

lessly connect to a mobile operating network and seamlessly transition to another as needed during a flight. In the meantime, Liberty Global is going to continue testing in hopes that its drones will be able to fly freely.

“We’re going to prove the concept further afield with more trials in wider European countries that we are operating in, and we’re also going to do business analysis as to how much it will cost to own, what are the legal implications, etc.,” he said. “Essentially, we want to get to where we can make a yes or no decision in the next 12 months as to whether or not this is going to be a commercially viable product.”

FOX'S COLLIER MOVING TO ROKU

Well-known media exec *Charlie Collier* will join **Roku** as President of Roku Media in late October, overseeing the growth Roku Media globally. Roku Media includes ad sales and Roku's ad platform business as well as content for Roku's owned and operated channels. Collier is currently CEO of **Fox Entertainment Group**, which includes FOX network and FOX Entertainment Studios. He's previously held senior roles at **AMC Networks**, **Court TV**, **Oxygen** and **A&E Networks**. Roku also announced that *Mustafa Ozgen* was elevated from SVP to President of Devices. *Gidon Katz* was promoted to President, Consumer Experience. The three execs will report to Roku Founder/CEO *Anthony Wood*.

IMAX ACQUIRES SSIMWAVE FOR \$21M

IMAX has snatched up AI-driven video quality solutions firm **SSIMWAVE** for \$21 million. Over the years, SSIMWAVE has kept us apprised of its advancements to optimize video as well as its Emmy-award winning technology, but it has kept its client base pretty quiet. Thursday's big announcement included that four of

the world's top-10 streaming media companies—including **Disney**, **Paramount Global** and **Warner Bros. Discovery**—partner with SSIMWAVE. IMAX said the deal is part of its quest to deliver the highest quality video images on any screen. The acquisition (\$18.5 million in cash and \$2.5 million in stock) is expected to be accretive in 2023 and have minimal financial impact in 2022.

MSG DROPS THE PLUS SIGN

With the plus sign evolving to represent DTC streaming these days, it makes sense that **MSG Networks** is rebranding its RSN **MSG+** to **MSG Sportsnet**. It's the sibling of MSG Network, carrying sports events from several of the NY area's franchises, including Islanders and Devils games. The new name will be formally introduced Monday to coincide with the start of the upcoming **NHL** preseason.

CARRIAGE

FETV (Family Entertainment Television) scored carriage across the NY DMA through **Optimum TV**. The deal with **Altice USA** pushes distribution over the 50 million mark. The net carries classic movies and TV, with a “Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman” marathon scheduled for this weekend. – French language entertainment net **TV5MONDE**'s streaming service **TV5MONDEplus** is being added to **Roku** streaming devices in France, Germany, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States with more launches to come. TV5MONDEplus is available in the U.S. at no extra charge with a TV5MONDE USA subscription through streaming and select pay-TV providers. The streamer features thousands of titles subtitled in up to six languages (Arabic, English, French, German, Romanian and Spanish, with more to come). – **DirectTV** has added **NBCUni-**



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versal's classic TV broadcast diginet **COZI TV** to Channel 80. COZI's lineup includes "Frasier," "Columbo" and the additions next month of "Bones," "Monk" and "Las Vegas."

USDA DOLES OUT MORE RECONNECT FUNDS

The **USDA** is awarding \$502 million in loans and grants for high-speed internet in 20 states through a third round of funding of the ReConnect Program. The Department will make additional investments for rural high-speed internet in the coming months, including funding from the bipartisan infrastructure bill. The money is going to 32 awards and includes a \$25 million grant to the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians to connect 1,217 people and 26 businesses in Michigan's Chippewa and Mackinac counties and a \$12.4 million loan to **Net Vision Communications** to connect 4,587 people, 300 businesses, nine farms and 15 public schools in Barton County, Missouri.

EVOCA ASSISTS TRAIL BLAZERS

The **Portland Trail Blazers** signed a multi-year deal making **Evoca TV** the team's "NextGen Broadcast Provider." What does that mean? Some nice marketing, plus the ATSC 3.0-powered pay TV service will provide its subs with interactive experiences featuring real-time player, game and team stats while watching the Trail Blazers on **ROOT Sports Northwest**. Evoca, which is \$25/month plus a receiver, began broadcasting in Portland in May 2022. The service is available in most of Oregon—Bend, Eugene, Medford/Klamath Falls—as well as Southwest Washington. Evoca also inked a deal with the **Portland Winterhawks**. It's not only broadcasting all the junior ice hockey team's games, but it's also the helmet sponsor.

