

Neal Travis



Overhaul for ABC's 'This Week'?

YOU keep hearing that Disney's **Mike Eisner**, in his drive to improve the Mouse Factory's bottom line, is getting very frustrated by the failure of ABC's Sunday-morning show "This Week" to generate anything like the profits produced by NBC's "Meet the Press."

Industry observers — noting the contract of "This Week's" **Cokie Roberts** is up and that her co-host, "Farmer **Sam Donaldson**, is toying with a syndicated radio show — suggest the a.m. yawner is due for a huge upheaval.

"The network likes Cokie and Sam, but they're not getting the results — either in ratings, advertising or the first shot at the most desirable political guests," notes one ABC insider. "Frankly, you have to

get a star to make one of these Sunday-morning shows work. Before **Tim Russert** bloomed at 'Meet the Press,' you couldn't give away ad spots on the program. Now, 'MTP' is making around \$40 million a year for NBC."

The one name that crops up as a possible replacement for Roberts-Donaldson is the host of ABC's "Nightline," **Ted Koppel**, who knows his way around D.C. and might not be averse to taking on a lighter working load for the same money.

I spoke to network flacks in New York and Washington who insisted everything is hunky-dory with "This Week" and that no changes are in the works. The Koppel rumor is "just an old story," according to one of the spokespeople. We shall see.

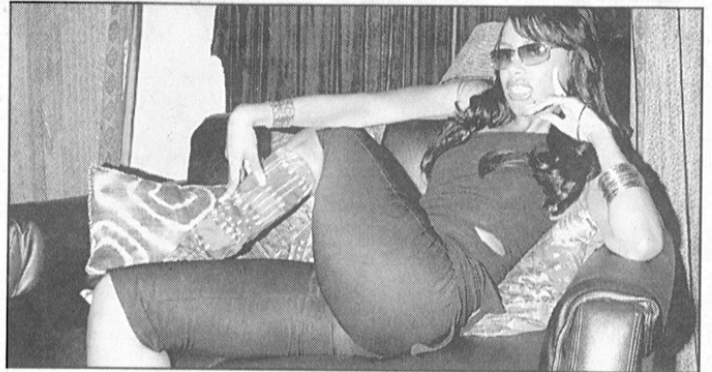
with little to show for its efforts. Varner wanted first-class round-trip air tickets from L.A., a five-star Manhattan hotel, and a luxury limo to take him out to the Hamptons. Talk about surviving...

Marvin seeing stars

YOU get to celebrate your 50th wedding anniversary only once, so billionaire **Marvin Davis** and his philanthropist wife, **Barbara**, made sure they got it right over the weekend.

The mogul and the missis had New York's society bandleader **Bob Hardwick** flown in to L.A. to play for 120 of their closest friends at the Davis mansion.

Temperatures Escalade-ing



Red-hot R&B artist Aaliyah makes herself comfortable yesterday at the Black Entertainment Television studio at 106th Street and Park Avenue, where she promoted her album "One in a Million," as well as BET's upcoming "20K and an Escalade Escapade" contest.

Dave Allocco / DMI

The supporting acts were impressive, too: **Pat Boone** (he dedicated "April Love" to Marvin and Barbara), **Little Richard**, **Natalie Cole**, **Stevie Wonder**, **Kenny Loggins**, the Fifth Dimension, **Barry Manilow**, **Baby Face** and **Coolio**. Big talker **Larry King** sent a video featuring what he claimed were highlights of the five decades of their marriage.

The Boss of all bosses

SOME in the media still kind of resent **George Steinbrenner** for coming into town and throwing his weight around while re-establishing the Bronx Bombers as world champions. But he's tops with the nation's fans. The Boss has just been voted best owner of any sports franchise in a poll run by ESPN.com.

"He gives his team a chance to win every year by his willingness to spend

money," was a typical reaction. (The New York Giants' ownership ranked seventh, which is pretty good, too, in the survey.)

Luxury villa suits Oscar

IF you envied the lifestyle of designer **Oscar de la Renta** before, you'll hate him when you see the sumptuous layout the August issue of InStyle has done on his new estate in his native Dominican Republic's beachside Punta Cana.

Oscar, who is probably the most elegant man in New York, confesses that he loves to "come home" to the villa and get into his gardening clothes. Those who can afford it will get to share the great life on the Caribbean coast. De la Renta and testosterone-overdosed Latino crooner **Julio Iglesias** are now developing a 15,000-acre property next door, to contain a hotel, luxury homes and three golf courses.

Prima donna 'Survivor'

I CAN'T wait for the various "Survivors" contestants to complete their 15 minutes of fame. Some have become such pains that you want to send them back to a desert island and leave them there forever. Take a character named **Jeff Varner**, who didn't win the Outback round but does seem to think he can parlay the experience into a showbiz career.

Varner was scheduled to be one of the co-chairs of the Child Development Center of the Hamptons' "Survivors" benefit in Amagansett over the weekend. But he was a no-show, organizers say, because his demands would have left the charity