

# News Release

For Immediate Release: February 19, 2004

## VARIETY CLUB TELETHON 2004 COOK UP SOME MAGIC!

Buffalo, New York: BILL RANSOM, President and General Manager of WKBW-TV, Channel 7 joined Variety Club Telethon 2004 General Chairman KENNETH E. SCIBETTA in announcing details for "The Variety Club Telethon 2004" on WKBW-TV, Channel 7. The 21 hour telethon will originate LIVE from the Courtyards of the Four Points By Sheraton Hotel in Cheektowaga, March 6th & 7th from 10:00pm Saturday through 7:00pm Sunday. This is the 42nd annual Telethon for Variety Club Tent #7 which is the longest locally produced Telethon in the world and the 41st for Channel 7. All monies raised by the Variety Club of Buffalo benefit The Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo, the Dr. Robert Warner Rehabilitation Center and many other local charities benefiting children that Variety serves.

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME...the hit song from the Disney movie "Toy Story" will serve as the Telethon's National Cast's first musical Number. The entire Western New York community can come together and show they are truly friends to Variety's special children.

KENNETH E. SCIBETTA is the General Chairperson of Variety Club Telethon 2004. Ken last served as General Chairperson in 1997 and has been involved in many capacities with the Telethon for the past 20 years. Ken, who is an advertising representative for The Buffalo News is married to his wife Kay and they reside in Tonawanda, N.Y.

Ken is joined by co-chairpersons MICHEAL BENEVENTO, recently retired from The Buffalo News and KATHY KAMINSKI, an employee in the Town of Amherst Highway Department.

The 2004 Variety Club Telethon stars include some of the best in the business! The brightest star is the 2004 "Celebrity Child", VICTORIA MACY of Clarence, New York. Victoria was born at Millard Fillmore Suburban Hospital on March 8, 1992. She was a healthy baby and grew into a happy little girl who enjoyed dancing and ice skating. At age 3½ years, doctors at Children's Hospital diagnosed Victoria with a large brain tumor. Dr. Li, neurosurgeon, performed hours of brain surgery during which he removed some of the tumor. After this, Victoria had a long stay in the pediatric Intensive Care Unit where she had expert nursing and pediatric care. Initially, Victoria was unable to walk or talk or eat, and she was disoriented. She had another operation to reduce the pressure in her head with a shunt and to place a catheter for chemotherapy. She had her first dose of chemotherapy before leaving the hospital. The chemotherapy was aimed at shrinking the tumor by reducing its blood supply.

At home, therapists from the Rehab Center worked with Victoria. After several months, however, the chemotherapy stopped working as the tumor was no longer shrinking. Doctors at Children's Hospital then tried a different

chemotherapy protocol. Fortunately, the tumor started to shrink again.

During this time, Victoria had many admissions to Children's Hospital for chemotherapy and its complications, and for surgery. To everyone's dismay, the chemotherapy stopped working before the protocol was finished. Second opinions at other facilities concurred with the treatment at Children's. As Victoria was otherwise progressing well, the decision was made to watch her tumor with MRIs every few months.

At this point, she is getting MRIs every six months and the tumor is stable and has not increased in size. Victoria is followed at the Neurooncology Clinic at Children's Hospital where the neurologist, neurosurgeon, and oncologist see her.

While Victoria has low vision, seizures, and other residual effects of her tumor, she doesn't let these slow her down. She swims, plays the piano and violin, sings with the Amherst Bel Canto choir, attends Camp Good Days and Special Times, and is a high honor roll student at Clarence Middle School.

Victoria is grateful to Children's Hospital for treating her tumor. She is anxious that other children get the medical care they need there, too. She is eager to help the hospital and the many charities that the annual Variety Club Telethon benefits, and hopes that Telethon 2004 will be the best ever! Look for VICTORIA, and her parents TOM AND PATRICIA to share their story with viewers.

