

## SCENE & NOTED

**SCENE: Scott Shooman** has been promoted to VP of acquisitions and productions at **Sony**. In his new role, he will continue to acquire film projects for the studio, spanning scripts, completed films and overseas productions.



Shooman

... **Image** has launched a worldwide TV sales division and has named **Steve Saltman** head of the new unit. ... **Magic Play Entertainment** will begin self-distributing new product beginning in May. Leading the effort is **Mitch Perliss**, senior business director of North American distribution, with **Ron Lehman** as director of sales. Both were at Razor Digital. ... **MVD** has merged with **Big Daddy Music Distribution**. **Burt Goldstein** will become VP of product management at MVD. **Pamela Baldwin** has been named associate of marketing. She was at DPR Records.

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technology vendors and content owners alike," said David Mercer, principal analyst at Strategy Analytics. "The 265 million homes that will own an HDTV by 2012, and Hollywood's need for a new growth engine, represent huge incentives for the industry to coordinate marketing activities and demonstrate unified support for the successor to DVD."

The largest Blu-ray market by 2012 will be Europe, predicts the research firm, with 26.4 million Blu-ray devices being sold that year. The U.S. and Japan trail at 22.6 million units and 8.4 million units, respectively. **VB**

## F.Y.E. continued from page 1

must redeem a mail-in rebate, plus belong to the chain's frequent buyer program 'Backstage Pass.' Full F.Y.E. pricing on *Enchanted* is a more average \$25.99. If customers redeem the rebate but don't belong to Backstage Pass (where members pay a \$25 annual fee to enjoy 10% discounts on most products), *Enchanted* costs \$18.99.

F.Y.E. has long offered such rebates for its standard DVD releases, but the chain is now spreading similar offers for its Blu-ray versions.

Going forward, Trans World plans to also heighten BD merchandising by gradually devoting space that had been split between BD and HD DVD to BD exclusively. The format also is getting more promotion at the retailer's Web site.

"Now that the confusion is over, we want to drive customers' attention to the Blu-ray category," said Mark Higgins, Trans World VP of DVD, videogames and consumer electronics. "We use various methods to do that—pricing and promotion will be part of the strategy going forward."

In other deals, F.Y.E. is offering 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment's April 15 release *Alien vs. Predator: Requiem* for \$18.19

for Backstage Pass members with rebate; \$20.99, with rebate only; and \$27.99 regular pricing. Fox's April 15 title *Juno* is being offered at the same pricing breakdown. For comparison, Amazon.com was listing *AVP: Requiem* and *Juno* for a straight \$27.95.

Meanwhile, select Best Buy stores are moving to clear out all unsold HD DVD software and has expanded its Blu-ray Disc merchandising at the same time.

Chain spokesman Brian Lucas said that there was no immediate plan to remove HD DVD stock nationwide. But all HD DVD titles had disappeared from the in-line racks of two Los Angeles Best Buy outlets last week. With new releases quickly drying up in the format, Lucas said, "I'm sure we will start doing that [chain-wide] at some point."

Just a couple of weeks ago, there was room for 120 HD DVD facings at one L.A. store, though format inventory was nearly wiped out at that time.

advertising decline has the most to do with current supply shortages of BD players.

Manufacturers did not anticipate that the format war would end this soon and were not prepared for the resulting heightened demand from consumers to buy BD hardware.

"Panasonic didn't expect Toshiba to pull the plug on that particular day, and now there is more demand for Blu-ray, and we and other brands are reacting to that," said Panasonic senior group manager Tony Jasionowski. "We're trying to get more product out. We are on top of this and have made our factory in Japan aware of this in order to increase the availability of product."

Jasionowski said any supply shortages should be remedied soon.



Pricing for Fox's title ranges from \$27.95 to \$18.19.

Now, in the spots previously held by HD DVD, that store has a mixture of Blu-ray titles and some standard DVD product. Blu-ray rack facings last week totaled about 295, marking about a 50% increase from the March 14 week.

A second L.A. store had made room for 230 in-line Blu-ray facings, also representing a big hike from earlier in March.

Best Buy still had HD DVD titles for sale on its Web site. However, most titles were listed as being in limited availabil-

ity or sold out.

After Warner Bros. decided to exclusively back Blu-ray earlier this year, Best Buy quickly decided to favor the format over HD DVD. The chain said it would emphasize Blu-ray over HD DVD starting in March.

At that time, however, the chain said it would still offer HD DVD titles as long as it made sense according to customer demand. Last month's death of the HD DVD format likely has accelerated a drop in demand for HD DVD software. **VB**

"The companies are reacting right now, and within the month, you'll see increased supplies," he said.

David Workman, executive director of consumer electronics buyer PRO Group, reports that his retail clients are likewise having problems keeping customers satisfied with BD products.

"Pretty much everybody is experiencing shortages—for high-end players from Pioneer or down the line to Sony's [entry-level] player," Workman said. "Normally, if they had something to sell, you'd see more marketing out there. You'd be telling people that the format war is over. Blu-ray should represent one of the top growth categories for the year, but you have to have it to sell." **VB**