

FCC prepares to answer cable questions quickly



NATIONAL

WASHINGTON (AP) — Television viewers who are confused about new cable television regulations can take heart: Federal regulators say help is one phone call away.

The Federal Communications Commission also has printed a fact sheet with answers to consumers' most frequent questions.

And officials at the agency, legendary for speaking in jargon and bouncing callers from one office to the next, say they are changing their ways.

"We're finishing up the rules, making them clear and simple, so that any consumer who wants to take some time can understand them," said Sandy Wilson, chief of the FCC's new cable TV bureau.

When a consumer calls the bureau, the person who answers will be expected to start addressing the caller's problem immediately, she said.

Wilson is in the process of hiring and organizing a staff

of 240 lawyers, accountants, economists and clerical workers. They will be divided into teams, each of which will have authority over all cable problems in one region of the country.

But Wilson emphasized that the FCC is not a police force patrolling the nation's 11,000 cable companies looking for violations.

And consumers can't expect every change in monthly bills to be covered by the law. For example, subscription fees charged for once-free cable TV program guides or fees for fixing VCRs are not covered by the law.

It's inevitable when part of a business gets regulated, companies will look for ways to make more money in unregulated areas, said Mike Ruger, an FCC attorney.

"We have seen operators who have dreamed up charges they never had before," he said, adding that the agency is interested in hearing about new charges.

The public's biggest misconception about the new law

appears to be that all rates would go down and that the federal government regulates everything cable-related, FCC officials said.

Actually, local governments regulate the cost of equipment needed to receive cable service; installation; service charges; and basic cable programming — i.e., all over-the-air broadcast stations, public and government access cable channels.

Consumers who have problems in those areas should call their local government's cable TV office. Officials there are supposed to determine whether basic rates are reasonable.

The FCC regulates the cost of channels that aren't basic, including premium channels, such as HBO and Showtime, and pay-per-view for special sporting events or movies.

The FCC will decide whether program packages beyond the basic are reasonably priced.

Police question suspect's kidnapping story

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — A woman who is still a suspect in her son's 1991 kidnapping and death has new troubles with the law — she claims she was abducted by two men who said they were FBI agents.

Michelle Lodzinski disappeared Friday. Her brother, Edward Lodzinski, said that five hours after she left for work, he found her car idling outside the apartment they share in Woodbridge. The driver's side door was open, but her pocketbook, coat and a canister of Mace were still inside, according to police and neighbors.

Lodzinski said his sister called him collect Saturday morning from Detroit and told him two men driving a black four-wheel-drive vehicle abducted her and said that she had better keep quiet about the death of her son, Timothy Wiltsey.

"The two guys who took her were telling her 'You're going to learn a lesson from this,'" Lodzinski said. "They told her 'Every-

one's going to think you're nuts because of this. You're going to lose your job. It'll make you look bad.'"

Before Timothy's body was found, Michelle Lodzinski repeatedly told relatives she feared those responsible for his death might come after her.

FBI officials and Middlesex County Prosecutor Robert Gluck said Michelle Lodzinski claimed to have been kidnapped by two men identifying themselves as FBI agents.

"At the end of the interview with her, we determined her story lacked credibility," said Hank Glaspie, FBI spokesman for the Detroit office.

Michelle Lodzinski, 26, was staying with relatives Sunday in Toledo, Ohio, and could not be reached for comment. Her mother, Alice Lodzinski, said her son planned to pick her daughter up, but did not know when she would be back.

Gluck said investigators want to speak to

Michelle Lodzinski when she returns, and added that she is still a suspect in Timothy's death.

The five-year-old disappeared at a carnival he was attending with his mother in May 1991. His skeletal remains were found in April 1992 in a marshy section of an industrial park.

"She has never stopped being a suspect," Gluck said Sunday. The investigation is still open.

When questioned after Timothy's disappearance, Michelle Lodzinski first said she lost track of her son when she went to buy a soda. Later she told police a couple that she recognized took the boy away.

