

The science of the smooch is chemistry

by TOM RAUM
AP Science Writer

CHICAGO—"Chemistry look what you've done to me," Donna Summer crooned in *Science of Love*, and so, it seems, she was right.

Just in time for Valentine's Day, a panel of scientists examined the mystery of what happens when hearts throb and lips lock. Kissing, it turns out, unleashes chemicals that ease stress hormones in both sexes and encourage bonding in men, though not so much in women.

Chemicals in the saliva may be a way to assess a mate, Wendy Hill, dean of the faculty and a professor of neuroscience at Lafayette College, told a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

In an experiment, Hill explained, pairs of heterosexual college students who kissed for 15 minutes while listening to music experienced significant changes in their levels of the chemicals oxytocin,

which affects pair bonding, and cortisol, which is associated with stress. Their blood and saliva levels of the chemicals were compared before and after the kiss.

Both men and women had a decline in cortisol after smooching, an indication their stress levels declined.

For men, oxytocin levels increased, indicating more interest in bonding, while oxytocin levels went down in women.

In a test group that merely held hands, chemical changes were similar, but much less pronounced, she said.

The experiment was conducted in a student health center, Hill noted. She plans a repeat "in a more romantic setting."

Fisher noted that more than 90 percent of human societies practice kissing, which she believes has three components—the sex drive, romantic love and attachment. ■

For millions, digital TV deadline still is now

SAN DIEGO—Isidro Diaz surfs channels on his old TV about three hours a night in the trailer he rents for \$350 a month. Come Tuesday, February 17, his limited choice of programs will be much more limited.

Although the government delayed the mandatory shutdown of analog TV signals by four months to give people with older TVs more time to prepare, that's small comfort to Diaz and other people who live in cities where some broadcasters are switching to all-digital broadcasts February 17, as they had originally planned.

Because it is costly to keep broadcasting analog signals, nearly 500 stations intend to make the transition February 17 rather than June 12. The Federal Communications Commission has told 123 stations they might have to reconsider, so no city loses all its analog network broadcasts. But either way there will be an odd patchwork of programming for millions of Americans who still rely on analog TV signals.

To deal with the change, they need a digital converter box or a new TV with a digital tuner, or cable or satellite service.

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition of 200 advocacy groups, has digital TV assistance centers in seven metropolitan areas—Atlanta, Detroit, San Antonio, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Ore., and St. Paul, Minn.—to answer questions, demonstrate converter boxes and sometimes send out house calls.

In San Diego, the nation's eighth-largest city, the ABC, CBS, Fox and CW affiliates plan to end analog broadcasts February 17.

Diaz, a 63-year-old Mexican migrant who was laid off a month ago by a garden nursery that paid \$10 an hour, figures he will eventually muster \$200 for a digital television; the least expensive model on Best Buy

Co.'s Web site costs \$130.

He recently shopped at an electronics store for a digital converter box for the \$40 used Sony TV he bought from a newspaper classified ad four years ago. But the \$60 converter box didn't seem worth it because he can get a new TV for a little more.

Subscribing to cable or satellite TV is out of the question.

"There's no work right now, \$40 a month is very difficult," Diaz said while scarfing a dinner of beef tacos at a stand in San Diego's Barrio Logan neighborhood.

The Obama administration sought the delay in the analog TV shutdown after the government ran out of money for the \$40 coupons that subsidize digital converter boxes. The program has a waiting list of 4 million coupons; each household can get up to two.

According to research firm MRI, 17.7 percent of Americans live in households with only over-the-air TV. The Nielsen Co. said last week that more than 5.8 million US households, or 5.1 percent of all homes, were not ready for the analog shutdown.

However, officials at stations that plan to make the switch on Feb. 17 believe that the transition will mainly go smoothly, and that the delay will confuse consumers.

"They've had two years to get ready is our feeling," said Larry Patton, general manager of KSWO-TV, an ABC affiliate in Lawton, Okla. "We feel there's always going to be a few people who are going to wake up on the morning of Feb. 17, or June 17, or whenever it is, and not be ready."

Bryan Frye, marketing director at KAKE-TV, the ABC station in Wichita, Kan., said he was half-joking when he described fears about the analog shutdown as "a little like Y2K."

"We are going to pull out all the stops, we are going to have everybody on board, you know, full alert," Frye said. "It is going to happen and

everybody is going to go, 'Hmmm, OK.'"

In Jackson, Miss., Ashley Lewis, 25, said she has visited an older neighbor several times to help with her digital converter box. Lewis bought a new antenna last Feb. 12 for the neighbor, thinking that might make the box work better. In most cases digital signals, which are more efficient, come in better than analog, but some older antennas aren't well suited.

"She can barely walk," Lewis said. "Her knees are so bad sometimes, and she is on a fixed income, and I don't think it is fair for elderly people."

