

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

June 20 - 26, 2005

\$3.00

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NUMBER 25

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Shooting Stars

When there's no such thing as bad publicity

By RACHEL BROWN AND JAMES NASH
Staff Reporters

Paparazzi may be the scourge of Hollywood A-listers, but Fraser Ross has few qualms about the mob of photographers.

Ross, owner of the celebrity-friendly L.A. boutique Kitson, said paparazzi shots of stars like Halle Berry shopping at his Robertson Boulevard store have helped to triple sales in the past year.

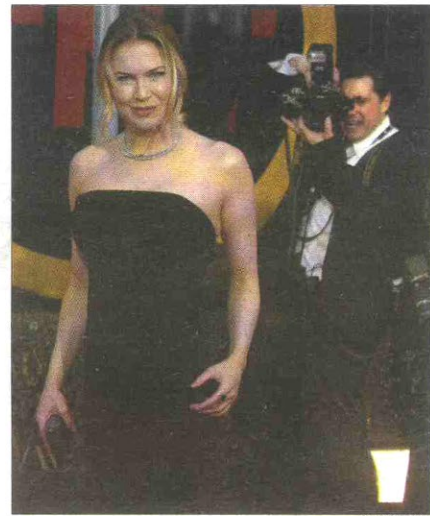
"Obviously, the pictures of the store help our business," said Ross, whose shop is near one of Hollywood's prime watering holes, the Ivy. "Now, we are at the level where Kitson has become the celebrity."

The perennially blackened image of

paparazzi has gotten a renewed soiling in the past few weeks when photographers got into a traffic accident with Lindsey Lohan, cornered Reese Witherspoon outside a gym, and scuffled with Cameron Diaz and her boyfriend Justin Timberlake as they left a hotel. The Lohan and Witherspoon incidents have triggered criminal investigations into paparazzi behavior.

But to Ross and other L.A. business owners, the paparazzi are less a nuisance than a sales tool. Celebrity-friendly businesses go out of their way to accommodate swarms of photographers by setting up paparazzi zones and turning a blind eye to employees who phone in celebrity sightings.

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Pictorial: A photographer snaps a view of Renée Zellweger. The celebrity shooters are often tipped off to a star's presence by employees of shops or restaurants, where an A-lister can boost receipts.

GETTY IMAGES

Easy Listening? Not Today's Radio

Stations Face New Era of Competition

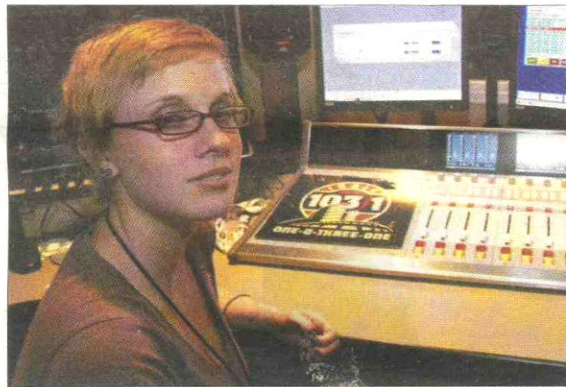
By JAMES NASH
Staff Reporter

For radio to prosper in the age of the iPod, it needs to reach people like Megan Delehanty.

The 21-year-old USC student listens to music at least three hours a day, regularly shops for used CDs, browses music-oriented Web sites and has thousands of songs stored in her iPod.

What about radio? Delehanty said she would barely listen each day, if it weren't for her part-time job at KDDL-FM (103.1).

Struggling with stagnant revenue and audiences, radio stations in L.A. and across the country are grasping for ways to appeal to listeners like Delehanty. They offer non-music programming for instant download, limited advertising and experimental formats



RINGO H.W. CHIU/LABJ

Delehanty: "The success of radio is going to be based on quality."

that jump from genre to genre. But Delehanty, who is completing a degree in music, remains skeptical.

"All of my friends have filled up their 40 gig iPods (holding roughly 10,000 songs) and that's still not

enough for them," said Delehanty, whose own employer, known as Indie 103.1, appeals to a loyal audience with a playlist that ranges from familiar

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Dark Horse Sets Pace in Race for Hollywood Park

By ANDY FIXMER
Staff Reporter

The owner of Bay Meadows race track in San Mateo has emerged as the leading candidate to acquire Hollywood Park with a bid of about \$275 million, according to numerous sources.

