

THE HARMELIN MEDIA REPORT

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The Election & TV Parody by Kathy Ruddy & Michelle Levy

The buzz around the political satire throughout the 2008 presidential election has been almost as exciting as the election itself. *Saturday Night Live* is hotter than ever with Tina Fey's impersonations of Gov. Sarah Palin. With four Fey appearances in five shows, *SNL's* ratings are up 76% over last year. Even more impressive, the online and DVR audiences for the skits were more than twice the



Tina Fey and John McCain on *SNL*

size of the original TV audience. This is rare as the vast majority of viewing usually takes place during the actual broadcast. Delayed viewing surged with the buzz. An estimated 17 million viewers tuned into the first half-hour of the sketch comedy on October 18 when

Gov. Palin made a cameo appearance during Fey's fourth skit. The VP candidate helped the program reach its highest rating in 14 years.

SNL isn't the only news parody enjoying record viewership this political season. Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* is averaging 1.8 million viewers and *The Colbert Report* is averaging 1.4 million. Both cable shows are up 16% from last year.

Political humor once scared off advertisers, with partisans claiming that shows like *SNL* favor one side or another. This year, advertisers are jumping back on board. Demand spiked since Fey began appearing as Gov. Palin, and advertisers who haven't sponsored *SNL* for several seasons have returned to the show.

Comedy Central is also capitalizing on this trend. Its "Indecision 2008" election night special is estimated to bring in twice the revenue it did four years ago.

What effect do these political parodies have on public opinion? Parodies often create caricatures of the political candidates by exaggerating one characteristic and giving it such prominence that we begin to see that candidate differently. For instance, more than 30 years ago, Chevy

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The Election & The Phils by Bridget Crowther

As we move through November, it is hard to look back on 2008 without noticing the history this year is making. We just witnessed one of the most notable elections in U.S. history. It's the first time that an African-American had been nominated for president by a major political party.

Sarah Palin, the Republican nominee for Vice President, is her party's first female candidate for vice president and just second woman candidate for the #2 job in



history (Geraldine Ferraro was Walter Mondale's vice-presidential choice when the Democrats lost to Ronald Reagan in 1984.) Both of these aspects made it an interesting race to follow. With interest in this presidential race at an extremely high level, there's been more attention and criticism of the two parties' campaigns and the media covering the campaigns.

One campaign controversy came while our very own Philadelphia Phillies had won the National League Championship Series and were heading to the 2008 World Series. Not long after the Phillies won the NLCS, Major League Baseball agreed to a fifteen minute delay of the start of the sixth game of the series, if there was a need for a sixth game. This delay was so FOX could join CBS, NBC, and Univision in airing Barack Obama's thirty minute commercial (or infomercial). The reaction to the news was mixed. Some baseball fans were aggravated, but not too much since the delay of the actual game was only a matter of minutes (the pre-game show would get pre-empted). Besides, it is not the first time a network and sports league decided to bump the start time of a sporting event due to political

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Good Bye Analog, Hello Digital

by Lauren Hanko

With about 100 days to go, the era of analog broadcast TV will come to an end as the nation switches over to an all-digital system. Americans have until February 17, 2009 to either switch to a digital television, get hooked up to a subscription service such as cable or satellite TV, or buy a digital-to-analog converter box, which allows you to watch digital broadcasts with your analog television. You will know if you have already have a digital TV because there will be a label marked on the back of the TV. Most viewers will not notice the change because they are already cable or satellite TV subscribers.



To help consumers, the government created the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program. Every household in the U.S. is able to receive up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, toward the purchase of the converter boxes. You can retrieve the coupons through this site: www.dtv2009.gov. The average cost on Best Buy's and Circuit City's website for the converter box is around \$60. Even though these converter boxes are much cheaper than buying a new TV, the picture and sound quality will not be much clearer than analog.

There are many positive effects that happen when switching over to an all-digital broadcast. The picture and sound quality will greatly improve. Another is that the all digital switch will free up parts of the broadcast spectrum. This allows public safety communications, such as police, fire departments, and rescue squads to be able to make emergency broadcasts. Also, by freeing up the broadcast spectrum the FCC was able to hold an auction to private companies who offer wireless services. The money that was raised went to offset the federal deficit. This auction was held in March 2008 and raised a record of \$19.6 billion.

It's not cheap for television stations to upgrade to digital. The estimated cost is about \$2 million per station and about \$10 million per station if they want to broadcast in high-definition. More than 1,500 stations have already made the digital transition. The good thing about switching over to digital for the stations is that they will have the opportunity to broadcast multiple programs on one signal. For example, a local station can have a news and weather channel that will broadcast over one signal. This additional programming provides many more possibilities for advertising revenue, which is what the broadcasters want.

