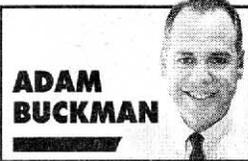


Live! Mayhem in the a.m.



**ADAM
BUCKMAN**

NEW York is finally the star of its own show.

And I'm not talking about some sitcom like "Friends" either.

I'm talking about the actual, gritty city — specifically, its wide, ugly highways, exit ramps, bridge approaches and tunnel entrances — all shown on television during the morning rush.

This mesmerizing new concept is called "Morning Drive Live." It premiered yesterday (6:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.) on Crosswalks NYC — Ch. 74 on both Time Warner and Cablevision systems.

Using Department of Transportation cameras mounted all over town, the Department of Information, Technology



and Telecommunications (known by the acronym DoITT), delivers to your home each morning the ebb and flow of traffic in such exotic locations as the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway at Sackett Street, the Brooklyn Bridge at Centre Street, the Gowanus Expressway at Prospect Avenue and others.

The live video feeds are

accompanied by a text crawl identifying various traffic troublespots.

And best of all, additional advisories are announced every few minutes by the most refreshing trio of homegrown air talents seen on TV around here since the New York Lottery's Kimberly Chapman stole my heart back in the mid-'90s.

They are: Crosswalks staffers Adele Merlino and Robin Gaffney, and Janice Marie, an actress and corporate trainer.

"Morning Drive Live" combines two things I've long loved — listening to radio traffic reports (especially when I'm not anywhere near the hopeless traffic snarls being described) and seeing the city in the morning.

If I were Crosswalks, I



Photo: Elizabeth Lippman

Robin Gaffney, Adele Merlino and Janice Marie (l-r) host Drive Live — but the show's real star is pictured left.

would enhance the presentation with the time and temperature, add more camera locations, and accompany the pictures with running commentary — or just better music — instead of the generic-sounding swing music now in use.

Despite these minor flaws, few views of New York are more priceless than the one offered by "Morning Drive Live" of the eastern sunlight hitting the Queensboro

Bridge and the east side of Manhattan at sunrise — a view so special that F. Scott Fitzgerald noted it in "The Great Gatsby" ("The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world," he wrote).

And if that doesn't strike your fancy, there's always the view of the FDR at 155th Street.