Stockbridge Capital Partners, through its Bay Meadows Land Co. unit, entered the bidding late in the process and its sudden emergence has surprised Inglewood city officials, as well as the crowded field of homebuilders and developers who were vying for the 240-acre property.

City officials, losing bidders and other real estate sources said Stockbridge, a private equity firm, submitted a price 10 percent higher than its closest rival and that it has agreed to hire the current owner, Churchill Downs Inc., to manage the race track for three years as it goes through the entitlement process. Horse racing at Holly-

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RINGO H.W. CHIU/LABJ

Location: Sherri Milligan helps mansion owners rent their digs.

She's Matching Mansion Owners With Producers and Secret-Location Parties

By HILARY POTKEWITZ
Staff Reporter

One day a stranger showed up on Sherri Milligan's doorstep and offered the mortgage broker \$60,000 to let his film crew use her Beverly Hills house for a one-week shoot. Flattered, she said yes.

When the crew packed up their bags with a goodbye and thank you, she said: "Anytime" — and meant it. "I realized there was a lot of money to be made just in my own personal residence," she said.

Milligan immediately took photos of her

12,000-square-foot house from numerous angles and contacted other production companies about using her property for filming. Then she called friends and neighbors and took pictures of their houses for her book. "Pretty soon, I was getting them business," she said.

So was born Sunset Locations Inc. Milligan quit her mortgage broker job in 1999 to work on the project, which she took full time in 2001. She was then competing against a half dozen other scouting companies specializing in residential properties.

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GET AHEAD



Paparazzi: Shops and Restaurants See Some Advantages

Continued from page 1

Business owners, celebrity publicists, photographers, magazine publishers and even valets and busboys all are part of what one paparazzi author calls the "celebrity-industrial complex" — and all profit from paparazzi behavior even as some decry it.

"Restaurants need to have their pictures in the paper as much as the celebrities do," said Peter Howe, a former photographer and photo editor who wrote the 2005 tell-all "Paparazzi." "People want to eat at restaurants where they see celebrities hanging out because of the off chance of sitting down next to Cameron Diaz."

Diaz, like many A-list celebrities, is no fan of the paparazzi. Celebrities and their publicists often denounce them as reckless stalkers who hide in bushes and scream obscenities to get a reaction. A newer breed is becoming even more unruly, driven by the lure of six-figure checks from an increasingly competitive flock of glossy celebrity magazines.

"It's gotten a lot worse in the last couple of years," said Ken Sunshine, a publicist who represents Timberlake, among others. "There's a lot of money to be made. If the lunatics who do this didn't have a financial incentive to do it, they'd find another way to make money."

Green all around

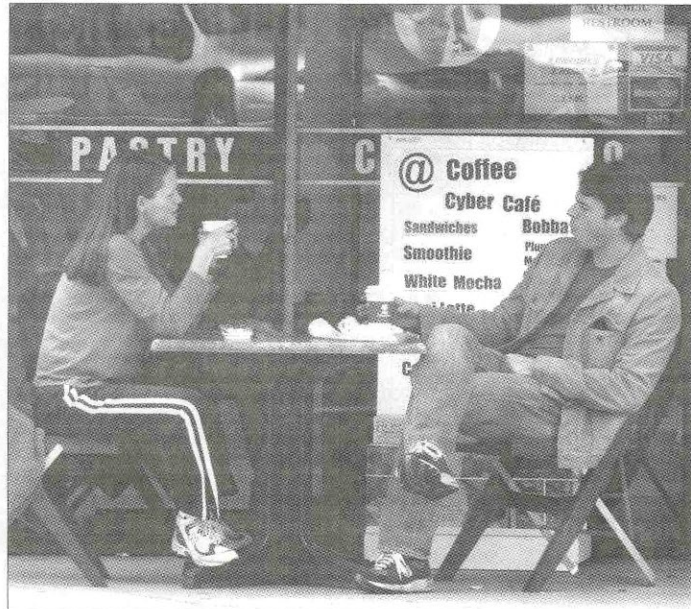
Photographed businesses profit less directly but no less significantly.

