

Springer under attack Insurance system needs fixing, commissioner says

CHICAGO (AP) — All of a sudden, it is Jerry Springer who's taking the hits, not the guests on his fists-flying talk show.

Rolling Stone magazine and a TV entertainment show are reporting that the fights are about as real as a pro wrestling match, a charge the show denies. And the NBC station that brought Springer to the big leagues has scraped the show off the bottom of its corporate shoes amid rising criticism that it has degenerated into a pornographic slugfest.

Springer has a history of profiting from sleaze. And as media watchers doubted that his top-rated daytime talk show will suffer from the allegations, Chicagoans braced for a double dose of "The Jerry Springer Show" on a new station.

"Nobody ever lost any money underestimating people's taste," said Christopher Sterling, a George Washington University media scholar.

The show "is like wrestling," Sterling said. "The whole thing is a put-up job."

On Thursday, Chicago's WFLD-TV, owned by the Fox Broadcasting Co., quickly snatched up the syndicated show in a multiyear deal that will air it not once, but twice daily.

A day earlier WMAQ-TV said it was ending its contract with Springer, whose profile the NBC station tried to raise a year earlier in a brief but disastrous

stint as a news commentator.

The WMAQ announcement came just hours before the syndicated show "Extra" was scheduled to air a report saying that many of Springer's fights are staged and guests are coached. On Friday, Rolling Stone hits the newsstands with similar allegations.

Show spokesperson Jim Benson denied the allegations and said the show has "strict production guidelines and policies."

Suzanne Muir, a Canadian restaurant owner who helped stage a high-profile hoax on the Springer show three years ago, said reports of staged shows are hardly shocking and she doubted that viewers care.

"You can tell who his audience is by who he's playing to," she said. "These people have just come from a fresh cockfight or a tractor pull."

The Springer show, which featured such topics as "I Strip With My Family," had been broadcast in Chicago daily from WMAQ's downtown studios. It will continue to be produced there under the new

deal with WFLD-TV. Larry Wert, WMAQ's new president and general manager, said only that he determined the show did not fit with his station's goals of making "the strongest connection with the community."

AUSTIN (AP) — In the last traffic jam you suffered through, as many as one of four motorists around you was illegally driving without insurance.

Texas Insurance Commissioner Elton Bomer believes the number can be slashed.

Bomer on Thursday recommended that state lawmakers adopt a program to randomly survey Texas drivers for proof of insurance. Those that could not prove they had coverage would face fines and suspended licenses plates.

The program, operating in Illinois since 1994, has reduced the number of uninsured drivers there significantly, Bomer said.

"I think it is a good system. Anytime you can bring something down from 17 percent to 4.4 percent that's pretty strong," he said of the Illinois program, run by the Illinois

Secretary of State.

In addition to adopting such a program, Bomer said Texas lawmakers should consider a complete overhaul of auto insurance laws. He said moving away from the current system, in which drivers who cause damage pay for it, to a "no-fault" system would save consumers money.

In no-fault systems, operated by more than a dozen states, insurance companies pay their customers for damages and injuries no matter who caused them. Drivers without insurance in those systems have limited options for recovering for their damages.

"I believe Texans would embrace a no-fault system if it reduced rates," Bomer said. "I believe a good no-fault system would bring down rates and I believe it

should be in the law."

Lawmakers could do a no-fault system or a mandatory survey before the regular session next year, lawmakers, however, would not directly reduce the number of uninsured motorists.

Bomer agreed. But a no-fault system would reduce insurance rates and that could get more purchase coverage.

"Affordability is added."

Insurance industry said they would like both ideas.

"Our thing is to get the of uninsured drivers down," Jerry Johns, president of western Insurance Information, said. "I believe a good no-fault system would bring down rates and I believe it

"Nobody ever lost any money underestimating people's taste."

Christopher Sterling
Media scholar

WHAT'S UP

Friday, April 24

Alpha Phi Omega: Meet to go visit Crestview Retirement Home at 6:30 p.m. at Crestview.

Student Y: We will meet at 3:45 p.m. at Koldus to go to Boys & Girls Club.

Episcopal Student Center: There will be a celebration of holy eucharist followed by free dinner at 6:15 p.m. on Sunday at 902 George Bush. Call Father Mark at 696-0774 for more details.

Environmental Issues Committee: Earth Week will be celebrated all day at Rudder Fountain with booths, free T-shirts, bands, and more. Call Sarah at 847-8446 for details.

Alpha Phi Omega: There will be a blood drive at Rudder Fountain and Sbsa from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Saturday, April 25

Pre-Vet Society: There will be a Dog and Car Wash at the Long John Silver's on Texas Avenue to benefit the Brazos Animal Shelter and Greyhound Track. Call Jennifer Sharpes at 847-8415 for more details.

Monday, April 27

Officers' Christian Fellowship: Bible study on how to live a Christian life in the military/Corps of Cadets will be held at 7:45 p.m. in the Military Science Building room 108. Call Tim at 847-1730 for details.

Alpha Phi Omega: Meet to go to Girl's Club at 3:30 p.m. in 133 Koldus.

Interspersed Christian Fellowship: On-campus Bible studies will be held. Contact David at 847-4264 for

location and further details.

Fellowship of Christian Cowboys: FCC will hold a Bible study, prayer and fellowship meeting at Pearce Pavilion on George Bush Doctor from 8 to 9 p.m. Call Jay or Andy at 825-2716 for details.

Catholic Students Association: There will be a praise and worship session from 7:30 to 8:30 at St. Mary's Catholic Church and a general meeting at 9 p.m. in the St. Mary's Student Center-Main Room every Monday for the rest of the semester.

What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit student and faculty events and activities. Items should be submitted no later than three days in advance of the desired run date. Application deadlines and notices are not events and will not be run in What's Up. If you have any questions, please call the newsroom at 845-3313.

Painting fanatic



Lindsay Maxwell, a junior anthropology major, paints the face of Melanie Krause, a senior genetics major, at the MSC on Thursday.

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*PAULIE (PG)	12:15 2:20 4:30 7:20 9:25 11:35
GREASE (PG)	1:45
*MAJOR LEAGUE 3 (PG-13)	2:35 7:45
CITY OF ANGELS (PG-13)	1:35 4:20 7:15 10:00 12:40
THE NEWTON BOYS (PG-13)	1:30 4:35 7:30 10:20 1:00
MY GIANT (PG)	1:25
TITANIC (PG-13)	12:00 4:00 8:00 11:00 5:00 9:15 12:00
PRIMARY COLORS (R)	1:05 7:05
WILD THINGS (R)	4:25 7:50 10:25 12:55
MAN IN THE IRON MASK (PG-13)	12:55 3:40 6:50 9:55 12:50
SCREAM 2 (R)	1:10 4:15 7:10 10:05 12:50
GOOD WILL HUNTING (R)	4:10 7:00 9:50 12:45
AS GOOD AS IT GETS (PG-13)	4:05 10:10
LOST IN SPACE (PG-13)	12:50 3:50 6:45 9:30 12:10 1:50 4:50 8:15 11:15
MERCURY RISING (R)	1:20 3:55 6:40 9:40 12:15
SPECIES 2 (R)	12:30 5:10 10:30 12:35
*THE BIG HIT (R)	12:10 2:30 5:05 7:35 10:15 12:30
*TARZAN & LOST CITY (PG)	12:35 2:40 4:45 7:25 9:35 11:45

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Please type your responses on a separate piece of paper

- 1) Why do you want to work at The Battalion, and what do you hope to accomplish?
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