Returning to headline the Variety Club Telethon, is Las Vegas superstar SUSAN ANTON. Susan has been a favorite of Variety Club and viewers alike when she embraced and became "Varietized" in the late 90's. From the small town of Oak Glenn, California to the dazzling light of the Las Vegas strip, Susan shines! When the curtain came down on the July 31, 2000 performance of the Great Radio City Music Hall Spectacular at the Flamingo Hilton in Las Vegas, Nevada, the occasion marked not only the end of Susan Anton's longtime association with the production (over 5000 performances) but a milestone as one of the most enduring and versatile performers in show business. Yes, indeed, it was 30 years ago that Susan Anton first burst into public consciousness and, ever since she has been captivating theater, television, and film-going audiences with an ingratiating style and easy charm that is found among only a handful of performers. Her five and a half year tenure in Las Vegas as Special Guest Star with the Great Radio City Music Hall Spectacular and its renowned Rockettes, preceded by a 2 year U.S. national tour of the same production, makes her not only one of the most popular and glamorous stars on the Las Vegas Strip, but a true veteran of the theatre.

Susan won the Miss California crown in 1969 and went on to become second runner-up to Miss America in 1970. She so dazzled the audience and judges in the talent portion of the pageant, that her plan to become a child psychologist went by the wayside and the idea of becoming an entertainer prompted her to pack her bags and move to Hollywood.

Well, not exactly Hollywood, but Pasadena where her high school boyfriend had just moved. Unfortunately, any thoughts Susan had of a quick segue to stardom were quickly diminished when she found herself cleaning office buildings at night

to pay the rent.

Relief came soon, though. Within a couple of years, she received her first big break when she inherited the title of the Muriel Cigar Girl from internationally famous singer Edie Adams.

Susan appeared in numerous television commercials as the Muriel Girl. Her co-stars in those spots often included other budding stars such as Treat Williams and Tom Selleck. Susan made her Broadway debut by replacing Candice Bergen in David Rabe's Tony nominated play *Hurleyburly*, directed by Mike Nichols. Preceding *Hurleyburly*, she starred in the U.S. national touring company of the Neil Simon/Marvin Hamlisch musical *They're Playing Our Song* and toured the U.S. with Elizabeth Ashley in *A Couple of White Chicks Sitting Around Talking*. She returned to Broadway in 1991 to co-star with Keith Carradine and the original Broadway cast of Tommy Tune's Tony award winning musical *The Will Rogers Follies*.

Susan returned to the stage when she starred in Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* at the Alcazar Theatre in San Francisco (June 2001), the Canon and Coronet Theatres in Los Angeles (August 2001) and the Cashman Center Theatre in Las Vegas (October 2002).

Susan first emerged on the big screen in the film *Goldengirl*, and went on to appear in such other films as *Making Mr. Right* (with John Malkovich), *Cannonball Run II* (with

Shirley MacLaine and Burt Reynolds) and *New Jersey Turnpikes* (with Kelsey Grammer). And, as she has in every other medium, Susan has been a significant star on the small screen. For three seasons, she was part of the cast of the world's most popular television series *Baywatch* playing the role of Jackie Quinn. She starred in the international series *Sail Away with Susan Anton*, as well as *The Travel Channel's Las Vegas!* produced by Susan and her husband, Jeff Lester. She also hosted *Perfect Buns*, one of the most prominent exercise infomercials on television.

Susan's other television credits include the Warner Brother's series *Nick Freno, Licensed Teacher*; NBC's *City Guys*; the critically acclaimed Steven Bochco series *Civil Wars*; as well as *Quantum Leap*, *Night Court*; and *Murder She Wrote*. She starred in ABC's *Cliffhangers* as well as her own variety show on NBC, *Presenting Susan Anton*. She has displayed her comic abilities on Gary Shandling's *Larry Sanders Show*, *The Ben Stiller Show* and *Blossom*.

