

# Electronic Media

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AT PRESS TIME

## Coke TV plans layoffs

BURBANK, CALIF.—As many as 60 employees in the first-run syndication division of Coca-Cola's entertainment business sector are being laid off as a result of the pending merger of Coke and Tri-Star Pictures' TV operations. Tri-Star confirmed late last week that it will eliminate an unspecified number of positions "to achieve operational efficiencies," effective Dec. 31. The move could include some top executives. Members of the division's top management team are attempting to conduct a leveraged buyout of the first-run unit.

## NABET strike nears end

NEW YORK—The National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians' 18-week strike against NBC was on the brink of ending late Friday, but two of the union's 14 units were still holding up a final agreement. Earlier, 12 units approved a new 29-month contract. The union and  
*(Continued on Page 51)*

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OCTOBER 26, 1987

## Syndicators sweeten pot to get slots

By RICHARD MAHLER  
Los Angeles bureau chief

As competition for a dwindling number of time slots in major markets heats up, syndicators are increasingly willing to give some form of compensation for clearances—even for post-midnight slots.

In fact, although many syndication industry executives don't like to talk about it, the scheduling of barter-based shows in top markets after midnight is fast becoming standard practice among distributors anxious to get a first-run show off the ground.

Moreover, if stations are unwilling to open up more desirable time slots, "the only way to get the program on the air is to effectively buy the time," says Larry Gerbrandt, a syndication analyst for Kagan & Associates.

Sometimes that means actually paying the station cash to carry a hard-to-place series. In other cases, it involves reducing or eliminating license fees.

And the trend is accelerating as more syndicated shows become successful, leaving fewer time slots available for newcomers.

"It's hell out there," laments Hal Brown, president of Peregrine Film Entertainment, which launched "The Spectacular World of the Guinness Book of World Records" this fall.

"We've got 20 pair of feet trying to get into two pair of shoes."

But the scheduling of new first-run programs after mid-  
*(Continued on Page 51)*



## The crash Companies face new reality

By DIANE MERMIGAS  
Senior reporter

Last week's historic stock market crash left broadcast companies to deal with a welter of new problems and opportunities.

Among them:

- A growing fear that advertiser spending will be crippled

More stock stories, Pages 42 and 43; Editorial, Page 10.

...ried by crumbling consumer confidence.

Some Wall Street analysts said they expect to see some renegeing by advertisers on 1987-88 commitments, and many broadcast company officials say they will tighten their 1988 expenses beyond their current plans.

- The possible need to change employee compensation  
*(Continued on Page 51)*

Wide World photo

## Tax on sale of stations hits Senate

By DOUG HALONEN  
Staff reporter

WASHINGTON—A Senate committee has moved to place a special tax on sales of many communications properties, with a heavier levy on those who engage in rapid trafficking of TV and radio stations.

At the same time, the Senate Commerce Committee passed a proposal to resurrect the fairness doctrine.

The committee voted 12-to-5 to attach the tax and the fairness doctrine proposals to a budget reconciliation bill, a controversial maneuver that has left the broadcasting establishment here steaming.

But some type of congressional action on the fairness doctrine had been expected ever since the Federal Communications Commission incurred the wrath of Capitol Hill by abolishing the doctrine last summer.

The tax, on the other hand, was largely unexpected and suddenly could give new life to the movement to curb station trafficking.

Under the proposal, a tax equivalent to 2 percent of the purchase price of a standard station would go to the federal government. But that amount would be doubled for stations held less than three years.

The 2 percent tax also would be applied to sales of many properties that use the radio spectrum, including cellular radio, land-mobile radio and cable television CARS services.

CARS, which stands for cable auxiliary relay service, are the microwave relays that cable systems use to expand their service over geographic barriers.

Also, any broadcast stations whose owners had ever violated the fairness doctrine would have to pay the federal government an extra 1 percent sales tax when the station is sold.

While designed to help offset the federal budget  
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### INSIDE:

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#### Checkerboard slide

With checkerboard ratings slipping, the NBC-owned stations are considering "USA Today" for prime access.

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#### Ethics survey

What are your business ethics? ELECTRONIC MEDIA is polling executives in the industry about their business decisions.

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#### SMPTTE preview

The annual conference of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers opens this week in Los Angeles.



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# Love slaves, demon cars

## TV theme weeks make best of B-movies

There are three things you can count on in television:

- Canceled "TV families" will return in two-hour Sunday night specials.

- The Emmy Awards telecast will run overtime.

- And, on any night of the week you can tune in to a one-star movie.

Clunker films often make their way onto TV, but savvy stations no longer bury them at 2 a.m. for insomniacs whose only other choice is color bars.

Instead, they tie the turkeys together with some first-rate flicks, dream up a campy title and promote a tongue-in-cheek theme week scheduled in prime time.

Theme weeks can win nearly respectable ratings for such totally unrespectable bombs as "Revenge of the Cheerleaders." This approach also can net a station free media publicity from radio jocks and newspaper TV writers, as well as create a distinctly fun station personality.

Here's a sampling of some of the most clever movie theme weeks found this year:

1. "Women With Strange First Names Week" on KSAS-TV, Wichita, Kan. It featured two Farrah Fawcett movies, "Sun Burn" and "Somebody Killed Her Husband"; Sissy Spacek in "Coal Miner's Daughter"; and Sigourney Weaver's "Year of Living Dangerously."

2. "Marital Blitz Marathon" on national pay cable's The Movie Channel. The day was hosted—appropriately—by Zsa Zsa Gabor. It featured "Ruthless People," "Heartburn," "Twice in a Lifetime," "Lost in America" and "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers."

3. "Love Slave Week" on WGBO-TV, Chicago. Featured films were "Little Ladies of the Night," "The Burning Bed," "Mistress of Paradise," "Making Love" and "Revenge of the Stepford Wives."

4. "Dirty Animal Long Movie Week" on KSAS-TV, Wichita, Kan. Featured films were "Ice Station Zebra," "Dirty Dozen," "Where Eagles Dare," "Kelly's Heroes" and "Godzilla."



MARKETING

Susan Spillman

5. "Demon Cars Triple Bill" on City TV, Toronto. Featured films were "Christine," "The Car" and "The Hearse."

By using theme weeks, programmers are "leading viewers to films they might not otherwise watch," says Matthew Duda, vice president of program planning for The Movie Channel, which regularly runs movie marathons and theme weeks with celebrity guest hosts. "We use our exclusive titles to drive viewership to classics and lesser titles," he adds.

Lee Reams, programing and promotions manager for Wichita's KSAS, estimates that a clever and well-promoted theme package can beef up a bad movie's performance anywhere from two to eight ratings points.

The finer points of scheduling theme weeks vary from market to market. But some basic strategies prevail at most stations.

For instance, purveyors of the practice suggest stations kick off the week with a strong title in order to provide a large audience to see promotions for the rest of the week's offerings. Women's movies do best against sports events such as ABC's "NFL Monday Night Football."

Also, they suggest, don't waste your best titles on Thursday nights. Finish strong with a top title.

And how do you create those punchy themes from your station's plethora of seemingly dissimilar films?

KSAS has a great way. The station's several thousand movie titles are all catalogued on computer in numerous categories—star's names, genre, subject matter and so forth.

"And there are always some aces in the hole, if you can't think of anything," says Ms. Reams. She mentioned "Superstar Week," "Blockbuster Week" or "Darn Good Movies Week."

WGBO seems to have drawn such an ace. Upcoming on the Chicago independent is "Superstar Week," featuring Charles Bronson, Chuck Norris, Charlton Heston and Peter Fonda.

Peter Fonda? "Well, yes, we are stretching things a bit there," says promotion manager Fritz Breland.

\* \* \*

Theme weeks aren't the only way to promote stupid movies. Columbia Embassy Television held a contest over the summer to see which stations could come up with the best way to promote its flick, "Sheena."

Among the six winning stations, which were given prizes such as color TVs and VCRs, were WSYM-TV in Lansing, Mich., and KMSB-TV in Tucson, Ariz.

WSYM took clips from the jungle romp and set them to a phony interview with the star, Tanya Roberts. In a valley girl drawl, the off-camera Roberts imposter intoned: "I read the script and I freaked. It was so good."

We see these words superimposed over a shot of the tawny Ms. Roberts riding a zebra. The imposter goes on to explain: "There was a lot of running and action, and I sprained my ankle several times." A tag line stated: "One of the most talked-about movies of our time—at least by the star."

KMSB took many of the same action clips of Sheena and created a promo for a mock workout video.

