

December 2004

"To be an American is a complex fate."—Henry James

Vol. XIII, No. 11

Signals in the Static: New mom **Julia Roberts** is the voiceover for AOL's new commercials. **Stevie Wonder's** new studio album, the first in a decade, will be released in April. Two unpublished songs by **John Lennon** will debut in the new musical about his life that will open on Broadway in August. Showtime will produce *Two Blind Mice*, a film about the soured relationship between Disney's **Michael Eisner** and **Michael Ovitz**. **Ron Howard** and **Brian Grazer** will produce an eight hour miniseries for NBC based on the *9/11 Commission Report*. A new **Muppets** movie will air on ABC in May. Retired: **John W. Young**, 74, the longest serving astronaut in history. Young commanded the first shuttle mission, flew twice to the moon, and was the first person to fly in space six times. Died: Illustrator **Harry Lampert**, 88, creator of the Flash comic character; **Dr. Ancel Keys**, 100, promoter of the Mediterranean diet that claims to protect against heart disease.

**Core Mobility** launches "Voice SMS," which allows the user to leave a voice message in someone's e-mail inbox or on their cell phone—without giving the recipient a chance to answer live. **Oregon** is working on a toll-road system that uses GPS data and odometer readings to collect fuel taxes on each gallon, based on the amount a motorist drives. **Starbucks** and **Jim Beam** will roll out Starbucks Coffee Liqueur next year. **Gap** opens a women's accessories store, called **Love**, on NYC's 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. **AARP** has entered into a marketing partnership with **The Home Depot**. **dLife**, a 30-minute weekly program for diabetics, will debut on cable's CNBC in January. **Hardee's** new "Monster Thickburger," (\$5.95) made with two 1/3 lb. slabs of Angus beef, cheese, bacon and mayonnaise on a buttered sesame bun, delivers 1,420 calories and 107 grams of fat. Its ad slogan is, "Be afraid. Be very afraid."

Mid-Brands Go Upscale: **Coach** offers a Mink Frame Bag (\$698), **Godiva Chocolatier** sells its "couture" G Collection (15 pieces/\$40), **J.Crew** promotes a Shearling Toggle coat for \$1,500. **Polo Ralph Lauren** raises the price of its signature Polo shirts from \$52.50 to \$65, and sees a sales spike of 100% for the women's shirt, and a 25% increase for the men's. *Ad Age*.

Visual Retina Displays: The University of Washington has developed a way to display computer-generated data directly on a retina. Microvision has licensed the technology and invented the Nomad Expert Technician, a Wi-Fi equipped system that enables automobile technicians to see repair diagrams superimposed over the systems they are working on. *www.thefeature.com*

Animal Appetites: A surprising number of premium brands, including **Newman's Own**, **Gucci**, **Ikea**, **Omaha Steaks**, **Land's End**, **Paul Mitchell**, **Harley-Davidson**, and **Ralph Lauren**, make products for dogs and cats. **OPI**, a maker of nail care products, introduced a line of quick-drying "pawlish." A bottle sells for \$10, slightly more than the human version. *NY Times*.

Pop-Up Retail: This new marketing trend tries to build a buzz around products by creating temporary stores. This year, NYC has seen the Meow Mix Café, the Chris Madden store (by J.C. Penny), and a Target shop for breast cancer awareness, all appear and disappear in a matter of weeks.

A Prayerful Nation: Eight out of 10 American say they pray daily or weekly. Why? To seek guidance (cited by 62%), to give thanks or praise (54%), to beg for forgiveness (47%), ask for healing (45%), or other favors (43%). Only 9 percent say they never pray. *Christian Science Monitor Survey, 2002*.

JOHO<sup>TM</sup> is published by The Morgenstern Company, Inc.

[david@writerdog.com](mailto:david@writerdog.com) © 2004 TMC, Inc. For back issues visit: [www.writerdog.com](http://www.writerdog.com)

JOHO reports trends, it does not endorse them. While researched from sources the author believes to be trustworthy, no independent verification has been made, so the author is not responsible for the topicality, correctness, completeness, accuracy, applicability, or quality of the information, and is therefore not liable or responsible for the use of the information contained herein. Permission is granted to quote from JOHO as long as you credit JOHO.

## The Best of JOHO, 2004:

**James Minder**, Chairman of arms maker Smith & Wesson, resigns after it was disclosed he had spent time in prison for armed robbery in the 1950s and '60s. **Jerry Springer**—*The Opera*, which has received rave reviews in Britain, will have its U.S. premiere in San Francisco in early spring, 2005. Eighties rocker **Pat Benatar** becomes a spokesperson for **Energizer** hearing aid batteries. **adidas** signs high school basketball phenomenon **Sebastian Telfair** to a multi-year endorsement deal.

**Rice to Riches**, a NYC store, offers 20 different varieties of upscale rice pudding. **endlessechoes.com** will broadcast—into space—your voice message to deceased loved ones (\$25.95/1 min.). **NeoStem** Inc. opens centers for healthy people to bank their own stem cells for future use (\$4,700 plus \$300/year). **MetroNaps** offers 20-minute naps (\$14) on the 24<sup>th</sup> floor of NYC's Empire State Building. In East Bay, California, **Joe's Bustaurant** is an "underground" restaurant that has operated out of a vintage bus for six years. Open only on Mondays to deter health inspectors, Joe requires a personal invitation from a current customer for admittance. His traditional Italian dinner (there's no menu, instead, diners just point to what others are eating) is \$12, payable to the fare collection box.

The Libertarian magazine, **Reason**, distributed its June issue with an individual cover for each of its 40,000 subscribers. It showed a satellite photo of each subscriber's neighborhood, with their house circled and the subscriber's name printed in large type. The October issue of **Playboy** features digital video game characters posing in the nude.

**New Weapon:** TASER International launches a civilian version of its energy weapon in July (\$999). While the standard law enforcement model discharges 19 shaped pulse discharges per second, for a period of 5 seconds at a time, the civilian model will deliver 15 pulses per second, but for an extended period of up to 60 seconds, to maximize incapacitation. The weapon can be carried without a permit in 46 states. *Military and Aerospace Electronics.*

**Krumping:** Combining hip-hop, African tribal rituals, pantomime and martial arts, krumping is a frenetic, hyper fast-paced dancing style that is creating its own subculture among teens in inner-city Los Angeles. Dancers gather in school grounds, parking lots, and yards to perform and "battle dance" each other. Theatrical face paint is also worn by the dancers, which gives krumping its other name, "clowning." *Trendcentral.*

**Cuddle Parties:** The newest craze for NYC singles involves hugging strangers while wearing pajamas (\$30 entrance fee). Strict rules prohibit any nudity or sexual contact. *Reuters.*

**Too Much Marketing?** A recent survey found that 69% of adult Americans are interested in products that allow them to skip or block advertising; 65% feel constantly bombarded by too much advertising; and 33% would actually prefer a lower standard of living in order to live in a society without marketing and advertising. *Yankelovich.*

**Blame Lindsay Lohan:** In 2003, 280,401 American women underwent breast augmentations, a 12% rise over 2002. The number of 18-year-olds who underwent breast-implant surgery nearly tripled last year, from 3,872 in 2002 to 11,326 in 2003. *NY Post.*