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## NEWS TEAM ASSEMBLE!

Is Maple Grove big enough for four big broadcast personalities?  
We'll find out.



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**MAPLE GROVE  
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ASSEMBLE!**

FOUR LOCAL NEWS PERSONALITIES MAKE MAPLE GROVE  
**THE GREATEST CITY IN THE WORLD**  
IT'S A FACT!



From left, Ken Barlow, Jason DeRusha, Jerrid Sebesta and John Lauritsen

BY BOBBY HART  
PHOTOS BY EMILY J. DAVIS



grown men argue over who would win in a back-alley brawl between their respective employers at Maple Grove's Starbucks at 8 a.m. They fire shots back and forth over the table in a barrage of colleague namedrops. Randy Shaver, Mark Rosen, Joe Schmit, Dave Dahl. The list goes on, until...

"I don't know if you'd want to run into Esme Murphy in an alley, though," says Jason DeRusha, stopping the others dead in their tracks with WCCO's Sunday-morning anchor. "She's a hockey mom."

You can't script this golden dialogue, the back-and-forth banter between DeRusha, WCCO-TV reporter and weekend anchor, John Lauritsen, WCCO-TV reporter, Jerrid Sebesta, KARE 11 meteorologist, and Ken Barlow, KSTP 5 Eyewitness News meteorologist, as they all have fun playing off one of many *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*-inspired questions asked by this writer as part of his swan song for the magazine, all in hopes of instigating a re-enactment of the side-splitting battle scene between news stations in the classic comedy.

*WCCO, KARE 11, Channel 5: Back parking lot. Who's left standing?*

"I think there's only one way to figure this out," declares Lauritsen. "It would be brutal, but there would be a lot of hugging at the end."

Battle royal aside, that sums up the product of jamming four workaholic, witty personalities from three different news stations into one suburb. They duke it out for ratings nightly. Then they drink in the opportunity to yuck it up with their industry rival neighbors like a smooth glass of scotch. Maple Grove is indeed big enough for the four of them.

## 1 MAN AMONG BOYS

Who is the most likely to have many leather bound books and an apartment that smells of rich mahogany?

The answer is unanimous — “Barlow!” blurt the other three simultaneously. Lauritsen’s explanation is simple: “He’s the biggest deal.”

No question, Ken Barlow is a name that’s time-tested and Minnesota-approved. That says a lot about someone who packed his bags and left after 15 years with KARE-11—and then returned after a four-year stint in Boston and Sacramento to join Channel 5.

“People were really excited that Ken was coming back,” DeRusha says. “To me that’s very interesting because we all like to think we’re important, but you think when you go away, people will forget about you.”

Barlow’s different, DeRusha says because “a” he knows his stuff and “b” he has a unique warmth that most people can’t communicate through the screen: “He can do that so well without being cheesy.”

So what’s his secret to sustained success? “Being yourself,” Barlow says. “I know this sounds really dumb, but if you’re different in the line of Starbucks than you are on TV, people will see that. That word gets out.”

### KEN BARLOW

Tune In: KSTP, Channel 5, Monday-Friday at 5, 6:30 and 9 p.m. (Channel 45), and 11 p.m.

Family: wife Theresa, son Patrick (24), and daughters Meredith (21) and Caroline (14)

Favorite *Anchorman* quote: “I’m very important. I have many leather-bound books and my apartment smells of rich mahogany.” —Ron Burgundy

## 2 THE WISE MAN

Who is the most likely to really enjoy a nice glass of scotch?

If scotch connoisseurs are as wise as they’re portrayed, DeRusha, who also writes restaurant reviews for *Minnesota Monthly*, can play the role. As WCCO’s Good Question reporter, viewers count on him to answer their questions, ranging from “Should organ donors be paid?” to “Why do we get belly lint?”

But Lauritsen recalls witnessing his colleague’s real power. As the two observed neighbor kids shoveling a driveway, DeRusha hollered—he says jokingly—for them to come shovel his next.

