

Adults mistakingly believe air bags help save children

BOSTON (AP) — While passenger-side air bags have killed at least 38 children, a major survey of Americans believe the safety devices save more children than they hurt, a new survey shows.

Nearly 60 percent of adults polled by the Center for Risk Analysis at the Harvard School of Public Health mistakenly believe air bags are saving more children's lives than they are, the researchers say. There are no documented cases of a child being saved by an air bag, said John Graham, director of the center and the study's leading author.

Although survey participants recognized that air bags can save lives, they were unclear on the range of injuries air bags can cause. "The public has a perhaps excessively optimistic and favorable view of what air bags are doing for them," Graham said.

Of the 38 children killed to date by air bags, 25 were sitting in the front passenger seat and were decapitated, Graham said.

Nine of those were infants. Of the 29 older children, 25 were not wearing seat belts and 10 were wearing lap belts without shoulder belts, said Brian O'Neill, president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety in Arlington, Va.

Air bags, which deploy at up to 200 mph, are credited with saving more than 1,600 lives.

However, Graham said he had not found any documented cases of children's lives being saved by the inflatable safety devices. Industry representatives could not be reached for comment Sunday.

And at least 20 adults, most of them smaller women, have been killed by air bags.

Cable industry faces competition from direct broadcast satellites

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Space: The final frontier?

Whether or not Rupert Murdoch is a Star Trek fan, his plan to beam hundreds of TV channels — including local stations — directly into people's homes via satellite leaves cable television executives, gathered for a convention here this week, wishing somebody would beam him up.

Already, Murdoch's latest venture — a \$1 billion stake in a Denver-based direct broadcast satellite company — is being referred to as the "Death Star."

Even Wall Street thinks the combination of EchoStar Communications with ASkyB, the nascent satellite television business of Murdoch's News Corp., makes a potentially formidable competitor to the \$25 billion cable industry. Cable stocks plunged 8 to 10 percent after Murdoch's Feb. 24 announcement.



Murdoch

Kenneth Goldman, a money manager who watches media companies for Entermidia Growth Partners of Denver, said consumers can expect more viewing choices than ever.

Telephone companies have scaled back plans to compete head-to-head with local cable systems. And microwave-delivered "wireless cable" has yet to evolve into the competitor policy makers had hoped. But direct broadcast satellite TV is cable's biggest nightmare.

"Cable is worried because Rupert Murdoch has shown a willingness to lose gobs of money to build new businesses. He takes big risks," Goldman said. "The Murdoch deal restores a cloud of competition that seemed to be waning over the cable industry."

Decker Anstrom, president of the National Cable Television Association, said a message of this week's cable convention is "we're going to meet that competition with a growing sense of confidence."

But in a sign of tension, the conference scuttled a session on how cable and direct broadcast satellite companies — called DBS in the industry — can work together.

Of the 100 million U.S. homes with television, about 65 million have cable. Just 4.5 million households have direct-broadcast satellite TV, but the industry could grow to 21 million customers by 2001, according to some projections.

The cable industry is about as entrenched as the Big Three networks were before Murdoch's Fox television, home to *The Simpsons*, *Married with Children* and NFL football, shook them up. DBS is a real threat because it is digital and can offer customers better sound and picture quality and more channels than the average cable system, which provides 54.

Plus, unlike other DBS providers, Murdoch says his new venture, to be called Sky, also will offer local TV programming in some markets. DBS users today generally need to either plug "rabbit-ears" or basic cable into their satellite receivers to get local stations on their sets.

If Murdoch pulls this off investors worry it would cost cable companies subscribers. Analysts expect cable companies will focus more on creating new local programming choices to combat that fear.

Cox Cable Communications' system San Diego, for instance, bought exclusive rights to 125 Padres' professional baseball games, which it will air this spring on a local programming channel it created: Channel 4.

Similarly, Comcast Corp. is supposed to offer local sports events on its cable system in Philadelphia.

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Please direct any questions regarding these positions or the MSC nominations process to Liz Rayburn at 845-9024.



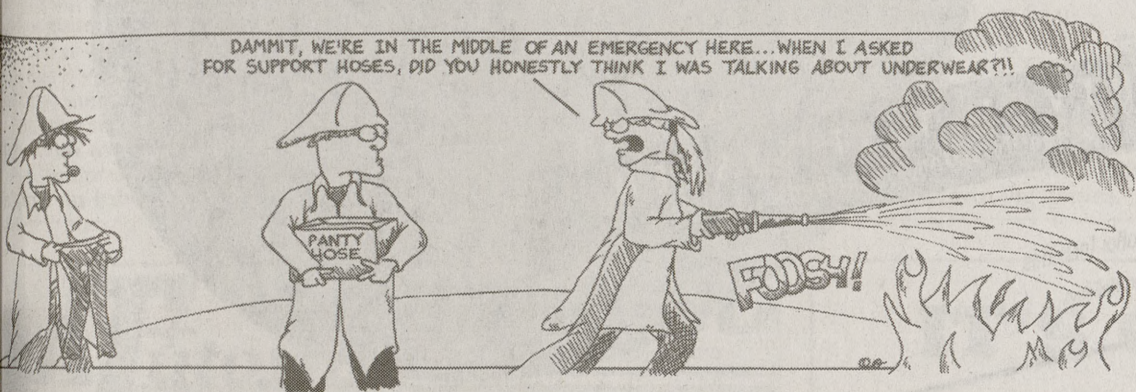
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The students listed are juniors or seniors currently enrolled in the Lowry Mays College & Graduate School of Business (College) or students who were graduated from the College during the December 1996 Commencement exercises.

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For additional information about Beta Gamma Sigma contact Dr. Robert Albanese, Department of Management, Wehner 433J. Telephone: 845-3132. E-Mail: balbanese@cgsb.tamu.edu

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