



## Plastics meltdown at Advanstar

When Advanstar Communications president and CEO Ed Aster shut down the company's Denver offices last May, he unintentionally spawned competition to Advanstar's *Plastics Machinery & Equipment*, *Plastics Design Forum*, *Plastics Compounds* and *Advanced Composites*, all based there. Only one of 40 editorial and ad sales employees elected to relocate to the Eugene, Oregon, office, where the titles are now published. Since then, two separate groups of ex-Advanstar employees have started new magazines, both based in Denver. *Injection Molding* (a 30,000-circulation bimonthly) is backed by former Advanstar executives Peter Zacher (former group vice president), Pete Sullivan (former group publisher), and Suzy Witzler (former group editor). The first issue was scheduled to mail September 10 with 50 ad pages in a 100-page issue. Judy Hazen, a former group publisher of the plastics titles, is now the publisher/chief editor of *High Performance Composites*, a 20,000 controlled-circulation bimonthly. The first issue was scheduled to mail on September 28 with about 30 ad pages. Jane Ganter, new editor of Advanstar's *PM&E* in Eugene, has spent nine years working as an editor in Aster-run properties. On the plastics defections, she concedes: "In the short run, it makes life very difficult. We're spending a lot more time getting acquainted with the industry." And the new competition? "I would not dismiss them. We know they have a track record and we take them seri-

### Hearst cancels *Family Adventures* . . .

In the same week that Jann Wenner was putting the finishing touches on *Family Life* and Walt Disney Publishing was beefing up *Family Fun*, Hearst was abandoning its entry in the market, *Family Adventures*. The ad closing date for the second issue was set for August 2—and sales were falling short. The test issue was put on newsstands last spring with a pressrun of 350,000. On June 16, Hearst put out a press release stating "the second edition will hit newsstands on October 6." The project was under the *Sports Afield* crew, so it does not go down as a failed mission for Hearst's celebrated magazine development team.

### While Disney mulls a *Family Fun* spin-off

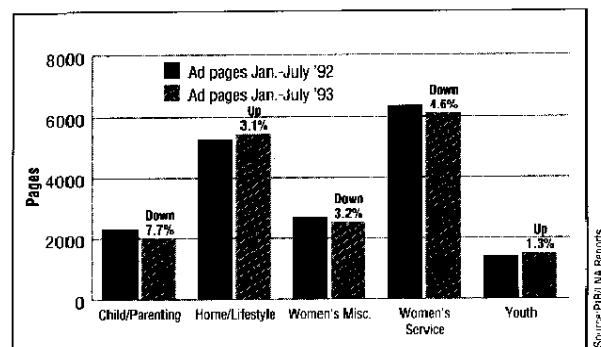
At least one industry source says Walt Disney Publishing flew its editors to its Burbank, California, headquarters in August to discuss a new-launch proposal—a title aimed at parents of children who like high-tech consumer electronics and video games. The project—if it gets a green light—will spin out of *Family Fun*, headed by publisher/president Jake Winebaum. Winebaum confirmed that the proposal is "about one of five ideas we're looking at." Publishing senior vice president Michael Linton said a decision could be made by November.

### Too close for comfort

Journalists who fail to effectively "mask" the identities of sources to whom they promised anonymity may be sued for breach of contract, a federal appeals court in Minneapolis recently ruled. The case—*Jill Ruzica v. Condé Nast Publications, Inc. and Claudia Dreifus*—involved a *Glamour* reporter who promised to conceal the identity of a female lawyer she interviewed for a story about sexual abuse by therapists. The lawsuit alleged that the plaintiff lost her job as a result of the severe emotional distress

caused when the reporter identified her as a member of a state task force on patient-therapist sex—on which she was the only female. A trial judge dismissed the suit, saying that the promise was too vague to amount to an enforceable contract. But the appeals court found that the First Amendment does not preclude claims against the news media for "promissory estoppel"—breaking a binding promise. The lawsuit now returns to a lower court, where the plaintiff must prove that such a promise was offered and the description indeed made her identifiable. Although the ruling is not binding in other jurisdictions, other courts may follow the Eighth District's lead. Reporters and magazines can avoid such liability by putting the promise in writing or agreeing only not to use the source's name, says Lawrence Savell, a lawyer specializing in media law with New York City's Chadbourne & Parke.

### Less play means fewer ad pages in parent titles



The nesting trend of the nineties isn't showing up in ad pages for parenting magazines. According to Vincent DePierro, associate publisher of Gruner + Jahr's *Parents Magazine*, endemic ads were soft in the first half of this year, especially among baby food and diaper manufacturers. Carol Smith, publisher of Time Publishing Ventures, Inc.'s *Parenting*, observes that toy advertisers such as Mattel have been cutting back on print ads this year.