

DIVERSITY WEEK DAY 1

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What the Industry Reads First

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Top Women: Rudnay, Barnett Receive WICT's Highest Honor

WICT mixed up its annual Woman of the Year award by bestowing its highest honor on two powerful leaders for the first time. **Comcast** evp, chief communications officer *D'Arcy Rudnay* takes the award on the operator side, while **BBC America** pres, gm *Sarah Barnett* holds the title among programmers. In interviews with **Cablefax**, both remarked they previously worked in industries that put less of an emphasis on diversity and inclusion than the forward-thinking cable sector. Rudnay joined Comcast in 2003, having spent nearly 10 years in financial services and before that various communications roles in DC. Barnett began her media career in the UK at a time when there weren't many formal organizations for females. It may be easy to chalk some of that up to a changing of the times, but give US cable some credit. **NAMIC's** yearly conference was founded in 1986 with **NCTA** as the Urban Markets Seminar. WICT has been around since 1979. "None of the industries I worked at before had this kind of environment," Rudnay said. "To have a week that's focusing on the importance of diversity is very important, and I think it puts a good focus on how important it is to have it within our company." But there's still work to be done, with NAMIC and WICT highlighting areas for improvements at their joint town hall this week. "Until there are as many women in the top seats of power in our industry as there are men, there is still a need for advocacy and there's still a place for organizations like WICT, which are smartly and passionately committed to peeling back the layers of bias," Barnett said. Both execs have been contributing to helping women climb the corporate ladder. Rudnay founded the Women's Network employee resource group in 2011 along with then-Comcast Cable CEO *Neil Smit*. It focuses on training and developing women in the company. The first week of its launch, 160 people signed up. "It has grown from an organization that we trialed in Philadelphia to having more than 8000 members across the country today," Rudnay said. Within **AMC Networks**, Barnett has made it a priority to consistently develop ongoing relationships with women and she sees the title of Woman of the Year furthering those efforts. "I find it really humbling to be in a long line of women who have really contributed to our industry—to think about how inspired I've been by those women. The fact that I'm in a lineup with them and that I could potentially help other women ... it's really such a great privilege." The two will be celebrated at Monday's WICT Touchstones Luncheon in NYC along with Women to Watch honorees *Samira Panah Bakhtiar* of **Cisco**, **ESPN's Tina Thornton** and **Charter's Charlene Keys**.



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Ratings War: Nielsen is seeking an injunction to prevent comScore from using its technology and data to compete in the business of providing linear TV ratings. The company filed a federal lawsuit Friday in New York stating that it agreed to let comScore use its proprietary Portable People Meter data to “provide service in the ‘Cross-Platform’ market,” but that comScore intends to provide TV measurement. Nielsen said the parties’ contract defines cross-platform services as “requiring, at a minimum, both television and online audience measurements.” The plaintiff also asserted that the agreement explicitly prohibits comScore “from using PPM data for ‘individual, stand-alone services’” like linear TV measurement. The complaint asserted that comScore’s plans to offer a service called Extended TV violates the agreement, as the new service would “provide television audience measurement in the absence of online audience measurement for virtually all programming and the vast majority of networks.” Nielsen is seeking an injunction preventing comScore from introducing Extended TV until the parties can resolve the matter via arbitration, as is stipulated in the contract. ComScore in a statement said, “We can confirm that there is a dispute regarding interpretation of the 2013 FTC consent decree, which resulted from Nielsen’s acquisition of Arbitron, that provides comScore with access to certain Nielsen data. The dispute is being addressed through binding arbitration. Due to the pending nature of these legal proceedings, we have no further comment at this time.” Nielsen’s complaint said its business will suffer “irreparable harm” if comScore is allowed to bring its Extended TV service to market, citing “loss of important customers and decreased market share” as possible outcomes.

Another Retrans Blackout for AT&T: The hits just keep coming... Broadcaster **American Spirit Media’s** stations went dark on **U-verse** and **DirecTV** at midnight ET Thursday. Seven stations are impacted in DirecTV markets, including WXTX (**Fox**) in Columbus, GA, and KAUZ (**CBS**) in Wichita Falls-Lawton, OK. Four stations are blacked out on U-verse, including WAFX (Fox) in Wilmington, NC, and WDBD (Fox) in Jackson, MS.