"Jane Fonda, hang up your leopard. It's time to work out with Sheena," says the announcer. Bouncy aerobics music accompanies the scenes as a perky off-camera instructor shouts: "Swing that vine, one and two . . . raise those chains and push and push."

"Sheena" scored a cume rating of 11.2 on Aug. 5.

But it's probably safe to say the winning promos were more entertaining than the film. #



Columbia Embassy Television held a contest to see which stations could come up with the best way to promote "Sheena."

## Fox planning coverage of political conventions

By RICHARD TEDESCO

Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Fox Television plans to step up its focus on presidential politics by providing coverage of next year's Democratic and Republican national conventions.

Furthermore, sources said that Fox's convention coverage could be the precursor of the launch of a Fox networkwide newscast.

At the political conventions, Fox will have anchor booths, interview rooms and positions on the floor. It intends to have reporting facilities comparable to those maintained by the three major broadcast networks, according to sources familiar with Fox's plans.

Kim Montour, vice president and new director of KRIV-TV, the Fox owned-and-operated station in Houston, will be directing convention coverage. Ms. Montour said convention plans are still in a preliminary stage and the extent of the coverage is yet unknown.

But, she said, all five Fox owned-and-operated stations will defini-

tely carry the coverage.

Carriage across the entire Fox network is also possible, Ms. Montour added.

Times Square Studios in New York will coordinate the coverage, as well as supply some manpower and equipment, according to George Case, executive vice president of the studio.

Mr. Case, who will oversee the production for Fox, produced CBS's convention coverage in 1984.

He said Fox will have the ability to cover the Democrats in Atlanta and Republicans in New Orleans next summer gavel to gavel.

The coverage will aid the growth of Times Square Studios, according to its president, Marcello Miyanes.

"We are trying to position ourselves as a broadcasting center," he said.

"We are much more than a TV studio in a traditional sense."

Mr. Miyanes said Fox approached Times Square after the studio produced the coverage of Pope John Paul's recent visit for WTVJ-TV in Miami. #

## MGM/UA plans comedy strip for late night, mulls revivals

By RICHARD MAHLER

Los Angeles bureau chief

LOS ANGELES—MGM/UA Telecommunications is planning a late-night comedy strip, "T.H.E. Hospital," as its initial first-run project for 1988.

The studio also is dusting off its vintage program library and examining possible remakes of several former series, including "Bat Masterson," "Stop the Music" and "The Outer Limits."

The half-hour "T.H.E. Hospital," depicting the off-beat medical staff of a private hospital, should be available starting in June on a cash-plus-barter basis, the studio said.

It's been presold to the United Station Group and Gaylord stations, reaching 20 percent of all TV homes. "T.H.E. Hospital," created by David Lawrence and George Paris, is targeted at the 18-to-34 age group, the company said.

Originally titled "Carry On, Doctor," the show is going after the type of mostly female audience garnered by Embassy's "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" 10 years ago.

According to studio sources, MGM will spend about \$50,000 per episode for the series, which might be produced in Toronto to cut costs.

The cast for the show has yet to be named.

The studio plans to give "T.H.E. Hospital" a green

light if clearances reach at least 60 percent of U.S. households. It's looking for a minimum 3 to 5 national rating.

Separately, MGM/UA Telecommunications has confirmed it is also examining possible remakes of vintage programs for first-run series.

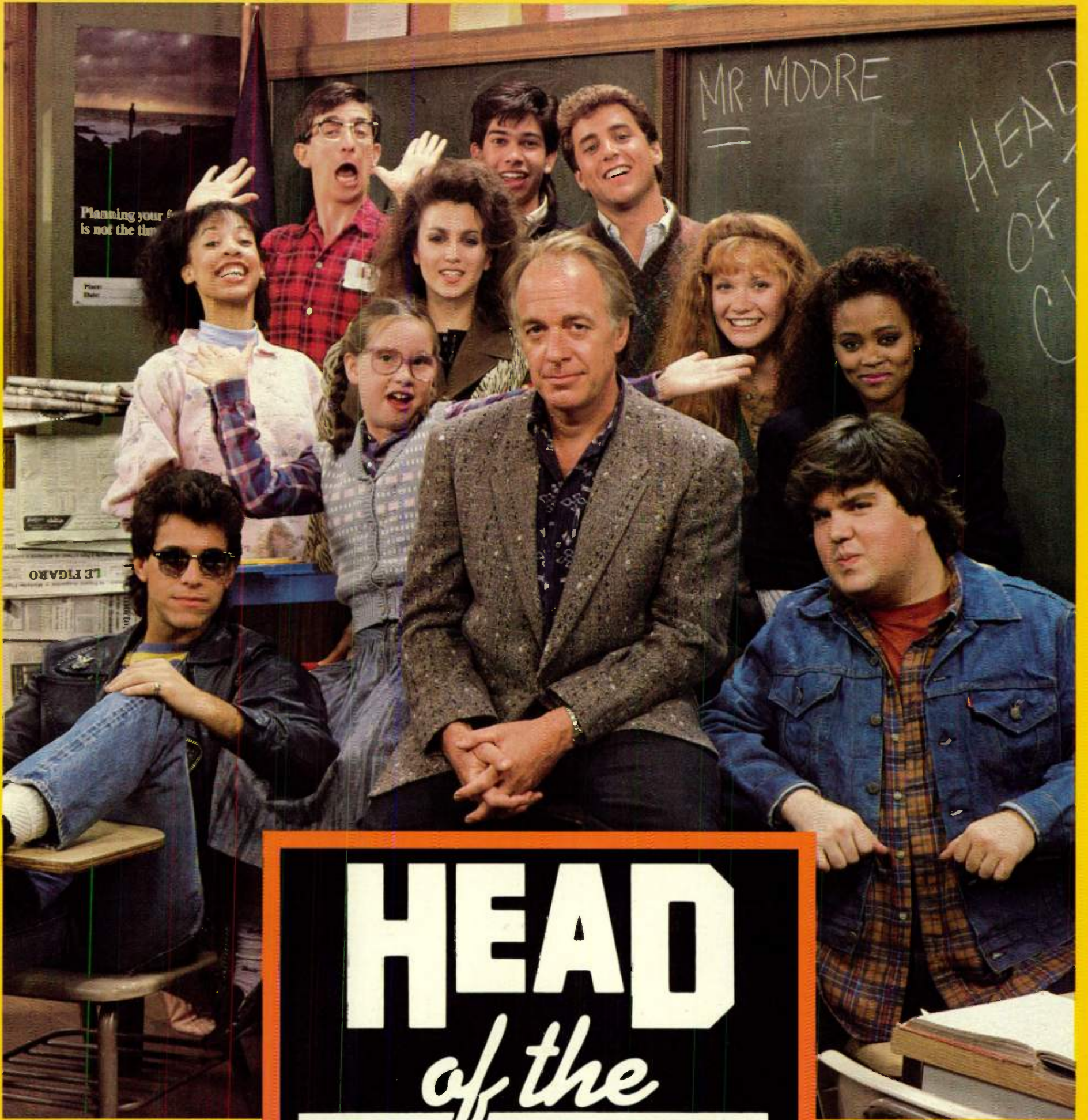
"We'll probably do a pilot for (a revival of) 'Stop the Music,'" says Dick Cignarelli, the studio's executive vice president of domestic syndication. "It will be targeted for January or September of 1988—whatever the market dictates."

The original game show aired on ABC from 1949 to 1952 and again from 1954 to 1956. The series, hosted by Bert Parks and later Jimmy Blaine, offered prizes to contestants who correctly identified hit songs played on the air.

MGM/UA is also looking into the possibility of producing new episodes of "Bat Masterson," the 1958-61 NBC Western that starred Gene Barry as a class wandering law enforcer of the Wild West.

"We colorized one episode and we're looking at (Four Star Entertainment's) remarketing of 'Wanted: Dead or Alive' before making a decision on it," Mr. Cignarelli says.