Susan will dazzle and captivate viewers into making those phones ring for Variety's special kids. Susan will be joined by her husband, JEFF LESTER, and musical conductor MICHAEL CHANSLOR.

Making his first appearance on the Variety Club Telethon is General Hospital's GREG VAUGHAN known to daytime viewers as LUCKY SPENCER. Greg joined the cast of General Hospital in February 2003. Named as one of People Magazine's Sexiest Men Alive in December 2002, Greg brings an unmistakable charm to the rich character of Lucky Spencer, son of General Hospital's famous supercouple

Luke and Laura.

Greg was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. Shortly after graduating from high school, he ventured to Italy, where he modeled for legendary designer Giorgio Armani. Gianni Versace, Tommy Hilfiger, Banana Republic and Ralph Lauren campaigns soon followed.

After three successful years of modeling, Greg decided to pursue acting. In June 1993, Greg came out to Los Angeles to study acting and made it his home one year later in 1994. In just ten months, he landed a starring role on Malibu Shores. He went on to land a recurring role on Beverly Hills, 90210 and guest starring roles on Any Day Now and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Greg's other television credits include guest starring roles on such popular television series as Will & Grace, Sabrina the Teenage Witch, Glory Days, and Nash Bridges. Most recently, Greg's television credits include a starring role on Charmed, a contract role on Young and the Restless and a guest-starring role on Still Standing.

Greg's feature film credits include For Mature Audiences Only, Poison Ivy: The New Seduction, No Small Ways and Children of the Corn V: Field of Terror.

When he is not working, Greg enjoys a number of sports including golf, basketball, horseback riding, windsurfing and hiking. Variety's special kids will be the "LUCKY" ones as Greg charms the viewers into making those pledges!

Returning for his second Telethon, ROSCOE ORMAN, has played his best known character "Gordon Robinson" on the famed PSB show Sesame Street. However he's had a distinguished career acting with greats besides "Big Bird" and "Elmo". Orman, A New York City native, made his professional acting debut with the Next Stage Theatre in New Orleans. His film and TV credits include "Sanford and Son", "Kojak", "Willie Dynamite", ABC's "All My Children", "F/X", "Striking Distance", "Law & Order" and "Cosby". He has played Gabriel in the award winning Broadway production of "Fences" and has appeared in other New York Stage appearances which include, "The Sirens" and "The Talented Truth" among others. Look for Roscoe to sing his way into the hearts of Western New York.

BOWSER (aka JON BAUMAN) returns with "The Stingrays." Jon is best remembered as a part of the popular "Sha Na Na" group from the 70's, and in the movie "Grease." Bowser will have you "Hand Jivin" to the phones. Jon credits Buffalo as one of the most supportive cities during his musical career, and looks forward to his Telethon visits. In addition to his music, Jon has also hosted various television shows and currently is on tour with his own produced Bowzer's Original Doo-Wop Party.

RICH BLEND, brings their Jump, Jivin and Whalin style of performing to the Telethon. From Niagara Falls, this group has appeared all over the United States, Canada and International Waters. Familiar songs from the forties, fifties, sixties, Broadway and more have been played on the stages that hold Rich Blend. Singing is only a part of Rich Blend. Clever choreography mixed with their unique blend of voices ensures a roller coaster ride of emotion that viewers are sure not to forget.

From 7 News at Noon & WNY LIVE!, the "Guru of Ohhh It's Soo Good," MR. FOOD (aka Art Ginsburg) returns this year as the Honorary Chairman. For his 12th straight year, Mr. Food has been appealing to viewers at home to make those important pledges for the children. Again this year, something's simmering at Salvatore's Italian Gardens in Lancaster as everyone is invited to "Lunch with Mr. Food!" on Saturday March 6th at 11:30am. Your \$30 donation entitles you to lunch, a Mr. Food cookbook, and lots of prizes. You can win big at the Chinese Auction, and get to meet Mr. Food! Get your reservations before they sell out by calling 854-7577. You can also meet Mr. Food at the Walden Galleria on Sunday from Noon-3pm

TERRY BUCHWALD returns for his second year as a member of our national cast. Terry has performed locally on the Telethon in the past. Terry is Buffalo's best known Elvis Impersonator. Terry performs some 300 shows a year throughout the country and his fans seemingly can never get enough of Terry. Look for Terry to do some of his famous Elvis songs and also watch as he performs some pop and soft rock with a little bit of country thrown in. Terry has a heart of gold and will help viewers take care of business for our kids.

