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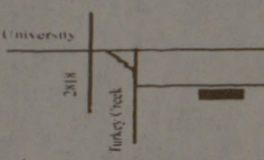
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Rosie O'Donnell, publisher in court battle over demise of Rosie magazine

By Samuel Maull
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Lawyers for Rosie O'Donnell and the publisher of her now-defunct magazine, Rosie, squared off in court Thursday, each charging the other with destroying the publication by seeking complete control.

"Ms. O'Donnell walked away from the magazine, causing it to shut down in its second year of publication and causing hundreds of people to lose jobs and Gruner + Jahr to lose millions of dollars," Martin Hyman, lawyer for publisher Gruner + Jahr USA, said in opening statements in a Manhattan courtroom.



O'DONNELL

The magazine, launched in 2001, folded soon after O'Donnell resigned in September 2002. G+J is seeking \$100 million from O'Donnell; she asks \$125 million in a countersuit.

O'Donnell, wearing a bright red coat over a black shirt and pants, listened attentively to opening arguments, but showed no reaction. She is expected to take the witness stand during the trial.

Hyman said the dispute began after a newly hired editor chose a cover photo of O'Donnell for the August 2002 edition that the entertainer deemed unflattering.

Hyman said the editor, Susan Toepfer, ignored O'Donnell's request to use another photo — and O'Donnell saw that as a sign she was losing control of the magazine. From that moment on, he

said, O'Donnell was determined that either Toepfer would go or she would.

In her opening statement, O'Donnell's lawyer Linda Schofield defended O'Donnell's decision to walk away from the magazine, saying the publisher breached an agreement that gave her control of the magazine's editorial content.

She agreed with Hyman that the disputed cover photo had upset O'Donnell, but that her client saw that as a sign that he wishes with regard to the magazine were not being respected. Schofield said O'Donnell found Toepfer difficult to work with and wanted the previous editor, Cathy Cazender, to return.

"She wanted things to return to the way they were when she was in control," Schofield said.

The trial is expected to feature differing accounts of O'Donnell's style as the editorial inspiration of Rosie, which subsumed the venerable, but failing magazine McCall's.

A key prong of the dispute is how the magazine reported its circulation numbers.

Lawyers for O'Donnell are expected to contend that G+J deliberately overstated its subscriber base to make the magazine appear healthier than it was. O'Donnell's contract allowed her to walk away from the magazine if it posted particularly high losses.

The trial comes as O'Donnell prepares to launch "Taboo," a boisterous musical about the 1980s pop phenomenon of George — and starring Boy George in a different role — that O'Donnell has confidently predicted will win a Tony Award. She is the \$10 million show's producer and single investor.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Travolta to act as master of ceremonies for First Flight Centennial

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — John Travolta will be the master of ceremonies for the final day of the First Flight Centennial celebration Dec. 17.

The actor, who has logged 5,000 hours as a pilot, will speak to the sold-out crowd of 35,000, announced guests and fly his Boeing 707 in a 100-plane squadron that will soar over the Outer Banks during the celebration. The final plane in the squadron will be a replica of the Wright brothers flyer.

Travolta's visit will be on the last day of a six-day celebration Dec. 12-17 at the Wright Brothers National Memorial to mark the 100th anniversary of Orville and Wilbur Wright's first successful powered flight on Dec. 17, 1903.

Tickets for Dec. 17 have sold out. Weeklong passes are no longer available, though tickets for Dec. 13-16 are still available. Tickets cost \$10 a day for adults and aren't needed for Dec. 12.

Kim Sawyer, a program coordinator for the First Flight Centennial Commission, said Travolta's representatives contacted event organizers to voice his interest in the program.

"He is very interested in aviation and was excited about the event," Sawyer said. "My sense is that he is as excited to be here as we are to have him be part of the program. ... His heroes are the people honored here."

In December, the 49-year-old actor served as master of ceremonies at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., for the inauguration of the yearlong series of events commemorating the Wright brothers flight.

Gwen Stefani's new clothing line to feature bumflaps

NEW YORK (AP) — Gwen Stefani's new line of clothes, L.A.M.B., has all the hallmarks of the No Doubt singer's style: bikini tops, Rasta-inspired colors, low-slung pants, even bum flaps.

Bum flaps? "That's one of her signatures, she's been wearing them for a while," her head designer, Annie Younger, said Wednesday.

A bum flap is a piece of fabric that looks like half of a pleated skirt, and it can be attached to the back of pants, worn slung across one hip or stacked for a layered effect.

After designing a collection of L.A.M.B. handbags for LeSportsac, the spring collection will be the first try at a clothes line for the 34-year-old singer, who has also branched out into acting, playing Jean Harlow in Martin Scorsese's upcoming "The Aviator." Stefani's style — an amalgam of skater punk, street style and 1940s glamour — is evident throughout the line.

Her music is incorporated into the clothes, with lyrics sewn into waistbands and vintage military-style patches that say "Just a Girl," from No Doubt's 1996 breakout single, and "Hysterical Confession," a line from a song on No Doubt's 2000 album "Return

to Saturn." One T-shirt is adorned with Stefani's handwritten essay on the origins of L.A.M.B., which stands for "love angel music baby" and was also the name of a beloved dog.

"Anything Goes" at sale of Cole Porter's birthplace

PERU, Ind. (AP) — The sale of jazz composer Cole Porter's birthplace was a duet of sorts, but it wasn't harmonious.

Two men bought the house at a Miami County tax auction last week. But the bidders weren't partners — they split the property, which was sold in two separate parcels.

The house where Porter was born rests on two neighboring lots which were divided for the auction last Thursday, said Michael Mullins of the county treasurer's office.

Local resident Brian Boyce won one parcel with an \$800 proxy bid, but a Michigan man outbid him on the second, which sold for \$9,000.

Boyce said he was considering having the historic house restored and converted into a bed and breakfast.

Keith Wegner, the other bidder, said he also hoped the house could be restored.

"I hope some historical society takes it over," said Wegner. "I'd like to see it fixed back up and become something the county can be proud of."

Both bidders must wait a year before making any such move. The original owner can regain the property if he pays the overdue taxes and penalties within that time.

Porter was born in Peru in 1891 and wrote more than 1,500 songs for stage, movies and television, including such standards as "I Get a Kick Out of You" and "Anything Goes."

Douglas, Zeta-Jones host Nobel Peace Prize concert

OSLO, Norway (AP) — When the organizers of the annual Nobel Peace Prize concert asked Michael Douglas to host the event, the actor asked if his wife, Catherine Zeta-Jones, could lend a hand.

"That was our first choice, but we didn't dare to ask for both at the same time," concert organizer Odd Arvid Stromstad said Thursday. "It didn't take us long to say 'yes.'"

Douglas and Zeta-Jones will act as co-masters of ceremony at the Dec. 11 concert in Oslo, the day after Iranian lawyer, writer and human rights activist Shirin Ebadi accepts her 2003 Nobel Peace Prize.

Tim McGraw, the Chieftains accompanied by Rosanne Cash, the Cardigans, opera stars Roberto Alagna and Angela Gheorghiu, Senegal's Orchestra Baobab and Broadway performer Martin Yates are among those scheduled to perform.

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