The studio is also discussing revivals of "Highway Patrol," an action/adventure series syndicated in the late 1950s, and "Outer Limits," a science fiction drama that appeared on ABC from 1963 to 1965. #



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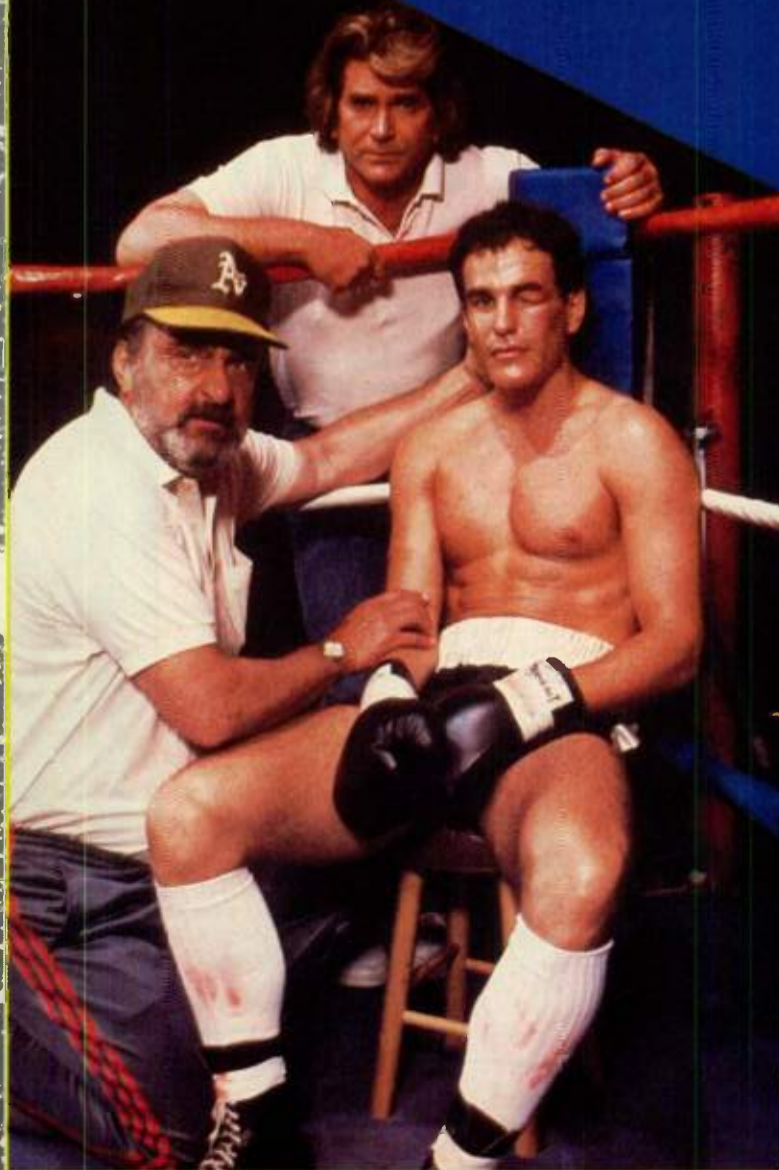
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# Ex-FCC official to host 'Snicker Theater'

By **RICHARD MAHLER**  
Los Angeles bureau chief

LOS ANGELES—A former Federal Communications Commission official is "going Hollywood."

Dan Brenner, who served as a top aide to former Federal Communications Commission Chairman Mark Fowler, will soon be introducing cult movies such as "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes" to late-night television audiences nationwide.

Mr. Brenner, a stand-up comic, is the new host of "Snicker Theater," a weekly movie package distributed by WesternWorld Television here.

After leaving the Federal Communications Commission last year, Mr. Brenner became the director of the University of California's communications law program here and a board member of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Thirteen new episodes of the tongue-in-cheek series have been ordered for "Snicker Theater" by co-producers WesternWorld and Independent Program Entertainment Source.

The segments include humorous wraparounds and intermission banter from Mr. Brenner relating to the two-hour movies, most of which are dubbed, foreign-made horror films.

"I like mystery films," says the relocated bureaucrat, "and the mystery is how films like 'Twenty-eight Minutes for Three Million Dollars' and 'Who Killed the Prosecutor and Why' ever got made."

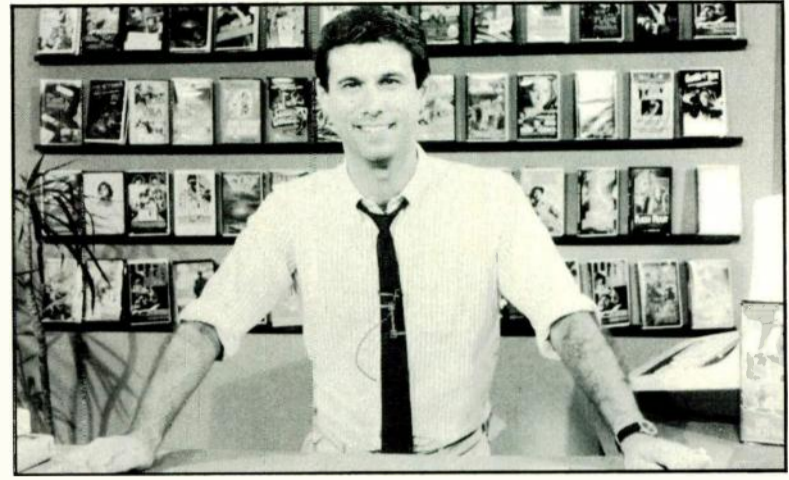
"Many of the films in the 'Snicker Theater' series feature American stars who are probably hoping that no one's staying up late at night to watch them."

Stations clearing the 3-month-old series include WNBC-TV in New York and KXAS-TV in Dallas-Fort Worth.

When not pursuing his career as an attorney, Mr. Brenner has found time to perform as a comic here and in Washington and New York.

His media appearances include KING-TV in Seattle, WUSA-TV in Washington and WNEW-AM in New York.

Mr. Brenner has also appeared on Paramount's syndicated "Entertainment Tonight." #



Former FCC aide Dan Brenner is the new host of "Snicker Theater."

## CALENDAR

### October

Oct. 26, **An Introduction to Community Access Television** sponsored by the Chicago Access Corp., CAC Center, Chicago. Information: Jose Andrade, 312-738-1400.

Oct. 27, **International Radio & Television Society** newsmaker luncheon featuring NBC President and Chief Executive Officer Robert Wright as guest speaker, Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York. Information: Marilyn Ellis, 212-867-6650.

Oct. 27, **D.C. Chapter of Women in Cable's roast of John Malone**, president of Tele-Communications Inc., Mayflower Hotel, Washington. Information: Lynn Levine, 202-872-9200.

Oct. 27, **Cable Day** at the Television Critics Association October press tour, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Jim Boyle, 202-775-3629.

Oct. 31-Nov. 4, **Imaging in Sound—Today and Tomorrow**, the annual fall conference of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles. Information: John Varrasi, 914-761-1100.

### November

Nov. 3, **Sports conference** sponsored by the Gannett Center for Media Studies, Columbia University, New York. Information: Shirley Gazsi, 212-280-8392.

Nov. 3-7, **Midwest Radio Theatre Workshop**, a workshop featuring topics of interest to radio producers, technicians, directors and writers, Ramada Inn, Columbia, Mo. Information: Diane Huneke, 314-874-1139.

Nov. 4-6, **Fifth annual Private Cable Show**, a trade show for private cable systems examining such topics as the booming demand for private cable in hotels, Sheraton Denver Tech Center, Denver. Information: Kim McBride, 713-342-9655.

Nov. 5-6, **Satellite Technology, a seminar for the non-technical manager and executive**, Four Seasons Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Ann Marcellino, 1-800-722-9000.

Nov. 7, **Breaking into Television: The Writer**, a one-day seminar sponsored by the American Film Institute and featuring Maria Ginsburg, vice president of creative affairs for New World Television, Parsons School of Design-Midtown campus, New York. Information: Janet Hahn, 213-865-7690.

Nov. 8, **Annual dinner dance of the Caucus for Producers, Writers & Producers**, Chasen's, Los Angeles. Information: David Levy, 213-652-0222.

Nov. 8, **Ninth annual Media Access Awards** honoring performances that have accurately portrayed people with disabilities in TV, radio, film, theater, commercials and print, Los Angeles Scottish Rite Auditorium, Los

Angeles. Information: Diane Reed, 213-474-3993.

Nov. 10, **Basic Cable Feud** sponsored by the Southern California Cable Association with 20 teams representing different Southern California cable companies competing, Pacifica Hotel, Culver City, Calif. Information: Knuch Keller, 213-463-2186.

Nov. 10, **A Night at the Round Tables** sponsored by the New York Television Academy, Sheraton Centre,

Nov. 12-13, **Human Issues in the Work Place: Meet the Challenge**, the North Carolina chapter of Women in Cable fall meeting, Hyatt Hotel, Winston-Salem, N.C. Information: Mary Lou Swann, 919-785-3561.