JOHNNY BIGG & THE FUN BUNCH is Canada's newest musical group dedicated to making music for the entire family.

Combining eclectic and sophisticated musical influences for music lovers, with clever and playful lyrics for kids, along with their distinct warmth and sense of humor, Little Johnny Bigg and friends are unlike any other musical group.

Little Johnny Bigg evolved as a continuance for John McPhee and Kevin Lucas, two former members of "The Magpies" a well known Canadian act touring throughout the 90's.

In 2002, John's brother Neil McPhee was added and the trio set out to write an album of new material. A new live stage show has been evolving with this new material, along with a cast of zany new characters including "Chef Jeff" ( a culinary King ), "Captain Crafty" ( always making something your Mom would love ), Art Books ( a cowboy who knows how to read, and tries hard to yodel ), "Rootin' Tootin'" & "Dusty Stringfield" ( Arts' cowboy buddy and his signing guitar ), and everyone's favorite Magpie character "Bookworth" the bookworm.

Subtle messages about literacy, hygiene, safety, and friendship are reinforced with a heavy dose of music, dancing, and FUN!!

"AIRBORNE" EDDY DOBOSIEWICZ makes people laugh all across the United States and Canada. A native of Buffalo, his special style comes from the heart. Based in Buffalo with his beloved wife Charlotte and two children Larissa and Christian, Eddy feels more young people should make the Variety Club their cause. Ed can be seen every Saturday night at 12:35am on the nationally syndicated "Off Beat Cinema" as "Maxwell Truth" on WKBW-TV.

Former Buffalo Bills Superstar Special Teams Player STEVE TASKER joins the cast of celebrities to help the kids. Steve is the host of "Buffalo Bills All Access" every Saturday night at 7:30pm during the football season on WKBW-TV

Channel 7, The Official station of the Buffalo Bills. Other players will join Steve in being a friend to children in need in Western New York.

Buffalo's most eligible bachelor, fresh from his appearance on ABC's The Bachelor, CHAD SCHLEE joins the cast for his first year. Chad will help the kids in hosting segments from Buffalo's Chippewa District, as well as appear at the Walden Galleria Mall. If you need to know what Meredith is really like, and what goes on during "The Bachelor"...make a pledge to the kids of Variety and ask to talk to Chad!! Chad is a native of Kenmore, New York where he was a star athlete.

Music will be provided by "The Variety Club Telethon Orchestra" under the direction of JOHN HASSELBACK. John and the band have performed at the show for many years.

Viewers will have a chance to participate in the Telethon from Buffalo's most happening street...CHIPPEWA! On Saturday night, (actually Sunday Morning) from Midnight – 2am...The Telethon will go Live to the McMonkeez on Chippewa Street where Variety Club Volunteers and representatives of the Chippewa Street Bars will be going bar to bar asking for those all important donations. Join AIRBORNE EDDY, JULIE FINE and Buffalo's own Bachelor CHAD SCHLEE as they report live.