According to Nielsen, as of October 2008, 7.7% of TV households are completely unready. It varies by demographic group. Households headed by people aged 55+ are the most ready (93.6% ready) while those headed by people under 35 are the least ready (10.6% unready). Hispanic households are much more unready (12.6% unready). However, Nielsen noted that there's been a big push in just the last month to get ready. But there will still be some households with a blank screen.

What to do with those analog TV sets? Maybe sell them for scrap or go green and recycle them. Here's a site to find out where to recycle them: <http://www.mygreenelectronics.org>. Let the new era of digital television begin.

(Continued from page 1) **Political Parodies**

Chase's impersonations on *SNL* portrayed Gerald Ford as clumsy and slow. Some say it wasn't fair as Ford was a college football star at Michigan when the Wolverines won two national titles. However, the president is often remembered as a klutz thanks to *SNL*.

Seventy million people watched the vice-presidential debate on October 2, while the majority of viewers (56%) who watched the *SNL* sketches never saw the actual debate.

Will the current popularity of these parodies be reflected on Election Day?

The sketches may not have swayed viewers one way or another. Sarah Palin, Joe Biden, even debate moderator Gwen Ifill and Biden's hometown of Scranton, PA took their share of hits in the *SNL* sketch. Obama and McCain have made appearances on the show. Every president and major candidate has been parodied on *SNL*. Viewers love it as evidenced by NBC's highest ratings for a non-Olympic show in almost two years when it ran *SNL Presidential Bash 2008* on the eve of the election. The two-hour special highlighted candidate parodies since *SNL's* premiere when Gerry Ford was president.

Some feel the audience reacts like this: if your candidate is being parodied, you and *SNL* are laughing with him. If the other candidate is being parodied, then you're laughing at him.

While many factors influence a voter's decision, *SNL* and other news parodies provide a frame through which people see these candidates. Although McCain and Palin lost the



election, we can be sure that *SNL*, *The Daily Show*, *Colbert Report* and all the rest will be poking fun at President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden for at least the next four years. But *SNL's* ratings will certainly miss Sarah Palin.

Reaching Kids at School

by Cyndi Graiff

At the start of every September the air turns a little nipper, summer vacations are over, and for millions of American children, school begins again. If you are a parent it is time for Back-to-School Night, where you meet teachers, see classrooms and learn the importance of book covers. For many parents it has been a long time since their own school days, and things have changed.

Almost twenty years ago, many schools were introduced to Channel One. The TV situated in the corner of your homeroom was new to the curriculum. Channel One featured a 12-minute daily news show for students in grades 6 through 12 that included two minutes of age-appropriate ads for products like jeans and soft drinks. In exchange for airing the program each day at the same time for three years, Channel One Communications provided participating schools with a satellite dish, cable hookup, television monitor for each classroom, and an agreement to service the equipment for the contracted time frame.



Channel One News™

Channel One was not alone in helping to bring advertisers into the classroom, but they were able to market it with content that helped educators discuss current events with their students. Over the years many variations of in-school advertising have popped in the classrooms. Ads in school newspapers, school sports scoreboard advertising, and billboards on school property have been more and more frequent over the last decade.

School districts not only permit this advertising but in many cases promote and solicit it to help with flat or lower school budgets. In addition to these venues some advertisers are participating in sponsored educational materials and programs to help school districts that are struggling financially. These sponsorships allow for low-cost teaching tools, videos, software, books and workbooks for students. Some of these items may be free of advertising while others may contain ads from the producer and contain promotional text for advertised products, websites, and give-aways.

A variation of this type of sponsorship has been active for almost thirty years. It's Campbell Soup Company's Labels for Education. For more than 30 years, Labels for Education has been awarding free educational equipment to schools in exchange for proofs of purchase from the Campbell family of brands. It's a fun, easy program where students, families and members of the community work together for a common goal. Over 80,000 schools and organizations are now registered with Labels for Education, benefiting more than 42 million students. According to Campbellsoup.com, over the years Campbell's has been able to provide more than \$100 million in merchandise to America's schools.

Why are advertisers so interested in reaching this audience? They don't usually have disposable income. But they do have parents! Raisin Bran Crunch's current TV spot says it best. Four men are at the reception desk pitching slogans to the marketing department via speaker phone. The last guy screams "Raisin Bran Crunch BUY ME SOME MOM!"

Children collectively spend or influence the spending of over \$500 billion worth of purchases. Advertisers have retreated from targeting moms and dads and now speak directly to the kids.

Kids today are savvier in this changing technological world than their predecessors. Advertisers must follow the changes in children's behaviors in order to keep this audience engaged and interested in their products. They can be reached during classes on the computers provided by corporate sponsors and providers. Email blasts can be sent to high school students via their school accounts.