Nov. 13-15, **Radio Sales University**, a basic training course for professional radio salespeople sponsored by the Radio Advertising Bureau, Hilton Inn, Little Rock, Ark. Information: Tessa Rodriguez, 800-232-3131.

man, 818-763-2975.

Nov. 19-21, **Loyola Radio conference**, Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, Chicago. Information: Taylor O'Malley, 312-670-3207.

Nov. 19-21, **American Video Conference**, Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, Hollywood, Calif. Information: Mark Josephson, 212-722-2115.

Nov. 20-22, **Sportscasters Camps of America play-by-play camp**, Stouffer Concourse Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Roy Englebrecht, 714-760-3131.

Nov. 21, **Writers on Writing** sponsored by the American Film Institute, Mark Goodson Theater, New York. Information: Janet Hahn, 213-865-7690.

Nov. 23, **1987 International Emmy Awards gala**, Sheraton Centre, New York. Information: Victoria Fahn, 212-308-7540.

Nov. 24, **Television: New Sources, New Forces**, an International Radio & Television Society Newsmaker luncheon featuring Viacom's Sumner Redstone as a guest speaker, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Marilyn Ellis, 212-867-6650.

### December

Dec. 1-2, **Satellite Technology, a seminar for the non-technical manager and executive**, Ritz-Carlton, Atlanta. Information: Ann Marcellino, 1-800-722-9000.

Dec. 2-4, **The Western Show**, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, Calif. Information: Rhonda Gibson, 415-428-2225.

Dec. 3-4, **Technology studies seminars** sponsored by the Gannett Center for Media Studies, Columbia University, New York. Information: Shirley Gazsi, 212-280-8392.

Dec. 9-12, **Serving the Nation Through NUTN**, the sixth annual conference of the National University of Teleconference Network, Washington Hilton, Washington. Information: Lin Friedman, 405-624-5191.

Dec. 17, **International Radio & Television Society Christmas benefit**, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Marilyn Ellis, 212-867-6650.

### January

Jan. 6-10, **INTV**, Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Sheila Jefferson, 202-887-1970.

Jan. 7-10, **Winter Consumer Electronics Show**, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. Information: Dennis Corcoran, 202-457-8700.

Jan. 13, **International Radio & Television Society Newsmaker luncheon**, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Marilyn Ellis, 212-867-6650.

Jan. 22, **Ninth annual ACE Awards—non-televised presentation**, Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Susan Detwiler, 202-775-3611.#



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## Major events

### TvB annual meeting

Atlanta ..... Nov. 11 to 13  
Information: Robert Grebe, 212-486-1111.

### The Western Show

Anaheim, Calif. .... Dec. 2 to 4  
Information: Rhonda Gibson, 415-428-2225.

### INTV

Los Angeles ..... Jan. 6 to 10  
Information: Sheila Jefferson, 202-887-1970.

### RAB

Atlanta ..... Jan. 23 to 26  
Information: Wayne Cornils, 212-254-4800.

### NATPE

Houston ..... Feb. 25 to 29  
Information: Nick Orfanopoulos, 213-282-8801.

### NAB

Las Vegas ..... April 9 to 12  
Information: Hilda Jannesson, 202-429-5353.

### CAB

New York ..... April 10 to 12  
Information: Vince Fazio, 212-751-7770.

New York. Information: Debbie Feldstein, 212-765-2450.

Nov. 10, **Hollywood Radio and Television Society newsmaker luncheon** featuring Michael Fuchs, chairman of HBO, Beverly Wilshire Hotel, Beverly Hills, Calif. Information: Ollie Crawford, 818-769-4313.

Nov. 10, **International Radio & Television Society second Tuesday seminar**, Viacom Conference Center, New York. Information: 212-867-6650.

Nov. 11-12, **The First Amendment—Third Century**, a forum featuring J. Richard Munro, chairman and chief executive officer of Time Inc., Rep. Al Swift, D-Wash., and Edward Reilly, vice president for broadcasting at McGraw-Hill, San Diego State University, San Diego. Information: Sig Mickelson, 619-287-2446.

Nov. 11-13, **Television Bureau of Advertising annual membership meeting**, Atlanta Marriott, Atlanta. Information: Robert Grebe, 212-486-1111.

Nov. 13-15, **Journalism Ethics**, a conference co-sponsored by the Foundation for American Communications and the Meadows Foundation, Houstonian Hotel & Conference Center, Houston. Information: Dale Ellen Shaps, 213-851-7372.

Nov. 13-17, **Public Radio RF Transmission Training seminar** sponsored by the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, Sheraton Hotel, St. Louis. Information: Pat Watkins, 202-797-8911.

Nov. 15-17, **Canadian Association of Broadcasters annual meeting**, Harbor Castle Westin, Toronto. Information: Gerry Acton, 613-233-4035.

Nov. 15, **Installation ceremonies into the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' Television Academy Hall of Fame** inducting Johnny Carson, Jacques-Yves Cousteau, Leonard Goldenson, Jim Henson, Bob Hope, Ernie Kovacs and Eric Sevareid, Twentieth Century Fox Studios, Los Angeles. Information: Murray Weiss-

# ONE COMPANY HAS 3 OF THE TOP 5 FIRST-RUN SITCOM HITS



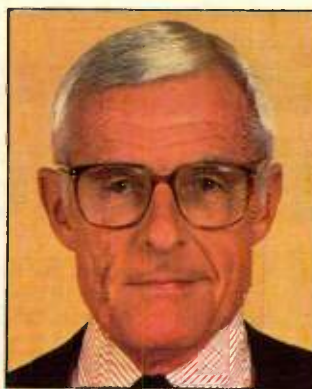
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Source: NSS Preliminary Ranking Report, season to date—Sept. 27, 1987.  
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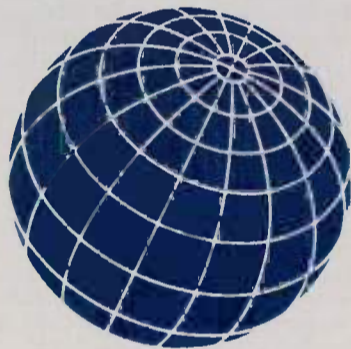
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**CBS BROADCAST INTERNATIONAL**

# Electronic Media

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NOVEMBER 23, 1987

## 21st century TV

Experts predict technology of the future

By **KATHY MAEGLIN**  
Staff reporter

It's the year 2000, and the chief engineer is sitting in his office, discussing the current state of TV broadcasting.

"We can now deliver a signal that's as clear as 35mm film," he says. "And analog equipment, well, you'd have to go to a broadcast museum to find any of that. Everything's digital now."

He looks proudly at his handiwork.

"We've equipped our plant with the most cost-effective machines available," he says. "Of course, with all the automation and computerization, we need fewer people. It is a little lonely around here."

That's the vision of

TV's future that a number of industry engineers and manufacturers described when asked by ELECTRONIC MEDIA to gaze into their crystal balls.

By the year 2000, most of those surveyed agree, there will be some form of high-definition TV, with an increased number of resolution lines and a greatly enhanced picture, in use.

"I think HDTV will be everywhere, even in home cameras," says Tom Keller, senior vice president of science and technology for the National Association of Broadcasters.

"(Electronic news gathering) will be HDTV, videotape, film, disc—most everything will be available in HDTV.

"I think we'll be consid-  
(Continued on Page 16)

Illustration by Karen Nigida

**THIS TEAM  
HAS WON MORE  
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THAN TRACY/HEPBURN,  
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NOVEMBER 23, 1987

