

Radio, Internet determined to kill off secret of 'Survivor'

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES – After East Coast television viewers learn who the "Survivor" winner is tonight, can the well-kept secret hold for a few hours more until the rest of the country tunes in?

Not if some radio stations and Internet sites have their way.

"We'd probably tell. That's what we do," said a mischievous Mark Thomas, assistant program director for Los Angeles station KFI.

But listeners will get fair warning if they want to avoid knowing who claims the show's \$1 million prize before "Survivor" airs in time zones outside the East. The two-hour finale is set for 8-10 p.m. tonight on CBS.

At Denver station KOA, a disclaimer will precede any announcement.

"I think people react negatively to a party pooper," said Jerry Bell, KOA's news director. "If somebody's driving home we wouldn't want to blow it for him."

Overeager fans can go directly to the Internet. As soon as news reports move with the winner's name, Yahoo! plans to post them. The Denver Post Web site, among others, said it will put the information up as soon as it's available.

Not everybody is rushing to spill the beans. Los Angeles news radio station KFWB plans restraint, said news director Cry Quimby.

"It's been ongoing for such a

long time, I prefer not to spoil it for anybody inadvertently," she said.

KNX, a CBS station that will broadcast the "Survivor" town hall meeting airing after the show, also plans to keep quiet. "It's like tearing out the last page of a book and reading it. You just don't do that," said KNX news director Robert Sims.

Non-CBS TV stations are unlikely to make a big deal about the show, which has been a summer hit for CBS. KNBC in Los Angeles said whether it airs the result at all will be up to the producer of its 11 p.m. newscast.

Though the series was filmed, and the winner selected months ago, the outcome has remained a secret.

Nausea drug could treat alcoholics

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO – A drug used to fight nausea in cancer patients can help the most difficult-to-treat alcoholics significantly reduce their drinking, research suggests.

Success with the drug ondansetron comes amid a growing search for new medications to help treat a disease that affects some 14 million Americans.

In the past half-century, just two drugs have been approved to treat alcoholism, though studies on a number of others are under way.

Researchers from the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio reported preliminary results with ondansetron in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association.

Ondansetron worked in patients with early-onset alco-

holism, who represent about 3.5 million of the nation's alcoholics, said Dr. Bankole Johnson, a psychiatrist who led the study.

These alcoholics, who develop problem drinking at or before age 25, are believed to have a biological predisposition toward alcoholism. They often respond poorly to counseling, exhibit anti-social behavior and have a high relapse rate.

An imbalance between two chemical messengers in the brain, serotonin and dopamine, is believed to create a craving for alcohol in early-onset alcoholics, Johnson said.

Ondansetron's ability to regulate the serotonin-dopamine interaction may explain why it was effective only in such alcoholics, he said.

The study involved 271 alcoholics who were given ondansetron or a dummy pill

twice daily for 11 weeks. Weekly behavioral therapy also was included.

Three different doses were tested, with the middle dose proving most effective. Alcoholics on that dose had an average of about 1 1/2 drinks daily compared with nearly 3 1/2 drinks daily for the placebo group.

They also abstained from drinking for an average of about 70 percent of the study days, compared with 50 percent for the placebo group.

The findings could lead to better ways to treat alcoholism and to tailor treatment to specific types of alcoholics, Dr. Henry Kranzler of the University of Connecticut wrote in a JAMA editorial.

Glaxo Wellcome Inc. makes ondansetron. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism funded the study.

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Japanese firms sued for slave labor

Lawyers want reparations, saying two Japanese firms used Chinese captives as slave laborers from the 1930s until the end of World War II.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES – Lawyers pursuing reparations for World War II atrocities sued two Japanese companies Tuesday on behalf of Chinese people used as slave labor.

The lawsuit, which seeks class-action status, names Mitsui and Mitsubishi groups as companies that used slave laborers to produce rubber, grain and coal during a period

beginning in the 1930s and continuing until the war ended in 1945.

"During their forced servitude in Japan, the Chinese workers were tortured and starved," the lawsuit said.

Attorney Barry A. Fisher said Chinese children were sent to work in coal mines, and victims were transported in ships and trains under inhumane conditions.

"Chinese citizens were herded like cattle into trains and loaded into cargo ships," he said, adding that many died aboard ships, and their corpses were tossed overboard.

Messages requesting comment were left on phone machines at a Cypress office of Mitsubishi and the New York

headquarters of Mitsui.

Fisher, who was involved in reparations suits in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, said the lawsuit seeks payment for labor that was never compensated, as well as damages. The suit asks for the companies to turn over "ill-gotten gains" from that era.

He said the lawsuit could involve hundreds of thousands of Chinese people.


The lawsuit was filed in Superior Court under a law passed by California last year that allows cases involving World War II slave labor to be filed until the year 2010.

It was one of several filed recently against Japanese companies alleging slave labor during the war.

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