If the Vine Street Lounge, one of Hollywood's latest additions to the bar scene, wants to build a reputation as the place to be, it helps when Jamie Foxx hits the dance floor. A paparazzi shot in publications that hit newsstands around the world can cement a club's "hot spot" status.

"If you have any venue that attracts celebrities or known people, you are going to attract the paparazzi," said Scott Shuttleworth, chief executive of the Hollywood & Vine restaurant and the Vine Street Lounge, which opened in February. "We try to have a professional relationship."

That relationship includes roping off an area for photographers. Shuttleworth tries to set up angles for photos and, in exchange, the paparazzi back off the stars when they step from the red carpet into the club. "As long as they stay in line, it will be very enjoyable for everyone," he said.

Businesses aren't alone in working out deals. Celebrity publicists often broker implied agreements with photographers — tipping them off on the locations of A-list clients in exchange for the paparazzi agreeing to photograph less-sought-after clients.



Close-up: Actress Jennifer Garner and her former husband Scott Foley.

Scott Downie, president of Celebrity Photo Agency Inc. in Beverly Hills, said paparazzi couldn't function without the complicity of agents and publicists who tip them off on the locations of their clients. The agents are willing to sacrifice their clients' privacy for the sake of exposure. "Their main goal is to make these people incredibly popular," he said.

Cowboys or criminals?

Although most photographers rely on a network of informants, others fall back on their own aggressiveness and derring-do. Reckless paparazzi behavior is often cited in the 1997 death of Princess Diana and in the recent non-injury crash involving Lohan and photographer Galo Cesar Ramirez in L.A.'s Fairfax district. After the incident, Los Angeles police arrested the 24-year-old Ramirez on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon — namely the van he was driving in pursuit of the "Mean Girls" star.

The Lohan incident, coming in the wake of more risky paparazzi behavior, has triggered an inquiry by Los Angeles police and prosecutors into whether photo agencies are liable for the conduct of their lensmen.

Prosecutors could charge agency owners or managers with conspiracy, a felony, if they can

show that illegal paparazzi behavior is encouraged by their bosses, according to Los Angeles Police Department Lt. Paul Vernon.

Fame Pictures Inc., the agency that employed Ramirez, does not encourage photographers to take needless risks, said Alan Croll, an attorney for the firm. "Their photographers understand that they are reporters with a camera and their job is not to create stories, provoke celebrities or initiate physical contact," Croll said.

For the most part, photographers operate within the law in Los Angeles, West Hollywood and Beverly Hills, according to police spokesmen in the three celebrity-infested cities.

Paparazzi are allowed to take pictures from all public sidewalks and streets. In general, they also may snap shots at private businesses where the public is allowed, such as restaurants and grocery stores, as long as they aren't being intrusive.

What's less clear is whether photographers using zoom lenses can take pictures into private homes from public vantage points. Celebrity lawyer Neil Papiano said he won a case establishing that a photographer may not climb a tree in order to take photos inside someone's bedroom, although Papiano said a gag order in

the case prevents him from offering details.

Vernon said the LAPD does not recognize the concept of visual trespass. His advice: "Buy drapes."

The rarest and most sought-after photos — typically ones showing secret relationships — fetch \$100,000 or more. Photographers working for agencies typically make \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year, plus small commissions, while freelancers operate in a more feast-or-famine environment in which a single photo can be worth more than the average person earns in a year.

Seldom crossing the line

Enticed by the prospect of six-figure checks, photographers are becoming more daring, according to some L.A. business owners. Competition could become even more intense as novices wielding camera-equipped cell phones get in the game.

Celebrity hangouts Koi and the Ivy have security people on hand to deal with any incidents that come up. Savvy paparazzi pretend to patronize businesses for legitimate reasons, using cell phones that can take pictures.

"I can see something is going to happen before it happens," said Michelle Ritz, the assistant manager at Ago. The only real way to deal with cell phones that take pictures, she said, is to ask people to put them away or exit the restaurant if they won't part with the phones.

