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Zucker



Reilly

## Spidey drops 'Anchor'

*Ferrell's \$28 mil is good news for DreamWorks*

"Spider-Man" spreads out international boxoffice web. See page 4.

By Brian Fuson

Everyone's favorite wall crawler clung to the top spot for the second consecutive weekend in North America as Sony's "Spider-Man 2" caught an estimated \$46 million in its boxoffice web. The sophomore weekend gross for the webbed one was off a relatively low 48% from the first three days of the four-day holiday debut a week earlier.

The Tobey Maguire starrer has racked up an estimated \$257.3 million in just 12 days — streaking past the \$200 million milestone in a record eight days; the \$250 million mark in a record 12 days — and swings toward the \$300 million benchmark at a sizzling pace. The Sam Raimi-directed sequel should hit the \$300 million mark somewhere near the record 18 days it took DreamWorks' "Shrek 2."



News delivers: "Anchorman's" Will Ferrell ignites the b.o. with strong bow.

Meanwhile, the boxoffice forecast for DreamWorks' "Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy" looks bright and sunny. The Will Ferrell starrer, a comedy spoof about a local news anchor in the 1970s from director Adam

See **BOXOFFICE** on page 18

## Zucker: Fox 'Champ' hits below belt

By Andrew Wallenstein

Furious with Fox for counterpunching "The Contender" with a boxing series of its own, NBC Universal Television Group president Jeff Zucker came out swinging Saturday during the opening session of NBC's portion of the summer Television Critics Assn. press tour.

"Quite frankly, they used to be innovators, and now they're imitators," Zucker said of Fox, See **TCA** on page 19

## Prochnow pumping for 'Arnold' bio

By Andrew Wallenstein

A&E is in negotiations with Jurgen Prochnow to play the role of Arnold Schwarzenegger in the upcoming biopic "See Arnold Run."



Prochnow

While terms of the contract are still being finalized, A&E is looking to tap the German-born Prochnow ("The English Patient") for "Arnold," which is scheduled to begin shooting

See **"ARNOLD"** on page 19

## PTC tries softer approach in film foray

By Gail Schiller

The Parents Television Council, the watchdog group known for its fierce criticism of the broadcast networks, is expanding its purview to the film world, but this time the nonprofit group headed by conservative pundit L. Brent Bozell is taking a much more conciliatory approach.

To further its mission of getting Hollywood to produce more family-friendly fare, the PTC has started issuing seals of approval for theatrical releases it sanctions while working with studios to hold grass-roots screenings and promote the films it endorses to its 860,000 members in a variety of other ways.

And unlike many of the television networks — which view the PTC with suspicion if not outright scorn — some of the movie studios have welcomed its endorsements as another potential marketing tool that could help them reach family audiences.

"When marketing a family film, it is always helpful to have the support of an organization such as the Parents Television Council," said a spokeswoman for New Line Cinema, which used the PTC seal in advertisements for 2003's "Secondhand Lions." "The seal of approval helps audiences

identify family-friendly product and also lends credibility to a film targeted to that audience."

A Miramax spokeswoman said the PTC seal of approval helped the studio position its recent feature "Ella Enchanted" as a "film that offers quality entertainment for the entire family."

Warner Bros. Pictures used the seal in print ads for its Mary-kate and Ashley Olsen movie "New York Minute," and Universal Pictures is employing it for "Two Brothers."

The PTC has also granted seals to such recent Walt Disney See **PTC** on page 17



## PTC

*Continued from page 1—*

Co. feature releases as "America's Heart and Soul," "Finding Nemo," "Freaky Friday," "The Lizzie McGuire Movie" and "Holes," and Sony Pictures/Revolution Studios' 2003 "Radio." Another Warner Bros. Pictures film opening July 16, "A Cinderella Story" starring Hilary Duff, has also earned the seal.

Representatives from Disney and Sony declined comment on whether they used the seals in their ads for all of those films, though recent newspaper ads for "America's Heart and Soul," which opened July 2, have featured the seal.

In years past, Disney has been a prime target of Bozell, who has railed against the studio's "continuing assault on traditional values" by promoting a "homosexual lifestyle" through films it has released and programs carried on ABC. Before forming the Los Angeles-based PTC in 1995 as an offshoot of his Alexandria, Va.-based Media Research Center, Bozell helped lead the 1992 outcry among conservatives, including then-Vice President Dan Quayle, over the CBS comedy "Murphy Brown" and the decision of Candice Bergen's character to become a single mother.

World Wrestling Entertainment has also been in the PTC's crosshairs for what Bozell has described as the wanton vulgarity and sexuality it showcases in the ring. In 2002, the PTC had to pay \$3.5 million to WWE to settle a defamation lawsuit stemming from the PTC's claims in press releases that WWE programs were linked to the deaths of four children. Bozell also had to admit that the PTC had exaggerated the number of advertisers that had pulled out of WWE programming as a result of the PTC's boycott campaign.

While the PTC issued its first seal of approval to a film in late 2002, Lara Mahaney, the PTC's director of corporate and entertainment affairs, says the council's full-fledged campaign involving grass-roots screenings and promotions was launched in earnest only this year. The PTC has tried to be as proactive with its seal-of-approval program in the television realm but none of the networks, with the exception of Pax TV, have used the seal in

their marketing campaigns.