COMCAST, SAMSUNG TOGETHER FOR 5G RAN

Comcast and **Samsung** are teaming up to develop 5G RAN solutions that will enhance the connectivity experiences of Xfinity Mobile and Comcast Business Mobile customers in the provider's service areas. Samsung will supply the 5G RAN solutions, including a newly-developed 5G CBRS Strand Small Cell, needed for Comcast to offer 5G access to its customers using CBRS and 600 MHz spectrum. Field trials are underway, and they're currently being expanded to include Comcast employee testing.

ON THE AD FRONT

Scripps Networks announced an agreement with **NuTime Media**, a MBE certified Black-owned media ad sales representation company with offices in New York and Chicago, that will help connect marketing partners with the expansive Black audience that consistently watches the Scripps portfolio of networks, led by **Bounce** and **ION**. The news comes ahead of the Saturday Bounce premiere of new series "Finding Happy," which follows life's ups and downs from the Black female perspective.

THAT'S CHAIRWOMAN, THANK YOU VERY MUCH

FCC Chairwoman **Jessica Rosenworcel** gave the keynote Thursday at well-regarded women in tech event, **The Grace Hopper Celebration**. One of the things she mentioned was when she first walked into the FCC's new HQ on L Street in Northeast D.C. "The floors were gleaming, the lights were bright, and everything felt brand new—because it was. The signs were

new, too. They told you what floor you were on and pointed you to the offices that make up the FCC. The signs directing me to my office said 'Chairman.' After 87 years, it never occurred to anyone that a woman would run the agency," she said. "I moved in; they changed the signs. But these signals we all get in our personal and professional lives matter. They shape who we think we can be and where we believe we can ascend."

OUTSIDE THE SHOW FLOOR

We hear the **Amdocs** "Make It Amazing" team, which was on the **SCTE Cable-Tec Expo** show floor in brightly colored, full-body inflatable suits, ruffled some feathers after escaping the Convention Center this week. They somehow made it into The Franklin Institute, which is currently closed in preparation for seasonal programming, and were asked to leave. We've got photographic evidence! That wasn't the only place to burst their bubbles. We've heard the crew tried to crash the **Comcast Center**, but was asked to leave. Probably best to leave the shenanigans to the Phillie Phanatic!

COMCAST AD SPOT GOES VAMPIRIC

Comcast is out for blood in its latest ad spot. The 30-second ad takes a stab at **T-Mobile's** home internet product, centering on a fictional family that has had to become nocturnal after daytime network traffic prevented them from being able to work, learn and enjoy entertainment. It's not going well, and their family therapist suggests if they just switch, they don't have to be vampires anymore. "We prefer day-adjacent," the mom hilariously replies. Give it a watch on the company's [YouTube channel](#).

PROGRAMMING

HGTV greenlit a new show with social media star **Galey Alix**, which will follow the Wall Street executive moonlighting gig as a designer. It's slated to debut in the spring. – Chef and author **Alison Roman** will be coming to **CNN** this fall with new CNN Original Series "(More Than) A Cooking Show." – **FX's** "Reservation Dogs" was renewed for Season 3, exclusively on **Hulu**. It'll make its return next year.

PEOPLE

NBCUniversal Telemundo Chief Administrative and Marketing Officer **Mónica Gil** was selected for **Nike's** board. – **Sarah Hird** was picked as SVP, Corporate & Consumer Communications at **BritBox**. Hird will oversee global communications and lead the company's team of in-house and agency partners across all regions. She joins from **DAZN** where she was VP, Global Communications, and before that she helped introduce **Disney+** to international markets as Director of Communications for Walt Disney EMEA. – One of our favorite PR pros has joined **SKDK's** NYC office as SVP of the Public Affairs practice. **Sarah (Chaikin) Lyons** will support corporate, technology, and healthcare clients at both SKDK and **Sloane**. Lyons' more than 20-year communications career has included roles at **Cablevision, AMC Networks** and **Oxygen**.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Your next issue of **Cablefax Daily** will hit your inbox Monday. We'll keep you aware of any breaking news before then at **Cablefax.com**.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

