

Signals in the Static: Cabaret singer **Bobby Short** will end his 36-year run at NYC's Café Carlyle. **Sarah Jessica Parker** becomes the new face of **Gap's** advertising. Archie comic vixens **Betty** and **Veronica** will get their own apparel line in high-end boutiques this August, which plays on the question "Are You a Betty or Are You a Veronica?". **Paris Hilton** will launch a signature fragrance this winter. 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. **Jerry Seinfeld** spends \$1 million on a Manhattan garage to park five of his sports cars.

The **Ohio State Highway Patrol** will use scanners on turnpike gates and in patrol cars for four months to test a new system that recognizes license plates and matches them with a national crime database. The **Charlotte Bobcats**, an NBA expansion team, will include Wi-Fi in the team's new \$265 million arena, enabling wireless Internet access by fans who bring laptops to the game.

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). **7-Up** will introduce a "fortified soda" with added calcium, vitamin C, and real fruit juice. **Coca-Cola** is discretely converting 120 Coke cans into mobile phones/GPS satellite receivers. Those who find these "cans" can use them to claim grand prizes. **nTag Interactive** launches electronic name tags featuring LCD screens that display lines of information about the wearer. When two tags get close, they interact, displaying relevant information about the wearers.

Network Commercial Clutter: The increase in the average promotional messages per break is equal to about 15,000 more commercials in 2003 prime time over 2002 across 43 cable networks and 7 broadcast networks. ABC had the most clutter, broadcasting an average of 7.11 messages per break, followed by UPN with 6.52, CBS with 6.32, NBC with 6.24, WB with 6.15, and Fox with 6.03. *Advertising Age*.

Invisible, Non-Lethal Weapon: The U.S. Defense Department unveils its "Active Denial System," a "long-range column of millimeter wave energy" that produces unendurable, burning pain in people within the beam, which instantly stops once it is turned off or moved. Other non-lethal devices being tested include directed sound waves that drive people away from an area, super-lubricants that make a road or runway too slippery for tires, and nets able to stop cars. *Sacramento Bee*.

Face Transplant: Surgeons in Louisville, Ky. are preparing to perform the world's first full-face transplant. The 24-hour operation involves lifting an entire face from a dead donor (including nose cartilage, nerves and muscles) and transferring it to someone disfigured by burns or other injuries. *New Scientist*.

Life Sentences: Almost 10% (127, 677) of all inmates in U.S. state and federal prisons are serving life sentences, an increase of 83% from 1992. In NY and California, life sentences are nearly 20% of the total. About 70% of these prisoners were convicted of murder, 4% for drug crimes, and 4% for property crimes. More than 20,000 are mentally ill, and a sizable number are women who killed their husbands after being beaten. During this same period, serious crime has fallen 35% in the U.S. *NY Times*.