"If you're a dog that's constantly getting hit over the head by somebody, you're going to be quite suspicious of that somebody when they suddenly want to come over and give you a nice pat," says one network executive who declined to be named. "This organization is known as a watchdog group that bashes the networks. That doesn't provide great incentive to want to legitimize any type of marketing effort that they have."

Indeed, the push to apply the PTC seal of approval to films could be seen as a marketing ini-



**"There are certain times the entertainment industry has to be criticized and rightly so.**

**On the other hand, they should be applauded as much or even more so for what they do right."**

**— Parents Television Council executive Lara Mahaney**

tiative for the PTC itself. Having the logo prominently featured in newspaper ads may in time raise the group's profile beyond the narrow world of media watchdog organizations. Screening events could also provide an incentive for new members to join the PTC, but Mahaney denied that the PTC's outreach to filmdom had anything to do with burnishing the PTC's own image.

"Nobody is going to join the PTC to get free screenings. This is not a tool we use to grow our membership," Mahaney says. "The screenings benefit the studios. ... They help the studios promote films for free to an audience that wants to see that genre and it allows us to be a little bit more fair and balanced in what we do as an organization."

From the PTC's perspective, the key difference between film and television content is that it is far easier for children and young teens to find risqué or violent TV programs than it is for them to get into an R-rated movie.

The PTC's Web site does offer reviews of current films and DVDs — for example, the current PG-13 comedy hit "Dodgeball" is rated a C- overall, with a D+ for its language — but the group has refrained from any overall critiques of the film industry as the report cards it has issued in the tallying of instances of sex and violence found on broadcast TV.

To date, the PTC has awarded its seal to only one PG-13 film,

Universal's 2002 "The Emperor's Club" — all the rest have been either G- or PG. It has steered clear of "Shrek 2" and "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban," both PG-rated movies.

Mahaney says most of the studios that have received the seals have asked the PTC to review their films, although the PTC has approached certain studios about issuing the seals.

Mahaney says that when a film receives the council's equivalent of the Good Housekeeping seal of approval, the PTC alerts its members via e-mail and, if time allows, in its monthly newsletter; posts a

wood studios, the organization is still a largely considered a pariah in the television industry.

Mahaney acknowledges that the PTC faces an uphill battle with the networks. But the group has no plans to stop its criticism of broadcasters, especially at a time when indecency on the airwaves is a hot topic on Capitol Hill.

The PTC claims credit for orchestrating a quarter of the more than 500,000 complaints that flooded the FCC over Janet Jackson's Super Bowl breast-baring incident, and the PTC also spearheaded a recent campaign against radio shock jock Howard Stern.

The PTC also recently took another hard-line approach with the networks by sending letters to 300 top advertisers and nearly 160 media buyers, urging them to advertise on the shows it has sanctioned while warning them that they have an obligation to "act responsibly when allocating their advertising budgets."

From the networks' perspective, some executives say privately that they don't want to appear to be favoring the PTC over similar advocacy groups while others don't think the PTC seals or outreach efforts will do much to bring viewers to the set.

"Television publicity and promotion just doesn't lend itself to using these seals," says one network executive who declined to be named. "Studios go from film to film. If they make a marketing mistake, they just don't repeat it. In television, you're dealing with a marketing campaign for a whole season."

Noting that at least six of the 18 shows that PTC sanctioned to its members during the 2003-04 season had been canceled — including ABC sitcoms "Married to the Kellys" and "Life With Bonnie" and NBC's "The Tracy Morgan Show" — one network executive called the PTC seal the "kiss of death."

But even though many regard the PTC as a scold, the organization is clearly working to change its image within the entertainment industry, at least to a certain degree.

"There are certain times the entertainment industry has to be criticized, and rightly so. On the other hand, they should be applauded as much or even more so for what they do right," Mahaney says. "If you're only hitting people over the head, maybe your criticism doesn't seem as valid." ■

review of the film on its Web site; links its Web site to the film's site; provides quotes that can be used in film ads; hosts screenings in the 16 cities where it has grass-roots chapters when given enough notice, and instructs its chapters to send e-mails to their local member lists announcing theater locations and times for the film.

In addition, Mahaney says the PTC alerts the numerous organizations in its extensive database that want family-friendly entertainment — groups, she says, that range "as far right as Focus on the Family to as far left as the National Organization for Women."

The PTC also sees opportunities in the fast-growing world of video games, where the PTC intends to apply its seal-of-approval program as well. With the PTC expanding its activities on a number of fronts, Mahaney says that the non-profit group has contemplated a name change.

Film marketers say that even though the PTC is not a well-known commodity to the public, their seals in film ads, as well as their campaigns, could definitely help a film's chances of success.

"The name of the organization provides enough of an assurance and makes it sound like the film has got a seal of approval from parents all over the place," says Mitch Litvak, president of the L.A. Office, a marketing firm.

While the PTC's friendlier approach seems to be working, at least to some degree, with Holly-