HBO Revisits Mass Evacuation of Kabul

What was supposed to be a mission to get U.S. citizens and soldiers out of Afghanistan became a humanitarian catastrophe that nobody foresaw. As the U.S. withdrew all soldiers from Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban seized the capital city of Kabul, sparking hundreds of thousands to leave their homes and go to the airport in hopes of a flight out of the country. "Escape From Kabul" looks back on the days when the Kabul International Airport lost all guidance (premiered on **HBO** Wednesday and is available to stream on **HBO Max**). The documentary begins with soldiers describing setting up shop at three security checkpoints to allow people through and onto a flight. But once the Taliban gained control of the city, civilians fled to the airport en masse, and the checkpoints became overridden with families pleading to be let through. "It's an immersive film, it grabs you and doesn't let go," Director *Jamie Roberts* told **CFX**. "What people went through in those 18 days was more desperate and traumatic than most of us will ever experience, we wanted the film to bring that home using privileged access to core participants, and footage that's not been seen before." The camera footage from the crowds of civilians deepened the human aspect of the film, which was a priority for Roberts when creating the documentary. But to do that, he needed access to the heart of the evacuation—something that proved to be a challenge. "Even trying to get into Afghanistan after the fall took time and was difficult," Roberts said. "On the ground in Kabul we spent months searching for footage and brokering access, navigating Taliban networks and finding people who'd tried to flee but couldn't make it out." With the film not only just having U.S. soldiers and Afghani citizens giving their accounts but also members of the Taliban sharing their experiences, it presents a fascinating window into the drastically different viewpoints of what happened in Kabul in August 2021—a month that changed the lives of many. — *Noah Ziegler*

OUR REVIEWER'S TAKE

"Escape from Kabul," streaming **HBO Max**. Much of the hype—and there was a lot—about this short, riveting doc about the U.S. exit from Afghanistan in mid-August 2021, centered on celebrated filmmakers *Dan Reed* ("Leaving Neverland") and *Jamie Roberts*, director of "Four Hours at the Capitol," securing the cooperation of the Taliban. True, interviewing senior Taliban commanders is a great get. Also impressive is a trove of footage the Taliban, possessors of an adroit media arm, supply. On the other hand, it's not easy watching Taliban fighters celebrating their defeat of American-backed Afghan government forces. It took just two days for Kabul's demise. Yet what struck your reviewer most was the Marines' authenticity. Interviews with them begin the 90-minute film. Their language is direct and explanations plain. They boarded planes quickly, without much planning, carrying basic equipment only. "We came off the plane and immediately started working," one says. The assumption was that removing American citizens and at-risk Afghans would be smooth and seamless. Security, at least around Kabul and its airport, was expected. As we know, that security was gone quickly and a relatively straight-ahead mission was anything but. The Marines, still seeming shell-shocked, make their frustration plain. "All hell broke loose," one says. Acknowledging mistakes is important and not always common around the Pentagon. Here's hoping lessons learned make future missions less costly. — *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(09/12/22-09/18/22)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
ESPN	0.805	2,506
FNC	0.698	2,176
MSNBC	0.403	1,256
HGTV	0.283	882
USA	0.275	858
HALL	0.233	725
TLC	0.232	722
CNN	0.224	697
FOOD	0.208	647
INSP	0.206	642
TBSC	0.190	591
HIST	0.170	530
TVLAND	0.168	524
DISC	0.160	499
ID	0.141	438
BRAVO	0.136	423
HMM	0.133	415
TNT	0.130	405
LIFE	0.126	393
A&E	0.120	374
WETV	0.116	360
FX	0.115	359
ESPN2	0.104	325
REELZ	0.100	312
GSN	0.090	279
NATGEO	0.089	278
SYFY	0.087	270
NAN	0.083	258
BET	0.081	253
OXYGEN	0.081	252
SNDNCE	0.080	248
APL	0.077	241
LMN	0.077	239
ADSM	0.075	234

*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.

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