A Radio Shack store in Casper, Wyo., where the ABC and CBS stations switch next week, has found that the converter boxes confuse some consumers, said assistant store manager Dorothy Durda.

"Normally, they come in and we draw them a little diagram or whatever of how to do it and that seems to fix their problem for them," Durda said.

Major San Diego stations have twice flashed warnings to TV screens on analog signals, telling anyone who sees the message to call a toll-free number for more information, said Jeff Block, manager of KGTV-TV, an ABC affiliate.

After a warning in December, the toll-free number got 359 calls. A warning in January yielded 510 calls.

Diaz didn't call the number but said February 17's switch comes as no surprise. The stations he watches have advertised the change for about three months.

He'll still be able to get Spanish-language news broadcasts, which he watches about three hours each weeknight. And he can still enjoy boxing on Saturday nights and soccer matches on weekends. But starting February 17 he'll have a puny selection of English-language programs. (AP)



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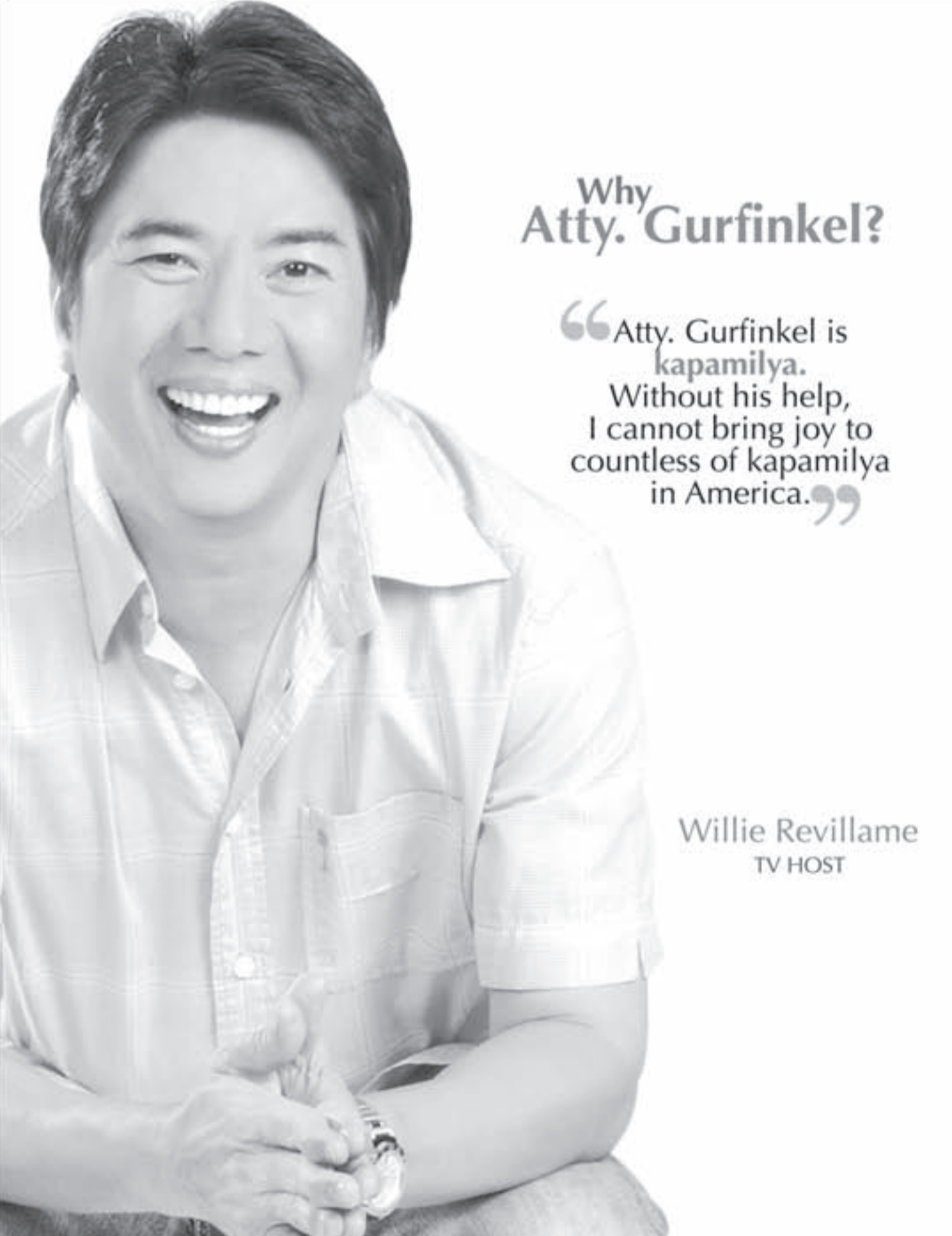
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