## AT PRESS TIME

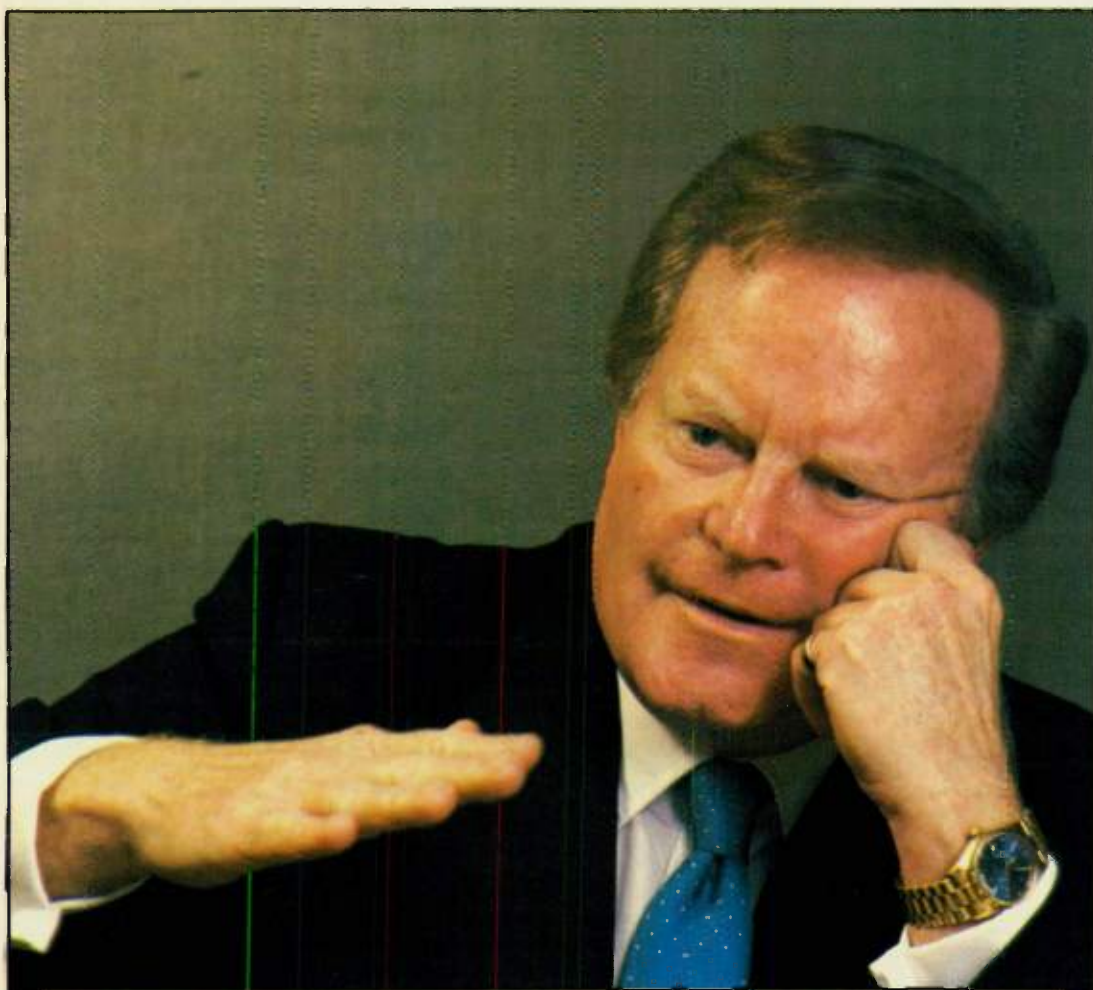
### New TV unit formed

LOS ANGELES—Carolco Pictures, which last summer acquired Orbis Communications, has formed a TV production company, Carolco/Gimbel Productions. Independent producers Roger Gimbel and Ken Locker will serve as president and executive vice president, respectively, of the new division. Carolco/Gimbel will produce prime-time movies and miniseries for network TV, which Orbis will distribute in syndication.

### Bilingual PPV planned

NEW YORK—Columbia Pictures Pay Television has signed a deal with Request Television to offer the film "La Bamba" on pay-per-view in both Spanish and English versions. This is the first scheduled bilingual satellite telecast for pay-per-view, according to Request. "LaBamba" was one of 1987's top-grossing theatrical films, earning \$53.3 million.

(Continued on Page 36)



## Q&A: Roone Arledge

### Innovations boost ABC News

By DIANE MERMIGAS  
Senior reporter

At age 56, Roone Arledge can say he has done for TV news what he did a decade ago for TV sports: made it more exciting through innovations.

He helped bring "Nightline" into the world and has since overseen the development of ABC's live "Viewpoint" specials, long-form retrospectives such as "45/85" and the overall growth of ABC News.

Mr. Arledge, who is preparing for coverage of the 1988 Winter Olym-

pics and the presidential election, spoke with ELECTRONIC MEDIA in his New York office last month.

An edited version of the interview, the second in a series with the major network news presidents, follows:

**EM:** What is the status of contract renegotiations with 'World News Tonight' anchorman Peter Jennings and 'Nightline' anchor Ted Koppel?

**Mr. Arledge:** We are close to signing Peter. It's just a matter of paper work now.

(Continued on Page 21)

## NBC, Turner in talks about joint venture

By DIANE MERMIGAS  
Senior reporter

NBC and Turner Broadcasting are considering a plan in which NBC would provide major programming and financial support to TBS's proposed new cable network, sources say.

Executives at both companies confirmed last week that they had held preliminary discussions about several joint ventures, one of which could help get the proposed Turner Network Television cable channel off the ground.

Such support could include NBC developing and producing programs for the new network,

sources say.

A likely condition to any equity position NBC might take in either the new cable network or TBS would be to establish some cooperative arrangement between NBC News and TBS's CNN.

Such moves would give NBC its long-desired foothold in cable, where commercial broadcasters are afforded virtually unrestricted involvement in program production and supply.

Any equity stake offered by NBC to Atlanta-based TBS would then be used to pay down some of TBS's outstanding \$1.4 billion debt.

(Continued on Page 36)

## CBS-owned station cancels checkerboard

By MARIANNE PASKOWSKI  
New York bureau chief

NEW YORK—The prime-access checkerboard has been canceled by one CBS-owned station and appears in trouble on the NBC station group.

After suffering weeks of declining ratings, CBS's WCAU-TV in Philadelphia confirmed

last week it will replace its weekday checkerboard of five first-run sitcoms next year, possibly as early as January.

The NBC station group, meanwhile, has sealed a deal with LBS Communications to air the new "Family Feud" game show strip next fall.

Publicly, however, NBC exec-

(Continued on Page 36)

## INSIDE:

### 3 Fair-weather friends

A new survey indicates that weather forecasters are the most appealing personalities on local newscasts.

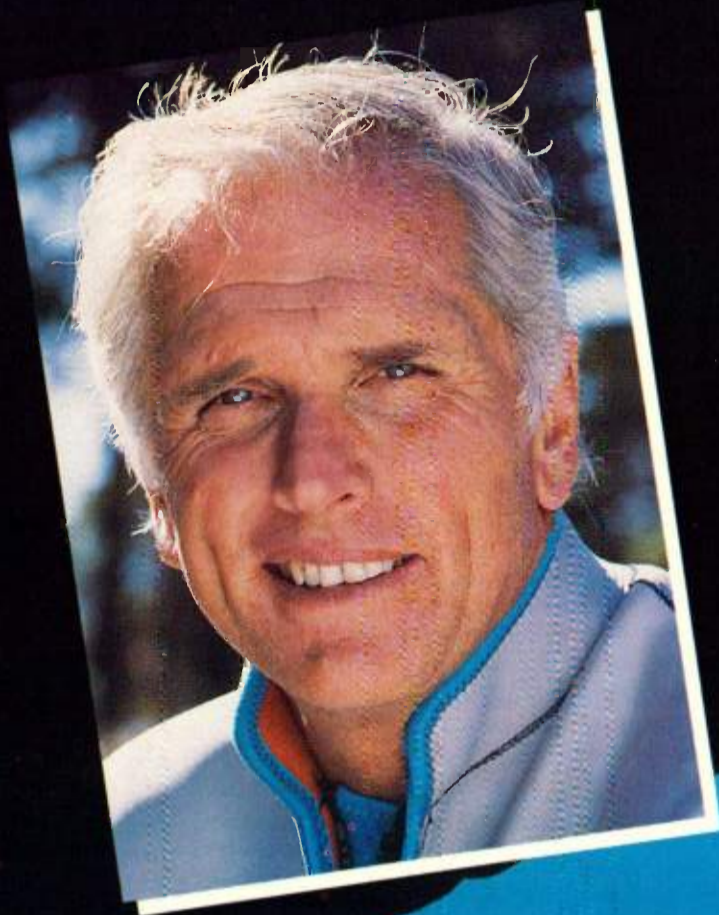
### 8 High-definition advice

An advisory committee of industry leaders set up by the FCC has begun discussions on enhanced TV services.

### 28 Disney plans 'adult' schedule

The cable channel's "Disney Night Time" schedule will feature family-oriented movies and programs to appeal to adult audiences.

