

## Memo Pad: Sign Language .. Ramp Jumps the Shark ... Media Match ...



David Pecker

**SIGN LANGUAGE:** American Media chief **David Pecker** isn't above jabbing a 195-foot-long finger in his competitors' eyes. Come June 1, his company will take over a giant billboard that runs along the eastern side of Broadway between 51st and 52nd Streets. The space will be used to advertise AMI titles, which include Star magazine, the National Enquirer, Shape and Men's Fitness. The billboard happens to be located catty-corner from Hachette Filipacchi Media, where Pecker was chief executive from 1992 to 1999. It's also only a crosstown block away from Wenner Media, from whence Pecker plucked his editorial director, Bonnie Fuller, last summer, in preparation for taking Star head-to-head against Wenner's Us Weekly, which Fuller had been editing. Until June 1, the lease on the billboard belongs to Hachette — it was Pecker who made that deal, as well. "The minute we knew it was going to be available again, we wanted to get it back," said **Kevin Hyson**, AMI's chief marketing officer. "David always did like Broadway," said Hachette chief executive officer **Jack Kliger**. "It's good to have him back in the neighborhood." — **Jeff Bercovici**

**RAMP JUMPS THE SHARK:** Ramp, the men's magazine that started out as a Maxim clone before veering into GQ territory, is no more. Owner Universal Media quietly pulled the plug in March, 18 months after Ramp's launch. Universal vice chairman **Geoffrey Lurie** said the 250,000-circulation title was unsuccessful at competing for ad pages with bigger players such as Maxim and FHM. "I guess the circulation of those magazines was more compelling than the desire to appeal to a more mature audience," he said. **Richard Amann**, who joined Ramp in February 2003 as president and publisher, said Universal chairman **Carl Ruderman** "wasn't willing to do long-term what it took to be competitive in the men's category." Amann said he already is working on a new men's magazine that will launch in the fall and go bimonthly in January. The magazine, which he described as "Euro-styled," will be based in Miami and backed by a private investor who he declines to name. "The concept is very clear in my head. It's unoccupied space in the men's market." — **J.B.**

**MEDIA MATCH:** Chill some champagne: Meta-media power couple **Jon Fine** and **Laurel Touby** are engaged. Fine covers magazine publishing for Advertising Age; Touby is the founder of Mediabistro.com, a journalism news and career-advice Web site. The pair have been together since they met at, yes, the annual Magazine Publishers of America convention in October 2002. "She thought I was the kind of sleazy guy who goes around hitting on girls at conventions," recalled Fine. Touby

said she was struck by Fine's stylish attire. "One of the things that attracted me to him was that he looked like a gay man," she said. On a recent Saturday evening, the two went for a lavish meal at Daniel, ostensibly to celebrate Touby's birthday. Full of food and wine, Touby fell asleep in the cab afterward, forcing Fine to delay his proposal until the following morning. The two have yet to set a date, but Touby is already pondering how she can put her event-planning expertise to use. "If I could get a sponsor for our drinks, I might do that," she mused. Fine thinks he can be of help as well. "I used to freelance at Martha Stewart Weddings," he said. "Theoretically I should have retained something." — **J.B.**

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