The practice of in-school advertising is not accepted everywhere. Some parts of the country are leery of this practice becoming overbearing and intrusive. Recently, South Carolina's State Board of Education ruled 15-2 against all advertising on school buses. Laws vary state to state, but South Carolina is the first for a complete ban. New York State refuses interior school bus advertising but does allow exterior ads. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been working on policies that would end all types of school advertising.

Despite some government attempts to limit it, in-school advertising is a growing medium. It allows advertisers a way to reach this influential audience in their own playground.

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The Phillies

broadcasts. In early September, NBC pushed the NFL opening night game kick-off time up to 7PM in order to accommodate the Republican National Convention and Senator John McCain's acceptance of the Republican party nomination later that night.

FOX's decision to air Senator Obama's advertising during the 2008 World Series had the potential to make baseball fans unhappy, especially when FOX is calling the shots and giving the cue for live action to the umpires. No one can predict the outcome of a game. Inclement weather can cause delays, and tied scores can stretch game times into the early morning hours. The Phillies' final week



is a fine example of what can go wrong as far as scheduling for a big TV audience. For example, game 3 of the 2008 World Series took place on Saturday, October 25th. It was the first home World Series for the Phillies since October 21st, 1993. Mother Nature decided to make the city wait for the first pitch until 10:06PM that night. The game ended in the bottom of the ninth inning with a Phillies victory, but not until 1:47AM Sunday. The Phillies would go on to win game 4 as well, which put them ahead of the Tampa Bay Rays in the series, 3 games to 1.

No one knew what was in store for the critical 5th game of the series in Philadelphia. There were a lot of circumstances throughout the start of game five on Monday, October 27th that could have had a significant effect on the outcome of the game if the political advertising were involved. Game 5 began on Monday, October 27th in rainy conditions at Citizens Bank Park. The Phillies and Rays played through rough conditions until the game was officially called following the top of the 6th inning around 11:10PM. This official delay occurred just after the Tampa Bay Rays scored a run, leaving the score tied and delaying the game for 46 hours. Play resumed with the Phillies up to bat in the bottom of the 6th inning, and eventually ended with one of the most exciting wins in Philadelphia history. Who knows what would have happened to the game if it had been game-five Monday that Obama decided to run his special? No one can say for sure. It may have stolen fifteen critical minutes that allowed the Rays to resume play with the score tied. The game would have played out in Philadelphia regardless of the weather. However, the fifteen minute delay for Senator Obama on FOX could very well have made a difference in timing and the final score may not have been the same. Worse for Phillies fans, the game might have been called before the Rays batted in the fifth and the game would have been replayed in its entirety — nine new innings. That would have meant wasting ace Cole Hamels' Monday night performance and not being able to use him again.

If the Phils were denied a parade down Broad Street due in part to president-elect Obama's infomercial, would McCain have won this blue state? Perhaps the Obama campaign had already thought of the possibility and wisely chose not to air the commercial Monday night.

Thousands Enjoy The View At 25

This fall, many of Harmelin's colleagues – from clients to media representatives to partner agencies – got to enjoy *The View at 25* at HarmelinAt25.com, the microsite commemorating Harmelin's 25th year in business. Visitors were enticed to go to the site to find answers to Harmelin trivia questions and be entered to win prizes: from twenty-five \$25 American Express Gift Cards to a grand prize of an Apple Vacations Caribbean trip for two.

The questions started out easy. In the first round, we asked what white item Linda Gaglione had purchased online. Although some thought a Coach bag, the correct answer was her wedding dress. The next round asked about the Harmelin employee with a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. Almost everyone quickly found out that John Camilleri was Harmelin's black belt in residence. The final round was a bit trickier. Participants had to determine which piece of technology was not listed as a "must have" item by any of the Harmelin employees profiled on *The View at 25*. This question stumped many participants who incorrectly assumed no one still had a Sony Walkman. But a clever group of participants correctly deduced that David Moore still had his trusty (and probably rusty) Walkman, and that the correct answer was an iPod.

Our congratulations to all of the winners, with a special bon voyage to **Melissa Mattilio** of **Turkey Hill**, winner of the grand prize trip to the Caribbean. While the contest is over, there is still time to learn more about Harmelin and the Harmelin team by visiting *The View at 25* at HarmelinAt25.com. You never know what you'll find out.

Around the Harmelin Water Cooler

After the final polls closed at 11PM on November 4, what medium was first to inform you that Barack Obama had been elected president?

Broadcast Network TV	48%
Cable Network TV	38%
Internet	8%
Radio	5%
Newspaper	1%

