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Celebrities



Elmo puppeteer quits after new accusation

Kevin Clash, the puppeteer behind the "Sesame Street" character Elmo, resigned on Tuesday following new allegations that he had sex with an underage boy, adding to an ongoing controversy involving one of America's most popular children's brands.

The announcement came just a week after another man recanted his claims that Clash, 52, had sex with him when he was 18-year-old.

"Unfortunately, the controversy surrounding Kevin's personal life has become a distraction that none of us wants, and he has concluded that he can no longer be effective in his job and has resigned from Sesame Street," New York-based Sesame Workshop, the company behind the show, said in a statement.

"This is a sad day for Sesame Street," added.

In a lawsuit filed on Tuesday, Cecil Singleton is seeking more than \$5 million in damages from Clash. Singleton claims he met the then 32-year-old puppeteer in 1993 in a gay chat room when he was 18.

A representative for Clash was not immediately available for comment on Tuesday.

The unnamed 23-year-old man who first accused Clash recanted his claims last week, saying the relationship was consensual. Clash had denied the allegations and acknowledged a past relationship with his accuser. He added the they were both consenting adults at the time.

"I'm a gay man. I have never been accused of this or tried to hide it," Clash said at the time, adding that he was taking a break from the TV show to deal with the situation.

"I was driving home from work and I thought I saw Honey Boo Boo."

—The Hunger Games star Jennifer Lawrence, sleepily explaining on "The Tonight Show" how she ended up in a recent feud with her neighbor.

Teaming up: Rapper MC Hammer says he and Roseanne spin sensation Psy are "rooking in the kitchen right now" after successfully teaming up on a performance of Psy's "Gangnam Style" close out the American Music Awards. "We'll try to make it a surprise for you," Hammer said. billboard.com

Romance in Rome: Lovelockish Adam and Milla Jovovich's red Milla Jovovich enjoyed some quality time in Rome, where Jovovich is filming a movie. Production reports: They were photographed at Antica Pizzeria restaurant in Rome and also have been spotted taking evening strolls in the city center.

Rallying cry: The American Humane Association said no animals died during filming of "The Hobbit" but called the deaths of up to 27 animals used in filming, including three horses, which they were held at a New Zealand farm "unacceptable" and said broader supervision is needed.

News services contributed.

A+E notes

Starz votes against a 3rd season of 'Boss'

Starz made official Tuesday what most had long suspected: The cable network has canceled the Chicago-set political drama "Boss" starring Kelsey Grammer in a formidable, Golden Globe-winning performance, the show's ratings for two seasons — and it is unlikely the show would have made it to Season 3 if Starr had not made the bold decision to renew it before the series debuted last year. Though ratings did improve some this season — picking up an endorsement from Oprah Winfrey along the way — the show failed to generate any buzz, recognition or much-needed buzz from critics and bloggers.

The cancellation is a big loss for the local crew, as well as the acting community. More than any other series to date, "Boss" employed a large stable of Chicago actors in prominent roles, including an entire fraction from the Steppenwolf Theatre: Guzman and James Van Der Beek.

Both "Chicago Fire" on NBC and "The Mindy Project" on Fox continue to film locally but signs point to a "Mild Doctor" end by December.

— *Nick Metz*

NEA's Rocco Landesman stepping down

Rocco Landesman says he will leave his position as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts at the end of the year.

In a statement, the former Broadway producer said: "My intention has always been to serve one term, and we have been able to accomplish more than I had ever thought possible: sparking a national movement around creative placemaking, forging significant relationships with other federal agencies, creating an unprecedented healing arts partnership with the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and increasing both the scope and impact of our research efforts."

"The time has come for me to become a cliché: I

Fiona Apple cancels shows with ill dog

Grammy Award-winning singer Fiona Apple said in a handwritten letter posted on her website Tuesday that she has canceled tour dates in North and South America to be with her ailing dog.