# THE HUNT FOR



Source: NSS Pocketpiece, Season-to-Date, Oct. 5-11, 1987

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World Radio History

# MEN IS OVER!

## #1 MEN 18-49

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>VIEWERS PER 1000 HOUSEHOLDS</u>
<b>SEA HUNT</b>	<b>487</b>
D. C. FOLLIES	460
COMEDY CLUB	452
WE GOT IT MADE	369
MARBLEHEAD MANOR	336
NEW MONKEES	325
OUT OF THIS WORLD	300
BUSTIN' LOOSE	295
SHE'S THE SHERIFF	292
DOM DeLUISE SHOW	291

## #2 MEN 18-49

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>RATINGS</u>
SHE'S THE SHERIFF	2.5
<b>SEA HUNT</b>	<b>2.3</b>
D. C. FOLLIES	2.3
COMEDY CLUB	2.3
WE GOT IT MADE	2.2
MARBLEHEAD MANOR	2.2
OUT OF THIS WORLD	2.2
DOM DeLUISE SHOW	1.7
BUSTIN' LOOSE	1.5
YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU	1.2

# SEA HUNT

The most efficient way to reach men, among all the top new once-a-week half-hours.



MGM/UA TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC.

# Experts predict TV technology of the future

(Continued from front cover)

ering the phasing out of NTSC standards (the current standards for picture resolution) after 50-some years of operation," Mr. Keller says.

But Julius Barnathan, Capital Cities/ABC president of broadcast operations and engineering, says: "The format of NTSC will still be around, but there should be another enhanced system approved in the U.S. that will replace NTSC or live side-by-side with it."

"I see the advent of HDTV, and I would certainly see HDTV commercial services by the turn of the century," agrees Jay Adrick, executive vice president and general manager of the systems division of Midwest Communications Corp., an equipment distributor in Edgewood, Ky.

"It could be that a (major commercial network) would offer programming in HDTV or maybe there will be a whole new network built around HDTV."

"The second thing that goes along with (HDTV) is that everybody will be using stereo or some form of surround sound, which would augment HDTV," says Larry Pozzi, director of operations at Denver's KMGH-TV. "At some point we may think of having digital sound transmission, which would be the second part of HDTV."

Another emerging technology that many respondents predict will have gained a foothold by the year 2000 is digital.

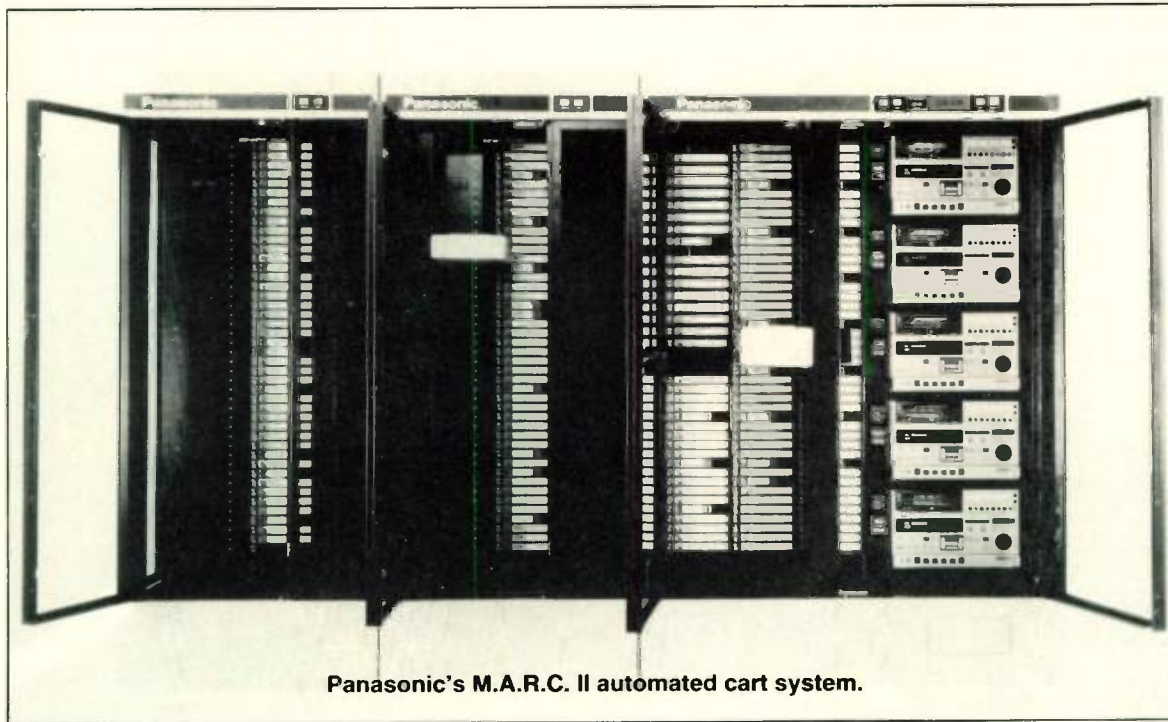
"I expect to increasingly see digital replacing analog products, since digital products can do the job cheaper and are easier to maintain," says Bland R. McCartha, director of marketing for the audio-video systems division of Ampex Corp. in Redwood City, Calif.

"ENG will probably just be changing over to digital by the year 2000, but digital tape machines in the studio will be almost universal," Mr. McCartha says.

"I would see the all-digital TV plant as being practical and cost effective, which would include digital switching, recording, fully digital cameras," adds Mr. Adrick of Midwest Communications.

Some in the industry also foresee more automation in broadcast facilities.

Tom Mikkelsen, manager of technical operations at WGN-TV in Chicago, says he expects "something on the order of increased use of ro-



Panasonic's M.A.R.C. II automated cart system.

**'TV stations must find ways to be more efficient in their operation of facilities . . . . The equipment we and other companies supply will be much more automation oriented, requiring less manpower and more computer control.'**

—Dick Wheeler

senior vice president, Sony Communications Products

botics and automation to allow our company to be more cost effective."

Mr. Mikkelsen points out that a few companies are offering cart machines that are capable of holding 1,200 commercials on line and that such machines will have a significant impact on operations.

Ampex's Mr. McCartha says: "I also see a lot of station automation, trying to integrate and automate as many processes as we possibly can. By 2000, there may be a computer-controlled TV station where most technical operations could essentially be computer operated."

Dick Wheeler, senior vice president of Sony Communications Products Co. in Teaneck, N.J., says, "TV stations must find ways to be more efficient in their operation of facilities, and all stations are asking for

products that would make them more efficient. So I see much more station automation.

"The equipment we and other companies supply will be much more automation oriented, requiring less manpower and more computer control," Mr. Wheeler says.

Many of those surveyed predicted advances in broadcast transmissions, by Ku-band and Ka-band (Ku-band's successor) satellites, and fiber optics.

"Just on the horizon is Ka-band satellite transmission, which will make the size of receiving dishes much smaller," says Paul Amos, vice president of CNN.

"And in terms of news coverage, they will make it easier to transport uplinks almost anywhere in the world. The price will probably also

come down, and so live coverage will probably increase."

Adds NAB's Mr. Keller: "I think the world will have a tremendous amount of fiber optics (by 2000), and it will depend on the way industry responds as to who will survive to compete with the fiber optics for signal delivery to the audience.

"I think the movie industry will be electronic," he says. "I think film will be virtually a thing of the past for the moving image."

A few industry members point out that cost efficiency will continue to be of concern to broadcasters.

"I think we'll see people grabbing any technology that makes financial sense," says Ampex's Mr. McCartha. "Change will be primarily financial driven.

"I think we'll see the continual

evolution of products that will drive more toward reductions in costs primarily and increases in performance secondarily."

Vacuum-tube technology will become a thing of the past, says Midwest Communications' Mr. Adrick. "I see the complete elimination of vacuum-tube technology in all areas, such as pickup devices for cameras and high-powered transmitters. High-powered transmitter technology that is all solid state is right around the corner."

Mr. Adrick also predicts something less tangible. "I see a major problem developing in the industry, particularly in the area of qualified technical personnel," he says.

"The industry has done little to promote the development and training of people to adapt to new technologies, and it could get to the point of almost a crisis situation, trying to find people to maintain and support the plant."

CNN's Mr. Amos expects viewers will interact a lot more with their TV sets.

"We already have it now with people meters, and as people become more familiar and used to that kind of interactivity, I think we'll probably see a lot more in terms of interactive technology," he says.

"In terms of cable, it's not outside the realm of possibility that there will be interactive games on cable. Can you imagine a whodunit and you get to guess whodunit and compare your guess with other people around the country?"

Major advances in the editing world are foreseen by Joe Bruno, director of engineering for WMAR-TV in Baltimore.

This could come, he says, "through optical- or laser-disc technology that will allow us to record still frames or complete edit sequences right on the video disc and do away with the problems associated with editing on videotape."