She moved in with her brother after she received harassing phone calls and her apartment was burglarized, Edward Lodzinski has said. Police also have unconfirmed reports that someone stalked Michelle Lodzinski for about two months in 1992.

Golden Globe Awards honor 'Schindler's List'

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — *Schindler's List*, considered by many the crowning achievement of Steven Spielberg's distinguished filmmaking career, left the Golden Globe-winning director at a loss for words on what lies ahead.

"The sad thing for me, I don't know what I'm going to do next," said Spielberg, who accepted Golden Globes on Saturday night for best dramatic picture and best director.

Schindler's List was the experience of my motion picture life," said the maker of *Jaws*, *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* and *The Color Purple*.

What could lie ahead are Oscars for the director and his searing black-and-white film about a Nazi profiteer's rescue of Jews in the Holocaust.

The Golden Globes, awarded by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, are seen as a barometer of film industry sentiments leading up to voting for the Academy Awards, which will be handed out March 21.

Also in the running are Tom Hanks and Holly Hunter, honored for best dramatic performances in *Philadelphia* and *The Piano*, respectively.

The 51st Golden Globe Awards show was staged at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

Hanks, who plays a lawyer with AIDS who sues his firm for firing him in *Philadelphia*, accepted his award with humble thanks to a number of advisers now dead from AIDS.

"I am a very lucky man to have been able to make the choices I've made this year," said Hanks, who also starred in *Sleepless in Seattle*.

Hunter was honored for her role as a mute virtuoso in colonial New Zealand. The star of *The Piano* thanked director-writer Jane Campion for "coming up with such an amazingly original story."

After the ceremony, Spielberg said youths who laughed during a recent Oakland screening of *Schindler's List* and applauded when a Jewish woman was shot by a sadistic German officer were "not to blame."

"They've been desensitized to violence," he said. The director also said he planned to take his film to Germany in a couple of weeks, "and that should be very interesting."

Robin Williams was named best actor in a musical or comedy for masquerading as a British nanny in *Mrs. Doubtfire*, which was named best musical or comedy film.

"If I start shaking, it's my nerves, not the room," Williams

said, referring to last week's quake and the aftershocks. "The exits are over there and there."

Angela Bassett, who portrayed Tina Turner in *What's Love Got to Do With It*, won the Globe for best actress in a musical or comedy.

Winona Ryder of *The Age of Innocence* and Tommy Lee Jones of *The Fugitive* won Golden Globes as best supporting players.

The press association made the comedy series *Seinfeld*, the hard-nosed cop show *NYPD Blue* and the HBO drama *Barbarians at the Gate* multiple winners in the television categories.

Seinfeld was named best comedy series, and star Jerry Seinfeld and supporting actress Julia Louis-Dreyfus also collected Globes.

NYPD Blue, dropped by some stations because of its frank material, was selected best drama series, and star David Caruso was honored for best performance by an actor in a dramatic series.

Kathy Baker of *Picket Fences* won best actress honors for a dramatic television series.

Barbarians At the Gate, the scorching treatment of financial chicanery in the '80s, scored a

Globe for best miniseries or movie made for TV. Its star, James Garner, won for best actor in a miniseries.

Helen Hunt of *Mad About You*, was named best actress in a musical or comedy.

Bruce Springsteen claimed the Golden Globe for best original song in a motion picture for "Streets of Philadelphia," written for *Philadelphia*.

The ballroom at the Beverly Hilton Hotel seemed festive despite the devastation of the past week in Los Angeles.

"We all thank God that we're alive and well and able to be here tonight," said emcee Faye Dunaway.

Before the program began, producer Dick Clark said the ballroom was safe and pointed out emergency exits to the audience.

Presenters included Gregory Peck, Al Pacino, Mariel Hemingway, Carol Burnett, Morgan Freeman, Lou Gossett Jr., Laura Dern, Charlton Heston, Tim Robbins, Andy Garcia and Sam Waterston.

Two presenters dropped out: Kirstie Alley and Arsenio Hall. The homes of both were reportedly damaged by the Jan. 17 earthquake.

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