Another LIVE REMOTE will take place on Sunday March 7th from Noon to 3pm in the Galleria Mall on the Lower level in front of Kaufmann's Department Store. Stay tuned to the Telethon for details on who will be appearing so you can "Meet and Greet" the stars! on LIVE TV! The Variety Club will also be at the mall on Saturday March 6th with members of the national cast raising money for this important cause

Channel 7 Personalities appearing will be news anchors KEITH RADFORD, SUSAN BANKS, LINDA WHITE, MARIA GENERO, PETE KENWORTHY, JOANNA PASCERI AND KEN HOUSTON with Accu-Weather Meteorologists MIKE RANDALL, AARON MENTKOWSKI, KRISTIN WEDEMEYER and ADAM COLPACK. Sports Director JOHN MURPHY with wife and "Action 7" reporter MARY TRAVERS will pitch viewers for their contributions along with LINDA PELLEGRINO and JOHN SUMMERS from "AM/Buffalo and GRACE POLANSKI and HELEN TEDEROUS from WNY Live."

Other Channel 7 personalities who will be on hand throughout the 21 hour event include JOHN BORSA, MELANIE PRITCHARD, STEPHANIE HOEY, JULIE FINE, "Business First" reporter ELIZABETH CAREY, VIVIKA VERGARA, KRISTY MAZUREK plus JEFF RUSSO and PAT TOMASULO from "Eyewitness Sports."

The Executive Producer of "The Variety Club Telethon 2004" for the Variety Club is STEVE PODOSEK . He is joined by ED SMITH. For WKBW-TV it's JOHN DISCIULLO, Program and Creative Services Director. He will be joined by "WNY Live" Executive Producer FRANK PACELLA ,AM Buffalo Producer LEA DICENSO, along with LANORA ZIOBROWSKI. Other members at the station, JOEL BARONE, RICH LEE, JIM EVANS and KEVIN MINDERLER from Mobile Production produce the special video stories. Longtime veteran crew chiefs CHARLIE SMITH and KEVIN CHUDY put the show together technically from the engineering and

production side. SARAH LARSON, CHARLIE MIKOLAJCZYK, and SHAWN DAVENPORT from the Graphics Department put together our graphics. The Mobile and Graphic Departments are under the supervision of Creative Services and Production

Manager TIM HALL. SPEIER DISPLAYS under the direction of CHARLIE AND CAREY SPEIER return to put together the set that transforms the Courtyards of the Four Points By Sheraton into a television studio. Every employee of WKBW-TV, including members of sales, traffic, programming, and administration assist in promoting Variety Club events.

The Variety Club Telethon will once again offer the opportunity for viewers to call in and make a donation with their VISA, MASTERCARD, or AMERICAN EXPRESS credit card. This guaranteed donation means you could receive premium items from DELTA SONIC, SIX FLAGS DARIEN LAKE, PIZZA HUT, ROADHOUSE GRILL and DIPSON THEATRE TICKETS, BUFFALO BISONS, MARTIN'S FANTASY ISLAND, PAUL REYNOLDS PHOTOGRAPHY, BUFFALO SABRES and much more based on the amount of your donation. This is an important fundraising vehicle for the Telethon. Credit card donations can also be made over the internet. You can see the entire list of premiums online by going to

[www.variety.buffnet.net/credit.htm](http://www.variety.buffnet.net/credit.htm)

The Variety Club is also online A partnership with BUFFNET has given Variety Club an internet address. You can reach the Variety Club at <http://www.variety.buffnet.net/donation.htm> or [www.wkbw.com](http://www.wkbw.com).

Other fundraising events include the DELTA SONIC PENNY-A-GALLON campaign February 29 through March 7th, \$.01 cent for every gallon of gasoline sold at WNY Delta Sonic locations. You can also have a fresh smelling car when you purchase a car freshener from Delta Sonic. \$.50 from each sale goes to the kids!

The Variety Club is giving away a 2004 Pontiac Sunfire Coupe, thanks to the generous donation from JIM MURPHY PONTIAC-GMC on Walden Avenue in Depew. Tickets are available at the Walden Galleria Mall on the Lower Level in front of Kaufman's. Tickets will be available through 3pm on Sunday March 7. This fund raiser actually has TWO great prizes! The winner receives the car and the seller of the winning ticket receives \$5,000!