Diversity Week Ahead: The industry will gather once again for Diversity Week, with a nice crowd shaping up for a roster of events that get underway Monday at the Marriott Marquis. **WICT** said it’s tracking for record attendance at its Leadership Conference and Touchstones lunch, with 780 already registered for the conference as of last Wednesday and more than 1000 on board for the lunch. Attendance for the 31st Annual **NAMIC** Conference is also on track for the organization’s goals, though leadership declined to provide specifics. A highlight of the week will be NAMIC and WICT’s release of their biennial workforce demographic surveys, which tackle not just representation of people of color and women, but trends such as turnover rates. The results will be presented in a joint town hall Tuesday, featuring a panel discussion with **Cox** chief HRO *Karen Bennett*, **Charter** chief diversity officer *Rhonda Crichlow*, “PBS NewsHour” correspondent *John Yang* and others. Organizers are hoping to make it a more interactive experience, allowing attendees for the first time to submit questions through the WICT conference app. NAMIC is introducing a new format to its confab, a **Ted Talks** riff dubbed NAMIC Talks that features insights from leaders such as **PositiveLee For You** founder *Barbara Gee* and *Carla Moore*, **HBO’s** vp of POS strategy and education. The organization also is turning an eye to emerging tech with a session on VR and drones. NAMIC continues to be a leader in the LGBTQ conversation, hosting a panel Tuesday afternoon that will delve into LGBTQ people remaining unknown or underrepresented in the workplace, particularly in C-level roles. And don’t forget about Tuesday morning’s **Cablefax** Most Influential Minorities breakfast, presented in conjunction with NAMIC. Cablefax publisher *Michael Grebb* will interview **Altice USA** chief *Dexter Goei* on stage in his first major appearance before the cable industry (he spoke at the **NAB** Show in April). Can’t make the conferences? Thanks to a grant from the **Kaitz Foundation**, WICT will tape its Profiles of Champions session as well as *Gretchen Carlson’s* opening keynote. They’ll be available following the conference in WICT’s learning library. NAMIC will live stream the L. Patrick Mellon Luncheon, featuring interviews with millennials *Neffy Anderson* (host of web series “The Path Less Traveled”) and *Jessica Santana*, co-founder and director of New York on Tech. The week is capped off with Wednesday night’s Kaitz Foundation’s annual fundraising dinner, which benefits NAMIC, WICT and the **Emma Bowen Foundation**. This year’s dinner recognizes **Girls Who Code** with the Diversity Advocate honor, while **HBO** is celebrated as Diversity Champion.

EAS Deadline Extension: The **FCC** extended the deadline for EAS participants impacted by recent hurricanes to file results from this Wednesday’s nationwide test. The Commission’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau is allowing affected cable operators, broadcasters and other participants to take until Nov 13—an extra six weeks—to file all three ETRS forms. It specifically pointed to those in Florida, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, as well as portions of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas. Unaffected participants are still expected to file forms one

and two by the end of the day Wednesday and form three on Nov 13. Those participants taking advantage of the extension have to describe their particular circumstances on form three.

Numbers Game: **ESPN** and **Nielsen** on Tuesday will release a new measurement that incorporates both traditional TV and streaming, and the net will no longer sell advertising based on the traditional linear rating system, according to *SportsBusiness Daily*. The net will also stop putting out ratings numbers that differentiate between traditional viewing and streaming viewing. “Monday Night Football” between the Cowboys and Cardinals will be the first test of the new system.

Done Deal: California-based **Procera Networks** completed its acquisition of Canadian network policy control company Sandvine. Procera parent Francisco Partners beat out a bid from **Vector Capital**-owned **Scalar** to acquire Sandvine, paying \$457mln in a deal announced in May. The combined company will operate under the Sandvine name, and Procera CEO *Lyndon Cantor* will serve as the combined company’s pres/CEO. The company plans to capitalize on growth opportunities in 5G and IoT, as well as software-defined networks and network function virtualization. Legacy Sandvine clients include **Comcast** and **GCI**; legacy Procera clients include **Cox**, **Boingo** and **Sprint** parent **Softbank**.

Hurricane News: **Verizon FiOS** is giving its customers access to two news stations covering Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic to provide up-to-date information on Hurricane Maria’s aftermath. **WAPA America**, the US arm of Puerto Rico’s top broadcast net, and Televisión Dominicana will both be available without charge through at least Monday night, and potentially longer. They are generally part of Fios’ Mundo and Mundo Total plans, as well as its Spanish Language Package. -- **WICT** added donation links to its Leadership Conference app so that attendees can easily find ways to donate to help those affected by recent natural disasters—namely its chapters in Greater Texas, Florida and Latin America.

Programming: **BBC America** is premiering “Queers” in conjunction with National Coming Out Day. Beginning on Oct 11 at 10am ET, the eight-part short film series sees writers responding to the 50th anniversary of The Sexual Offences Act, which began the decriminalization of homosexual acts between men in the UK. The films’ stars include *Alan Cummings*, *Gemma Whelan* and *Fionn Whitehead*. -- **Showtime** acquired the rights to adapt “The President is Missing” into a TV series. Written by president *Bill Clinton* and *James Patterson* and set for a 2018 release, the novel tells the story behind what occurs when the sitting head of the nation disappears from the Oval Office.

People: **Cox Communications** elevated *Philip Nutsugah* to svp, product development and management. He joined the company 2006, most recently guiding the development and launch of Cox Gigablast and Panoramic WiFi. *Steve Necessary*, who has led all of Cox’s major video initiatives in the last 13 years and managed the company’s full product portfolio since 2015, will retire at the end of the year. -- **Fox Sports** hired *Brian Strong* as its svp, brand communications, *Variety* reported. Strong, who later confirmed the move on **Twitter**, previously served as **Nike’s** global corporate communications director.

Cablefax Awards Gala

November 7
Taglyan Complex, LA
5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

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