



TRADES

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Captain America sidekick: Sebastian Stan

HR - Sebastian Stan, one of the actors who tested for the title role of Marvel's "Captain America" which ultimately went to Chris Evans, has nabbed the key role of Captain America's sidekick Bucky Barnes. In comic book lore, Barnes, a teenaged orphan, was too young to join the army but became one camp's mascot. When he discovered Captain America's identity, he joined Captain America as a partner in his Nazi-fighting escapades. The character died in Captain America's final World War II adventure. After decades of being "dead," the character was revived in 2005 and brought back into modern comic continuity, initially as a covert assassin named Winter Soldier. It is not clear if the movie version of Barnes sets up the Winter Soldier identity. Marvel would only confirm that Stan is playing Barnes. Insiders also say Stan has signed on for five or six pictures. Shooting on the Joe Johnston-directed pic starts this summer in Europe. Stan, repped by CAA and Brookside Management, starred in NBC's short-lived "Kings" and had a stint on the CW's "Gossip Girl." His feature film career has been on a roll of late, having recently appeared in "Hot Tub Time Machine" and wrapped the Joel Silver-produced thriller "The Apparition" and Darren Aronofsky's "Black Swan."

Baumbach, Stiller may reteam on 'Penguins'

Var - Filmmaker Noah Baumbach and Ben Stiller are mulling whether to get into the penguin business. Baumbach is in talks to direct Stiller in 20th Century Fox's "Mr. Popper's Penguins," based on the beloved 1938 children's book. Stiller also is in talks at this point; no deal has been made. John Davis is producing through his Davis Entertainment production company. "Mr. Popper" would mark the first kiddie pic Baumbach has directed. The filmmaker did, however, co-write the screenplay for Wes Anderson's family toon "Fantastic Mr. Fox," which Fox released last year. "Mr. Popper" would pair Stiller and Baumbach for the second time; they are currently in theaters with Focus Features' "Greenberg," which Baumbach directed and Stiller toplines. Fox acquired screen rights to "Mr. Popper" a year ago, setting scribes Sean Anders and John Morris to write the adapted screenplay. "Mr. Popper" is the tale of a house painter whose dreams of Arctic exploration prompt him to write letters to real explorers. One of them sends him a penguin, which he keeps in an icebox. Soon, Mr. Popper receives a female penguin from a zoo and before he knows it, he has a litter of 12 beaked birds. When the penguins start to eat him out of house and home, Mr. Popper forms Popper's Performing Penguins, a stage act that goes on tour and causes mayhem at every stop. The book, written by Richard and Florence Atwater, won the 1939 Newbery Award and has been taught in many elementary school classrooms.

Charlie Sheen about to exit "Two and a Half Men"?

Var - CBS' Monday night tentpole comedy may be losing one of its "Men." Troubled thesp Charlie Sheen, whose stint in rehab forced Warner Bros. TV to halt production on "Two and a Half Men" earlier this year, is now making rumblings about leaving the show all together -- according to a report in People magazine. CBS and Warner Bros. TV aren't commenting on the news. It's understood that the reports that surfaced midday on Thursday caught the net and studio by surprise. Sheen's status is sure to be a topic of conversation at tonight's taping of "Men." Unfortunately for the Eye and for WBTV,

Sheen would very much be free to split after this year. Although the Eye sealed a huge three-year pact with Warner Bros. last year to keep "Two and a Half Men" on the network through 2011-2012, the studio hadn't secured Sheen's services for that period. That's surprising -- but then again, there was probably little reason to believe that Sheen would want to depart a job that makes him the highest-paid actor in television. Sheen currently pulls down nearly \$900,000 an episode. Now, it's unclear whether Sheen's departure, as star of the show, would nullify (or change the terms of) that renewal -- as "Two and a Half Men" suddenly becomes a different show without Sheen. Insiders believe that Sheen's rumblings could be part of a negotiating ploy -- and indeed, it's not unusual for series stars to make this kind of noise when their contracts are up.

ABC shows to stream on iPad

Var - Disney has cut a deal with Apple to make full-length episodes of ABC shows available for streaming on the iPad. Deal announced Thursday includes a wealth of content and iPad applications for ABC, ESPN and Disney-related content. The big news is the extension of full-length web streaming of most ABC skeins, including web magnets "Lost" and "Grey's Anatomy," to Apple's tablet device, which hits stores on Saturday. "The iPad provides a very compelling consumer experience, and we are pleased to have new forms of original, interactive content on this great device," said Bob Iger, prexy and CEO of Disney. The ESPN applications include "ESPN Pinball," described as a package of "minigames, unique basketball sound effects and play by play voiceover by 'SportsCenter' host Jay Harris"; and "ESPN ScoreCenter XL," which offers users live play-by-play, video highlights, game summaries and statistics, box scores and standings. It also allows users to customize the feeds to follow favorite teams and events. Deal naturally includes a host of kid-friendly apps, including a "Toy Story" read-along feature incorporating video and games from the movies, and applications tied to the Mouse's popular Fairies franchise and Disney Channel animated hit "Phineas and Ferb." Disney is also serving up Marvel Comics-related content to iPad, including a comicbook reader, recommendations and store locator service. The Disney pact marks the most expansive TV content partnership for the iPad to date -- and it comes as no surprise given the longstanding relationship between the Mouse and Apple and the fact that Apple boss Steve Jobs is Disney's single-largest shareholder following the Mouse's 2006 acquisition of Pixar. CBS will make full episodes of "Survivor" available for iPad, among other content.

Chad Lowe joins ABC Family series

HR - Two upcoming ABC Family drama series have added new regulars: Chad Lowe has joined "Pretty Little Liars" and Gina Torres has come aboard "Huge." In pilot castings, Greg Germann and Damon Gupton round out Fox's comedy "Strange Brew," Riki Lindhome has boarded CBS' comedy "Hitched," and Robbie Jones and Heather Hemmens have been added to the CW's "Hellcats." "Liars," based on Alloy's series of novels, revolves around four teen girls -- Aria (Lucy Hale), Emily (Shay Mitchell), Spencer (Troian Bellisario) and Hanna (Ashley Benson) -- who begin to receive mysterious messages, seemingly from a girlfriend who disappeared three years earlier. In a recasting, Lowe will play Aria's father. He replaces Alexis Denisof, who played the role in the pilot. On "Huge," set at a weight-loss camp for teens, Torres will play Dr. Dorothy Rand. "Brew" revolves around a family that owns a small but successful regional brewery struggling with working and living together. Gupton will play the brewmaster; Germann will play a rival brewer. On "Hitched" -- about a newlywed couple (Jack Carpenter, Kristin Kreuk), their family and friends -- Lindhome, repped by Gersh and Principato Young, will play the bride's best friend. On "Hellcats," which revolves around a college cheering squad, Jones, repped by Gersh and Untitled, will play the male lead, a cheerleading "base" who falls for the new girl (Aly Michalka). Hemmens will play a cheerleader sidelined with a wrist injury.