But even though 2000 is only 13 years away, many in the industry pointed out that the rapidly changing technological environment makes it nearly impossible to predict precisely what will happen.

CNN's Mr. Amos tells of a college professor he had who predicted that cable TV would be the future of telecommunications.

"I laughed," Mr. Amos recalls. "Fifteen years later, I'm managing a major cable TV network." #

## JOBS

### Broadcast TV

**KDLT-TV** in Sioux Falls, S.D., is seeking a **general sales manager** with local and national marketing experience. Send resumes to: Jack Donahue, general manager, KDLT-TV, 3600 S. Westport, Sioux Falls, S.D. 57116. Phone: 605-361-5555.

**WLLG-TV** in Woodbury, N.Y., is seeking an experienced **local sales representative**. Send resumes to: Bob Bee, general sales manager, WLLG-TV, 300 Crossways Park Drive, Woodbury, N.Y. 11797. Phone: 516-364-1500.

**WPLG-TV** in Miami is seeking a **transmitter supervisor** for its engineering department. Three to five years experience is preferred. Send resumes to: Don Hain, chief engineer, WPLG-TV, 3900 Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Fla. 33137. Phone: 305-576-1010.

**KPTM-TV** in Omaha, Neb., is seeking a **promotions writer/producer**. Must be able to shoot and edit on Beta format and write copy. Send resume to: Bruce Binenfeld, KPTM-TV, 4625 Farnam St., Omaha, Neb. 68132-3222. Phone: 402-558-4200.

**KTIV-TV** in Sioux City, Iowa, is seeking a **promotion director** with knowledge of station operations and two years TV promotion experience.

Send resumes to: Dave Madsen, vice president of programming and operations, KTIV-TV, 3135 Floyd Blvd., Sioux City, Iowa. 51105. Phone: 712-239-4100.

**WDIV-TV** in Detroit is seeking a **research analyst** for its sales department. Media research and computer experience is required. A college degree in communications, advertising or marketing is preferred. Send resumes to: Personnel Department, WDIV-TV, 550 W. Lafayette, Detroit, Mich. 48231. Phone: 313-222-0444.

### Journalism

**WPLG-TV** in Miami is seeking an **assistant assignment editor**. A college degree in journalism and/or equivalent experience in broadcast news is preferred. Send resumes to: Tom Sweeney, assignment editor, WPLG-TV, 3900 Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Fla. 33137. Phone 305-576-1010.

**WPBT-TV** in Miami is seeking an **assignment editor** for "The Nightly Business Report" with two years TV news experience covering business and the economy. Send resumes to: Human Resources, WPBT-TV, P.O. Box 2, Miami, Fla. 33261-0002. Phone: 305-949-8321.

**KVBC-TV** in Las Vegas is seeking an **executive producer** with strong writing experience. Send

resumes to Mike Cutler, KVBC-TV, 1500 Foremaster Lane, Las Vegas, Nev. 89101. Phone: 702-649-0500.

### Radio

**WBCN-FM** in Boston is seeking a **part-time anchor/reporter** with experience. Send resumes and tapes to: News Director, WBCN-FM, 1265 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. 02215. Phone: 617-266-1111.

### Syndication

**Total Video** in New York is seeking a **sales assistant** to assist in day-to-day operation of syndication sales. Experience in advertising would be helpful. Send resumes to: Ruth Kaplan, Total Video, 136 E. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10022. Phone: 212-759-3900.

### Academic

**The Ohio University School of Telecommunications** in Athens is seeking an assistant/associate professor to teach courses in broadcast and cable management and TV finances, sales and economics. Must be an industry professional with significant experience and a master's or doctorate degree. Send resumes to: Mike Mirarchi, School of Telecommunications, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. 45701. Phone: 614-593-4855.

### Other

**BusinessVideo Communications** in White Plains, N.Y., is seeking to fill two positions:

**Advertising/sales/marketing representative** for its biweekly video business magazine. Must be New York-based and have extensive contacts in the broadcast, cable programming and hardware industries. Editorial or public relations experience preferred.

**Associate producers**, on a project basis. Must have experience in TV business journalism and a knowledge of TV news.

Send resumes to: Victor Livingston, BusinessVideo Communications, 42 Macri Ave., S. 201, White Plains, N.Y. 10604. Phone: 914-946-5436.

The "Jobs" column is an editorial feature compiled by Elizabeth Edgerton of our Chicago staff. Media companies having job openings they would like to list in this column should send the job title and a brief job description to Ms. Edgerton at ELECTRONIC MEDIA, 740 N. Rush St., Chicago, Ill., 60611. She can be reached by telephone at 312-649-5453. Items submitted for publication must include a telephone number for obtaining further information and an address where resumes can be sent. Please advise us when the job has been filled. Decisions on which items are published and what wording is used are made entirely by the editorial staff. #

## CALENDAR

## November

Nov. 23, **1987 International Emmy Awards gala**, Sheraton Centre, New York. Information: Victoria Fahn, 212-308-7540.

Nov. 24, **Television: New Sources, New Forces**, an International Radio & Television Society Newsmaker luncheon featuring Viacom's Sumner Redstone as a guest speaker, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Marilyn Ellis, 212-867-6650.

Nov. 29, **40th anniversary celebration of "The Howdy Doody Show,"** Museum of Broadcast Communications, Chicago. Information: Christian Fletcher, 312-987-1500.

Nov. 30, **Ninth annual National Media Conference**, Hilton Hotel, New York. Information: Eileen McGovern, 212-819-9310.

## December

Dec. 1, **Ruth L. Ratny: Trailblazing a Life in Film**, presented by Chicago Women in Film, East Bank Club, Chicago. Information: Rosanne Krevitt, 312-944-7319.

Dec. 1-2, **Satellite Technology, a seminar for the non-technical manager and executive**, Ritz-Carlton, Atlanta. Information: Ann Marcellino, 1-800-722-9000.

Dec. 2, **Bill Moyers' telephone conference on God and politics**. Information: Karen Frankel, 212-536-8774.

Dec. 2, **Drop-in luncheon sponsored by the New York Television Academy** featuring Steve Friedman, Copacabana, New York. Information: Debbie Feldstein, 212-765-2758.

Dec. 2-4, **The Western Show**, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, Calif. Information: Rhonda Gibson, 415-428-2225.

Dec. 3-4, **Technology studies seminars** sponsored by the Gannett Center for Media Studies, Columbia University, New York. Information: Shirley Gazsi, 212-280-8392.

Dec. 6, **Ninth Annual Media Access Awards**, Los Angeles Hilton and Towers, Los Angeles. Information: Judy Levy, 213-871-8088.

Dec. 8, **Technical seminar** sponsored by the Central Illinois Society of Cable Television Engineers, Sheraton Inn, Bloomington, Ill. Information: Tony Lasher, 800-252-1101.

Dec. 9, **Technical seminar** sponsored by the greater Chicago chapter of the Society of Cable Television Engineers, Embassy Suites Hotel, Schaumburg, Ill. Information: John Grothendick, 312-438-4200.

Dec. 9-12, **Serving the Nation Through NUTN**, the sixth annual conference of the National University of Teleconference Network, Washington Hilton, Washington. Information: Lin Friedman, 405-624-5191.

Dec. 17, **International Radio & Television Society Christmas benefit**, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Linda Miller, 212-867-6650.

## January

Jan. 6-10, **INTV**, Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Sheila Jefferson, 202-887-1970.

Jan. 7-10, **Winter Consumer Electronics Show**, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. Information: Dennis Corcoran, 202-457-8700.

Jan. 11-12, **13th annual course on investing in broadcast stations** sponsored by Federal Publications, Georgetown Inn, Washington. Information: J.K. VanWycks, 202-337-7000.

Jan. 11-12, **Burns Media Consultants radio studies seminar**, Registry Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Elizabeth Curran, 800-821-8035.

Jan. 13, **International Radio & Television Society Newsmaker luncheon**, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Marilyn Ellis, 212-867-6650.

Jan. 15, **Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau cable TV political advertising workshop**, Cannon House Office Building, Washington. Information:

Lloyd Trufelman, 212-751-7770.

Jan. 16-18, **Cable session for the January press tour** sponsored by the National Cable Forum, Sheraton Redondo Beach, Redondo Beach, Calif. Information: Jim Boyle, 202-775-3629.

Jan. 18-20, **National technical seminar** sponsored by the Florida chapter of the Society of Cable TV Engineers, Hyatt Hotel, Orlando, Fla. Information: Richard Kirn, 813-924-8541.