When Lauritsen returned, the kids were shoveling DeRusha’s driveway. “He has some kind of hypnosis,” claims Lauritsen.

DeRusha loves living in his Maple Grove neighborhood. When his family decided to upsize, they moved five houses away because they were so attached to the community.

There are other benefits, of course. When he can’t study his competition on TV, he can keep tabs on them around town—restaurants, coffee shops—and don’t forget the gym.

“John and Jerrid spot me,” DeRusha jokes.

“We’re the yellers in the gym,” Lauritsen adds.

And why wouldn’t they be? These are men—nay, these are anchormen.

### JASON DERUSHA

Tune In: WCCO, Channel 4, Good Question segment Monday-Thursday at 10 p.m.; Jason also anchors 10 p.m. news Sunday night.

Family: Wife Alyssa and sons Seth (6) and Sam (4)

Favorite *Anchorman* quote: “I’m not a baby. I am a man. I am an anchorman.” —Ron Burgundy





**JERRID**

**JOHN**

### 3 A TRUE GENTLEMAN

*Who is the most likely to be liked because he is polite and rarely late?*

Barlow looks at the young weatherman across the table: "I'm older than [Jerrid] by almost 20 years, and he's more disciplined than I am."

The word is out on Sebesta. After only two years with the KARE-11 weather team, Minnesota is charmed, and that applies to all demographics. He'll shoot the breeze (pun intended) with any Joe Shmoe at the gym before he uses his 6-foot-6 frame to dunk on his viewers at a pick-up basketball game. He's tall, good-looking, sincere and has a well-known passion for personal finance. The ladies love him.

Moving to Maple Grove from KPNX in Phoenix in 2010, Sebesta plays the new guy in town as smoothly as a jazz flute. With a wife who works at the Maple Grove Hospital and a 1-year-old son, he's growing accustomed to family life in the public eye.

But Sebesta heeds Barlow's life code. There's nothing phony about Sebesta's charm. What you see on the air is what you get.

"Jerrid has an enthusiasm on the air that's fun to watch," DeRusha says. "Even if the weather is bad, you're like, 'Oh, I want to see what Jerrid has to say about it.'"

#### JERRID SEBESTA

Tune in: KARE-11, Channel 11, Friday, Saturday and Sunday (and every other Thursday) afternoon/evenings.

Family: Wife Emily and son Beckham (1)

Favorite *Anchorman* quote: "What, we're on right now ... I don't believe you." —Ron Burgundy

### 4 MAN OF ACTION

*Who is the most likely to go into a bear pit to cover a story?*

All eyes fall on Lauritsen. "Yep," he quickly admits.

Lauritsen covered a colorful variety of stories in his young reporting career that's led him from Alexandria, Minn., to Waterloo, Iowa, and finally to Maple Grove when he joined Brooklyn Park-based Channel 12—his last stop before he joined WCCO in 2007. He's covered everything from high school sports and proms to natural disasters and crime. He's even put himself in harm's way when jumping a BMX, wrestling WCCO anchor Frank Vascellaro and handling a timber rattler, Minnesota's only poisonous snake, which nearly bit him. Bears schmears.

"I like stories like that—that get the blood flowing," Lauritsen says.

Lauritsen started forming his grit as a high school wrestler. Sebesta knows this, considering he was only a grade younger than him at Montevideo High School.

"Jerrid was still a half a foot taller than me back then, but I used to beat up on him all the time," cracks Lauritsen.

DeRusha has watched Lauritsen mature over the years. He remembers seeing a bright, promising "kid" at Channel 12. "Now he's one of our top reporters at WCCO," DeRusha says. //

#### JOHN LAURITSEN

Tune in: WCCO, Channel 4, Monday through Friday, typically at 10 p.m.

Family: Wife Jessica and daughter Harlow (1)

Favorite *Anchorman* quote: "For just one night let's not be co-workers. Let's be co-people." —Ron Burgundy



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