It's rare that the paparazzi cross the line. Typically, there are three photographers who idle by the doors of Spago waiting for a celebrity to come in or out. They don't want the police to be called because a money shot could be missed. "They are there to get their picture. They don't want to do anything that will get them into trouble," said Tracey Spillane, general manager of Spago Beverly Hills.

If paparazzi aggression escalates, restaurants and shops that court celebrities risk scaring away local customers who avoid the onslaught of cameras. But there are a crop of businesses, including hotels and charter jet companies that, at least indirectly, benefit from paparazzi belligerence.

The high-profile actress searching for a private enclave will stay at pricey hotels that pander to their guests' needs. The Peninsula Beverly Hills will place vehicles and personnel at the exits to shield a celebrity from cameras, and the Beverly Hills Hotel will guide high-profile guests through a network of private hallways.

"We are very much there for them," said Sarah Cairns, a spokeswoman for the Four Seasons Hotel. "Guests stay here because they know they feel comfortable. You don't feel like you are in a zoo."

Akin: Number of Attorneys Falls by 71 Percent Since Merger

Continued from page 3

dated the merger.

The problems at Washington D.C.-based Akin Gump, a powerhouse specializing in corporate and securities law, are not uncommon. Like other firms, it entered the market seeking what many outside firms do: a share of the legal spending in the country's second-largest market, with an eye on the entertainment industry. But several East Coast and Midwest firms have faltered in finding clients.

Last year, Clifford Chance closed its Los Angeles office after two years. Brobeck Phleger & Harrison LLP shut down its Los Angeles office in 2003, when the entire San Francisco firm folded. The year before that, Preston Gates & Ellis, a Seattle-based firm, closed its office in L.A. after eight years because it could not attract clients.

"If an L.A. office is not doing well, has a history of partner defections, is not growing, doesn't make an overall contribution to the

firm, then its partners aren't regarded as heavyweights," said Rick Kolodny, president of Portfolio Group, a legal recruiting and placement firm. "Then, when the firm's executive committee is meeting and saying, 'Where is the growth of our 1,000-person firm going to be?' no one will pound the table and say, 'L.A.'"

When it first merged with Troop Steuber, Akin doubled the size of its local office, which had about 60 lawyers since opening in 1997. A year after the 2001 merger, Akin's local office swelled to 139, ranking among the top 10 in employment in Los Angeles, according to the Business Journal's annual ranking of law firms.

Since then, the office's numbers have slowly dwindled. By March of this year, there were 89 lawyers and the office had dropped to No. 25 among the area's largest law firms. On its Web site, the firm lists 81 local lawyers.

Firmwide, Akin fell to No. 17 among U.S. firms, down from No. 13 the year earlier, with revenues totaling \$585 million in 2003, according to the most recent rankings by American

Lawyer magazine.

Many of the early departures in Los Angeles came as Troop partners failed to receive a percentage of profits that were supposed to be higher than the compensation of other Akin partners in the L.A. office. One key departure was Tony Oncidi, a former Troop partner who had headed Akin's labor and employment group in L.A. before leaving with three other associates for Proskauer Rose LLP.

The failed merger has continued to cast a shadow on the lawyers who remain in the local office. Several lawyers formerly with the firm say low morale that began with the failed merger has created a negative environment that never dissipated.

"The former Troop people were disenchanted and have long since left, but it has created a lot of turmoil," Van Vleck said.

Many of the recently departed lawyers say Los Angeles received limited support from the firm's Washington office in the form of billable work and clients. Such support was critical,

since many of them had to cut clients due to conflicts when they joined the firm. (Firms cannot both represent the plaintiffs and defendants in disputes.)

Some former lawyers said partners in the Washington office would even fly to L.A. to handle work that should have been billed by local lawyers.

Calls were not returned by David Allen, partner in charge of Akin's Los Angeles office who serves on the firm-wide management committee, or Bruce McLean, chairman of the firm in Washington.

Akin has grown several of its other offices. It also opened a new San Francisco office last year, headed by Los Angeles partner Stephen Mansfield, a former assistant U.S. attorney. Mansfield did not return calls.

Saltzman, who worked at the local office for five years until he left in May, declined to discuss his departure specifically, saying only that his new firm, Loeb & Loeb LLP, "is just a better fit for my practice."