Apple, who vowed to make up the concerts, called off three shows in Brazil between Nov. 27 and 30, a Buenos Aires, Argentina, festival appearance Dec. 12 and a Dec. 9 performance in Mexico City, according to her record label, Epic.

Halcyon reportedly splits with Interscope

Halcyon Reinhart, the busy singer from Wheeling who placed third on the 10th season of "American Idol," has parted ways with Interscope Records and 19 Recordings, a source close to the singer confirmed by Tribune Newspapers on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old's post-

Turned 65 am going to retire, and cannot wait to spend more time in Miami Beach.

The agency says NEA Senator Deputy Chairman Joan Shigekawa will serve as acting chairman until a permanent successor is confirmed.

— *Tribune Newspapers*

The 'Christmas' singer and pianist told her 13-year-old pit bull, Janet, has been suffering from a tumor in her chest among other ailments and appears to be dying.

Apple's best friend and my mother and my daughter's best friend and she's the one who taught me what love is."

Apple wrote in the four-page letter the pet was born last week, "I can't come to South America. Not now."

Apple, 35, said that she wants to appreciate the final days with her dog. "I will not be the woman who puts her career ahead of love and friendliness," Apple wrote.

— *Reuters*

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'RISE OF THE GUARDIANS' +1/2



Booth (right, voiced by Isla Fisher) examines Jack Frost's (Chris Pine) perfect teeth in DreamWorks' "Rise of the Guardians."

A far, joyless cry from holiday must-see fare

By ROGER MOORE
McClintock Newspapers

DreamWorks Animation CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg recently lamented the dearth of holiday-themed movies headed to your multiplex this year. But in featuring "Rise of the Guardians" upon unsuspecting audiences for the holidays, it's clear he just wants to take some of the pressure off this joyless, soul-dead pile.

"Guardians" is the worst animated movie to ever wear the DreamWorks logo. It's based on William Joyce's "The Guardians of Childhood" books, about a team that includes Bunny, the Easter Bunny; Tooth, the Tooth Fairy; Jack Frost (Chris Pine) and the silent, roly-poly Sandman.

They need the help of neowarrior Jack Frost (Chris Pine) if they're to have a chance of saving Pitch, about Pitch Black, the night-terrorer voiced by Aisle. He's setting to it that kids across the world are giving up their belief in magic and magical figures such as the Guardians. And he's giving them night terrors.

All the Guardians have their public face and their command side. When critics are called for, they team up to save childhood. Is Jack Frost worthy of their rank? It's an imp, a bit of a rogue, more into mischief than making the world safe for dreaming. He forces his kid and that makes work with the mayhem. Kids who can't see him, only his handprints, don't mind.

North sees the threat that Pitch's "mouch of fear" carries, and summons his surely

MPAA rating: PG (for thematic elements and some mild scary action)

Running time: 1:37

Opens: Wednesday

troups. "Now we get down to nacks of brass," he says, in silly slang. It's amazing the way his guy raves, using British composer names as profanity — "Shotta-kovich!" "Rimsky-Korokoch!"

Bunny is more militant. He packs a boomstaring and a chip on his kangaroo-styled shoulder.

It's a confused ramble across some of the same ground covered by "Arthur Christmas," "Monsters, Inc." and "The Tooth Fairy." This film is more concerned with the mechanics of how Santa manages to make all those toys — he has many non-speaking "Yeti" and elf assistants — than with telling an interesting story or giving the characters anything warm or funny to do. The assorted hummingbird-sized tooth fairy assistants are fascinating, visually. But is there a message, a lesson or a laugh in them? No.

Was hiring David Lindsay-Abeire as "Rabbit Hole" ("Inkheart") really the wisest choice for writing the script?

"Rise of the Guardians" is harmless enough, and the lack of any pop-culture jokes represents the post-"Shrek" direction of DreamWorks well enough. But this is the studio's least entertaining film. For a company that banks on building franchises of kiddie cartoons, from "Shrek" to "Madagascar," these Guardians don't rise to the occasion — not by a long shot.