content (the crucial question in John Huey's challenge), and everything to do with marketing strategy.

I'm married to no medium, and I'm certainly no digital wonk. I am but a consumer psychologist--a businessman and editor--keenly observant of the nature and preferences of my audience. Digitally targeting young professionals who are at their computers day-in/day-out made sense on every level.

Observation makes perfect when it comes to market and medium selection. Consumer marketing isn't rocket science (though focus groups and surveys can further one's grasp of the psychodynamics at work). Understanding any two of the following three pieces of information--content, form, audience--reveals the product's "Perfect Market."

Yet the magazine industry is a graveyard of failed titles--not because of a substandard product, per se, but rather, a lack of intimate audience knowledge. Flash and pizzazz--in short, sensationalism--are too often substituted for sustainable usability.

Consider the late Radar. I asked some former staff members about keeping it "digitally alive," but I was told that was never a serious consideration. The company wasted more than \$10 million on a mistakenly print-driven strategy to reach a core audience that was web- and tech-savvy.

Every technology requires a certain type of reader and subject matter to fit. Digital publishing makes little sense for bridal magazines, for example, which simply aren't read online. Rather, they're devoured in stacks by hyper-excited brides-to-be and their friends. (Yet, even here, as The New York Times reported on April 2, the relaunched **BRIDES.COM** is becoming a major component.)

BusinessWeek stands out among magazines as the perfect vehicle to test-drive new media (with "MediaCentric" columnist Jon Fine ever on the lookout) as it has readers who are tech-savvy, on the go, and open to every technology that will speed and streamline information delivery.

Yet, **News Corp.**'s purchase of **MYSFACE.COM**--its intention to milk that independent, peer-to-peer platform as an advertising conduit--shows a complete lack of understanding about the purpose of underground communications. Touching **MYSFACE**'s content will destroy its appeal by making users feel "watched"; it will, inevitably, shrivel as its users seek free expression elsewhere.

Failure to grasp an audience's psychodynamics can result in dire, embarrassing circumstances. At my first **American Society of Magazine Editors** dinner, I hastily asked Cargo editor-in-chief Ariel Foxman, "Do men really shop that way?" I thought that I might have been presumptuous, but now we all know that title's fate.

Dwell president/publisher Michela O'Connor Abrams has said that the name of the game in 21st-century publishing is to be where, when, and how the readers want. Here's the secret: *they* will provide the answers. We businesspeople need know scarcely more than how to pay attention.

Jonathon Scott Feit, M.A., is chief editor and publisher of Citizen Culture, the world's first all-digitally delivered magazine specifically targeting young professionals, and it is read in over 53 countries. At 24 years old, Feit is the youngest lecturer in **Boston University's** journalism department, and he is at work on a book about the consumer psychology behind new media publishing.