One of the most significant fund raisers is the BUFFALO NEWS KIDS DAY. This year marks the 22nd time that the Buffalo News has conducted this annual special fund raiser. Over 6,000 volunteers will take to the streets on Tuesday, March 2nd, selling special \$1 dollar editions of the paper. Through the leadership of Publisher STAN LIPSEY, and editor MARGARET SULLIVAN, "Kids Day" comes under the direction of MIKE SULLIVAN, LISA CISLO, TOM DISPENZA, DOTTIE GALLAGHER-COHEN, and the member employees and unions at the paper, they expect another banner year for the kids! Over \$2.9 million dollars has been raised since this project began.

This year in conjunction with The Buffalo News, the Infinity Group of Radio Stations which include WJYE-FM, WECK-AM, WBLK-FM, WYRK-FM and WBUF-FM and WKBW-TV, viewers will have a chance to WATCH, HELP and WIN some great prizes during the Variety Club Telethon. In the Buffalo News Kids Day edition, there will be a form that viewers will want to keep with them next to

their TV sets. Throughout the Telethon in 7 various hours, a word of the hour will be announced by members of the 7 News team, personalities from the Infinity Radio Stations and staffers from the Buffalo News. Viewers will need to get three words out of seven correct to be eligible to win one of five great prizes. Prizes include a Trip for 2 to Florida, A \$250 gift certificate to the Walden Galleria Mall, A \$250 gift certificate to Budwey's Supermarket, a complete inside and outside car detail package from Delta Sonic and a season pass for 2 to the FLIX Theatres in Lancaster . Look for details in the Buffalo News Kids Day and on the Variety Club Website at [www.variety.buffnet.net](http://www.variety.buffnet.net)

The sale of items at all area supermarkets including TOPS, QUALITY, JUBILEE, WEGMANS, PARKVIEW SUPERMARKET AND MARKET PLACE FOOD SHOPS mean dollars! The Food Brokers of WNY are participating once again with donations from various vendors. A full page ad showing their generosity appeared in the Buffalo News on Sunday February 16.

UNISTAGE, under the direction of BOB LOVEJOY continue as the principal studio sound and light technicians.

The Telethon is broadcast from the Four Points By Sheraton on Walden Ave. in Cheektowaga under the supervision of General Manager SCOTT GRANT and his staff. For information on hotel operations, call (716) 681-2400. This is the 2nd year the Telethon will be broadcast from the Courtyards.

The Women's and Children's Hospital of Buffalo is the primary recipient of the funds raised. President STUART WILLIAMS, along with ELSIE DAWE ,SUSAN SPANITZ, JOHN MOSCATO from the Children's Hospital of Buffalo Foundation look forward to telling the story about the place where medical miracles are made every day. Look for unique stories throughout the Telethon event, including updates on the Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit and the Dr. Robert Warner Rehabilitation Center. It was the late Dr. Robert Warner who began this whole television fundraising effort 42 years ago.

Other Western New York media are important in spreading the word about the Variety Club Telethon. Radio partners like ...WJYE 96.1 with Joe Chille...Shredd & Ragan from 103.3FM The Edge...Iney Wallens from WHLD am...Ramblin Lou and the Family Band from WXRL...Larry Norton from 97 Rock...The morning team from WYRK 106.5 FM, Dan Neavearth on WWKB1520, the on-air personalities at WECK-AM 1230, WBLK 93.7FM, and WBEN-AM 930

WKBW-TV Channel 7 President and General Manager BILL RANSOM is committed to supporting "The Variety Club Telethon" to benefit The Women and Children's Hospital, the Robert Warner Rehabilitation Center and other Western New York children charities for many years. Bill and his entire team are ready to "Cook Up Some Magic" during "The Variety Club Telethon 2004"

Channel 7, Live...Local...Latebreaking....and Cooking Up Some Magic For Our Kids!

## **42nd Annual Variety Club Telethon**

**March 6th & 7th**

**Four Points By Sheraton Courtyard**

**10pm Saturday until 7pm Sunday**