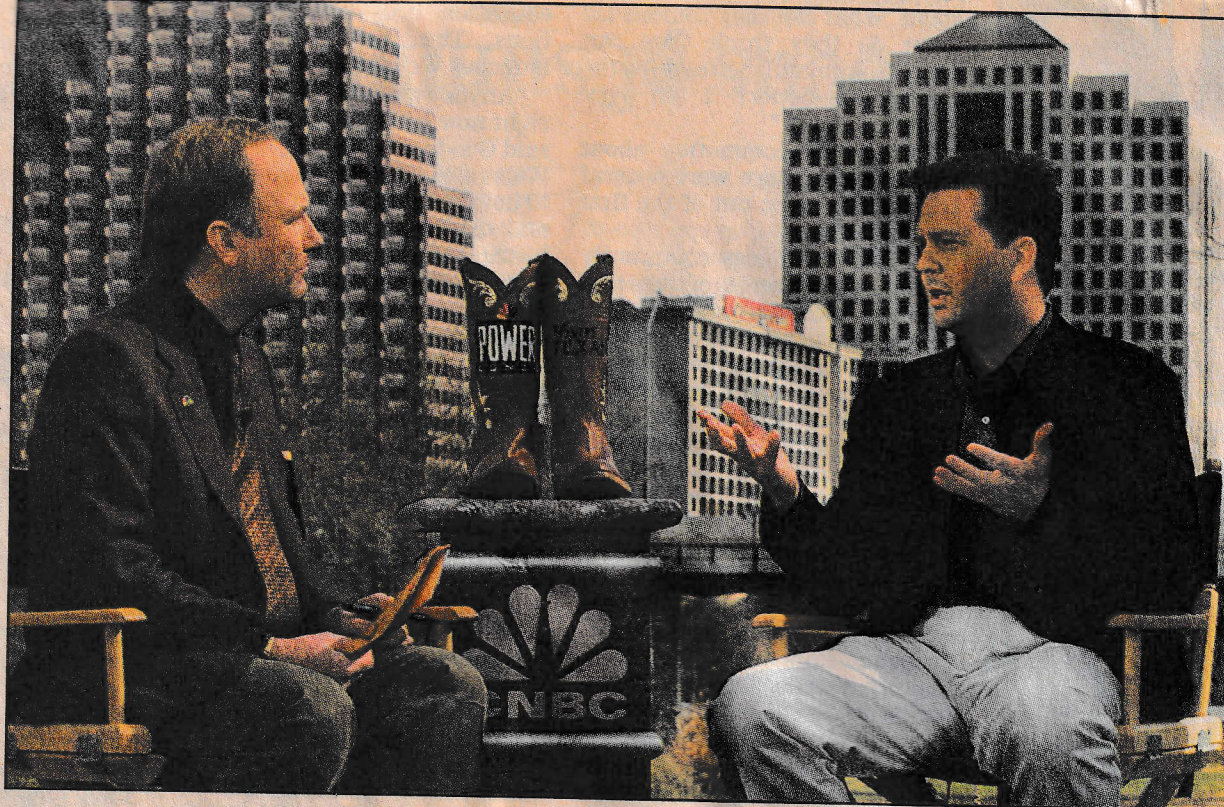




Bill Griffeth, left, anchor for CNBC's 'Power Lunch' show, talks with Greg Peters of Vignette Corp. during

a live broadcast Monday in Austin. The financial news show will visit other Texas cities this week. Sung Park/AA-S photos

'Power Lunch' is served

CNBC's popular financial news show airs from Austin

BY HEATHER COCKS
American-Statesman Staff

It took just seconds for the surge to start.

As soon as the last CNBC cameras switched off, spectators at the live "Power Lunch" broadcast on Auditorium Shores swarmed host Bill Griffeth, seeking photos, autographs or even a simple handshake.

"I watch him every day, so I had to come out," gushed Austinite Becky Kidd, holding out a CNBC calendar for Griffeth to sign. "He's so easy to learn from. My parents are going to see him tomorrow (in Houston)."

The two-hour live broadcast of the financial news network's popular program kicked off the show's week-long road trip through Texas, showcasing the faces and places that drive one of the nation's hottest economies.

The turnout at Monday's "Power Lunch" in Austin was a revealing sign of these wired times — more than 100 people came and stayed the duration, proving that these days, business news, stock tips and chief executives are as alluring as the promise of free ice cream and live music.

Still, to be safe, the CNBC folks

provided both those extra incentives.

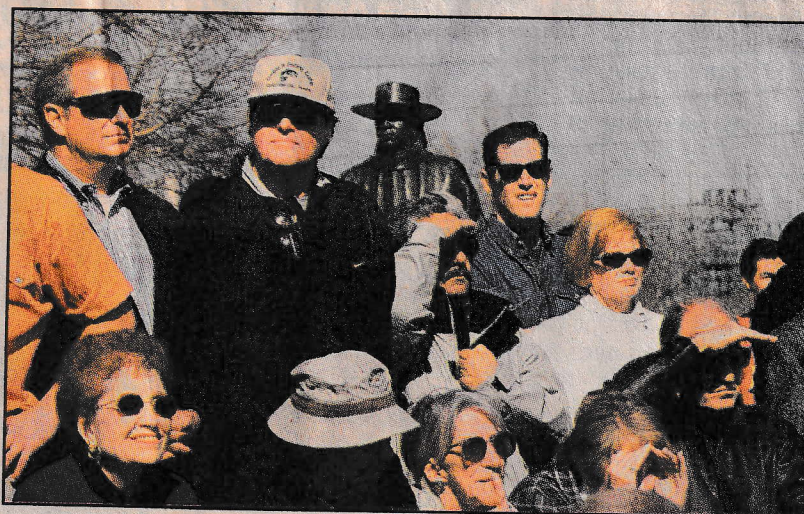
As spectators scooped up cups of Amy's Ice Cream — a special chocolate-caramel-pecan flavored concoction called Power Lunch Crunch — they tapped their toes to the country twang of Grammy-nominated local favorite Asleep at the Wheel, cheering wildly when the band played before and after the

live segments.

A calm and collected Ron Harris, awaiting his turn in the on-camera hotseat next to Griffeth, surveyed the crowd and chuckled in amazement.

"What are all these people doing here?" joked Harris, chief executive of Pervasive Software Inc.

See CNBC's, D3



Stevie Ray Vaughan's statue keeps an eye on spectators who gathered Monday for CNBC's 'Power Lunch' program at Auditorium Shores.