

Signals in the Static: **Eddie Steeples**, the OfficeMax "Rubberband Man," will star in a new NBC sitcom this fall. Singer **Michelle Williams** will replace **Joss Stone** as the Gap spokesmodel. Stone filmed only a single commercial. **Sheryl Crow** will appear in ads for Dell Computers. For the first time in two years, following his arrest for alleged rape, **Kobe Bryant** will appear in ads for **Nike**. **Amazon.com** turns 10. The **7-Eleven Slurpee** drink turns 40. The **Pillsbury Doughboy** also turns 40. Died: **Ernest Lehman**, 89, screenwriter of *North by Northwest* and *The Sound of Music*; **Jack Kilby**, 81, inventor of the integrated circuit; **Paul Winchell**, 82, film voice of Pooh's Tigger; **John Fidler**, 80, film voice of Pooh's Piglet.

Teddy Ruxpin, the hottest toy of 1985, will return this fall. A new franchise called **Oogles n' Googles** provides story-lined birthday parties for children. The birthday girl or boy can choose from such themes as "Tea Time," "Rev Your Engines," and "Wizard School." A Vail, AZ high school (350 students) will replace all printed textbooks with laptops and electronic media. The University of Texas will eliminate all of its library's 90,000 books, replacing them with a "electronic information commons." All students in Philadelphia will now be required to pass a course in African-American history in order to graduate from high school.

CBS News will launch a 24-hour, broadband news network which will become the centerpiece of the network's news delivery platform. **Disney** plans a live-action martial-arts remake of *Snow White* to be shot in China replacing the Seven Dwarves with Shaolin monks. More than 200 major league baseball players are wearing titanium-coated nylon necklaces from Japan (\$23) said to reduce muscle stress, heal injuries, and improve circulation.

Extreme Candy: Fear Factor Crunchy Larva (made from freeze-dried baby worms coated with cheddar cheese and Mexican spice), vomit-flavored jelly beans, toy dogs that poop candy, and marijuana-flavored lollipops. See (<http://www.maryjanecandyco.com>)

Sponsored Public Education: A school district in New Jersey sells the naming rights to its high school gymnasium to a local Shop-Rite. The Grapevine-Colleyville school district in Texas offers advertising space on its school buses, sporting venues and a middle-school roof. A suburban Detroit school board votes for commercial sponsorship of its athletic fields and school prom. The University of Louisville has a Papa John Pizza football stadium. In Philadelphia, Temple University is selling naming rights to its new \$150 million medical school. *Ad Age*.

The 2006 Mercedes S: The Mercedes flagship will feature a seven-speed automatic transmission, short-range radar that monitors traffic and reduces rear collisions, and a "night vision" camera that bathes the road ahead with infrared light. *Wall St. Journal*.

The 2005 Honda FCX: Honda introduces the first zero-emissions, fuel cell-powered car to the U.S. *Auto News*.

Who Wants to be an American? A recent survey of 17,000 people from 16 countries found that only India rated the U.S. in first place as a "country where you can lead a good life." Except for respondents in India, Poland and Canada, no more than 1 in 10 people said they would recommend the U.S. as a place to live. Canada and Australia were both selected as first choice by the most countries. *Pew Research Center*.

Reminder: JOHO will publish a combined August-September issue in September.