Jan. 22, **9th annual ACE Awards—non-televised presentation**, Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Susan Detwiler, 202-775-3611.

Jan. 23-26, **Radio Advertising Bureau managing sales conference**, Hyatt Regency, Atlanta. Information: Wayne Cornils, 212-254-4800.

Jan. 24, **Ninth annual ACE Awards—televised presentation**, Wiltern Theater, Los Angeles. Information: Susan Detwiler, 202-775-3611.

Jan. 29-30, **Technology in Transi-**

**tion**, the 22nd annual television conference of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, Opryland Hotel, Nashville. Information: John Varrasi, 914-761-1100.

## February

Feb. 1, **Minnesota Broadcasters Association sales seminar**, Sheraton Park Place Hotel, Minneapolis. Information: Laura Niemi, 612-926-8123.

Feb. 2-3, **Arizona Cable Television Association's 1988 annual meeting**, Hyatt Regency, Phoenix, Ariz. Information: 602-257-9338.

Feb. 4, **International Radio & Television Society Newsmaker luncheon**, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Marilyn Ellis, 212-867-6650.

Feb. 8-13, **International Film, Television and Video Market of Monte Carlo**, an international programming market, Loews Hotel, Monte Carlo. In-

formation: Andre Asseo, 45-62-31-00.

Feb. 11-13, **Country—America's Music**, the 19th annual Country Radio Seminar, Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tenn. Information: Frank Mull, 615-327-4488.

Feb. 12, **Southern California Broadcasters Association Third Annual SUNNY Creative Radio Awards**, hosted by Phyllis Diller, Registry Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Gordon Mason, 213-466-4481.

Feb. 25-29, **NATPE conference**, George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston. Information: Nick Orfanopoulos, 213-282-8801.

## March

March 3, **International Radio & Television Society Gold Medal Banquet**, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Marilyn Ellis, 212-867-6650.

March 7-8, **13th annual course on**

**investing in broadcast stations** sponsored by Federal Publications, La Playa Hotel, Carmel, Calif. Information: J.K. VanWycks, 202-337-7000.

March 15, **International Radio & Television Society Newsmaker luncheon**, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Marilyn Ellis, 212-867-6650.

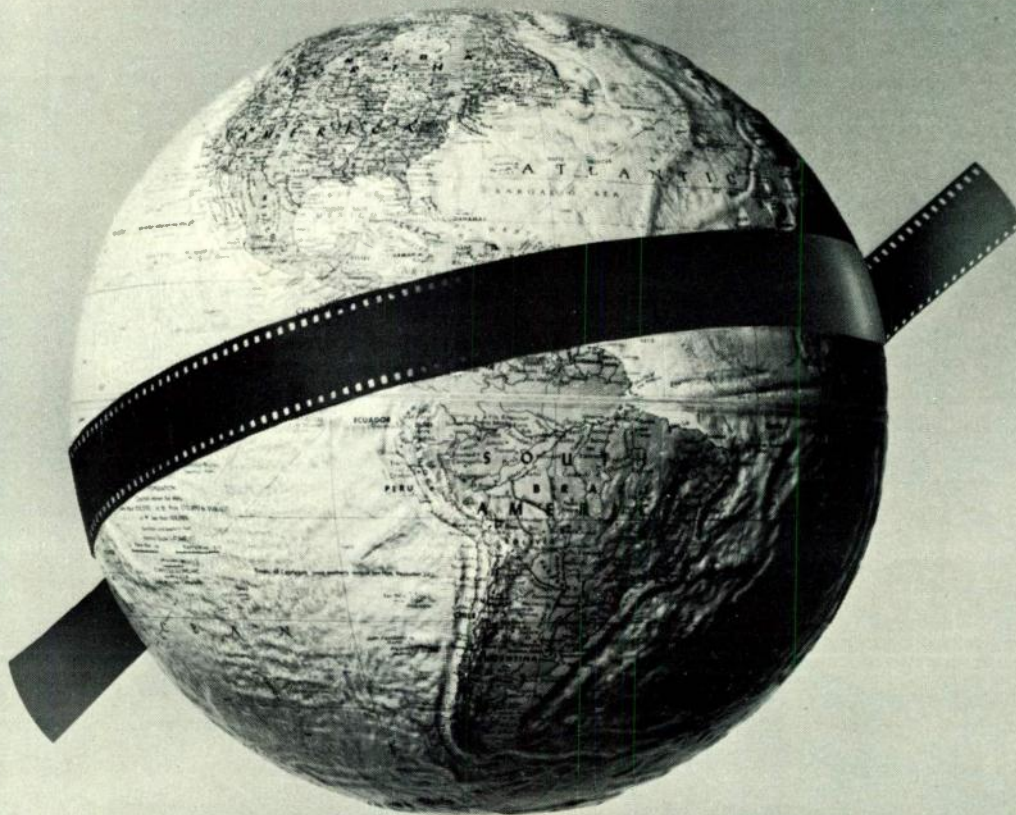
## April

April 9-12, **National Association of Broadcasters annual convention**, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. Information: Hilda Jannesson, 202-429-5353.

April 10-12, **Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau annual conference**, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Vince Fazio, 212-751-7770.

April 14, **International Radio & TV Society newsmaker luncheon**, Waldorf-Astoria, New York. Information: Marilyn Ellis, 212-867-6650.#

# HOW TO CROSS THE ATLANTIC —AND THE PACIFIC— NON-STOP!



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World Radio History

# Time's ATC is a cautious cable player

While Tele-Communications Inc. continues to buy up properties and make news, its closest competitor in size, American Television & Communications Corp., appears shrouded in obscurity.

Although it's the nation's second-largest cable TV concern, ATC stands in the shadow not only of TCI but of its \$4 billion corporate parent, Time Inc.

Indeed, one reason for ATC's relative inactivity this past year on the acquisition front could be found on Time's balance sheet, some cable TV analysts say.



**BUSINESS BEAT**

Diane Mermigas

Time's cable TV and magazine operations are its cash cows. ATC will contribute about 33 percent of Time's overall \$858 million cash flow this year. But ATC also is expected to generate \$123 million in depreciation this year, dragging down Time's overall earnings and stock price.

This is a critical factor, because Time's stock has been trading at about a 30 percent discount since the Oct. 19 stock market crash.

Over the next five years, ATC's cash flow and depreciation are predicted to steadily climb.

That mixed blessing has to give Time some pause before it commits to cable system acquisitions that would only increase depreciation and

worsen earnings, according to John Bauer, an analyst for Kidder, Peabody & Co.

After capital expenditures, taxes, stockholder dividends and other expenses, Time will have an estimated \$200 million in cash left over this year, Mr. Bauer estimates.

"What are they going to do with all that money if their depreciation goes up and their earnings and stock price go down when they spend it?" he asks.

Although ATC was made a more autonomous subsidiary last year when it offered an 18 percent interest to the public, it has continued to operate cautiously, following Time's generally conservative dictates.

ATC has not made one significant purchase to expand its nationwide regional cable TV clusters in the past year, frequently losing to more aggressive bidders.

But ATC executives insist that Time isn't stifling their growth.

"We just haven't been able to justify paying the 15 or 16 times cash flow multiples, or well over \$2,000 per subscriber, that people have been asking," said an ATC official, who asked not to be identified.

With only about \$500 million in outstanding debt, ATC has an estimated \$1.5 billion in borrowing power.

"Time's executives have appeared willing to take the hit when we've informed them we are bidding on something, even if it creates a bottom-line problem for them," the ATC executive said.

Still, ATC is a big part of Time's corporate juggling act. Under the leadership of President Nicholas J. Nicholas Jr., Time has cut costs and restructured and unloaded assets to enhance its earnings and stock price and to ward off unwanted suitors.

But the recent market-driven drop in its stock and renewed takeover speculation could prompt still more changes, some analysts say.

The \$80 or so per share price of Time common stock is well below the company's \$165 per share breakup value, as estimated by Mr. Bauer.

Time has struggled to get Wall Street analysts to take a hybrid approach to evaluating its financial condition, because ATC can't be assessed on an earnings basis. But the positive and negative impact of ATC's financial position continues to pose a dilemma for Mr. Nicholas' bottom line.

The company's discounted stock price, along with its modest \$1.3 billion debt, hefty cash flow and virtual stand-alone operating units, continue to make Time a prime candidate for a hostile takeover.

Although the company has adopted "poison pills," staggered board terms and has a stock buyback program in place, an ultimate defense could be taking itself private or bolstering its debt through acquisition.

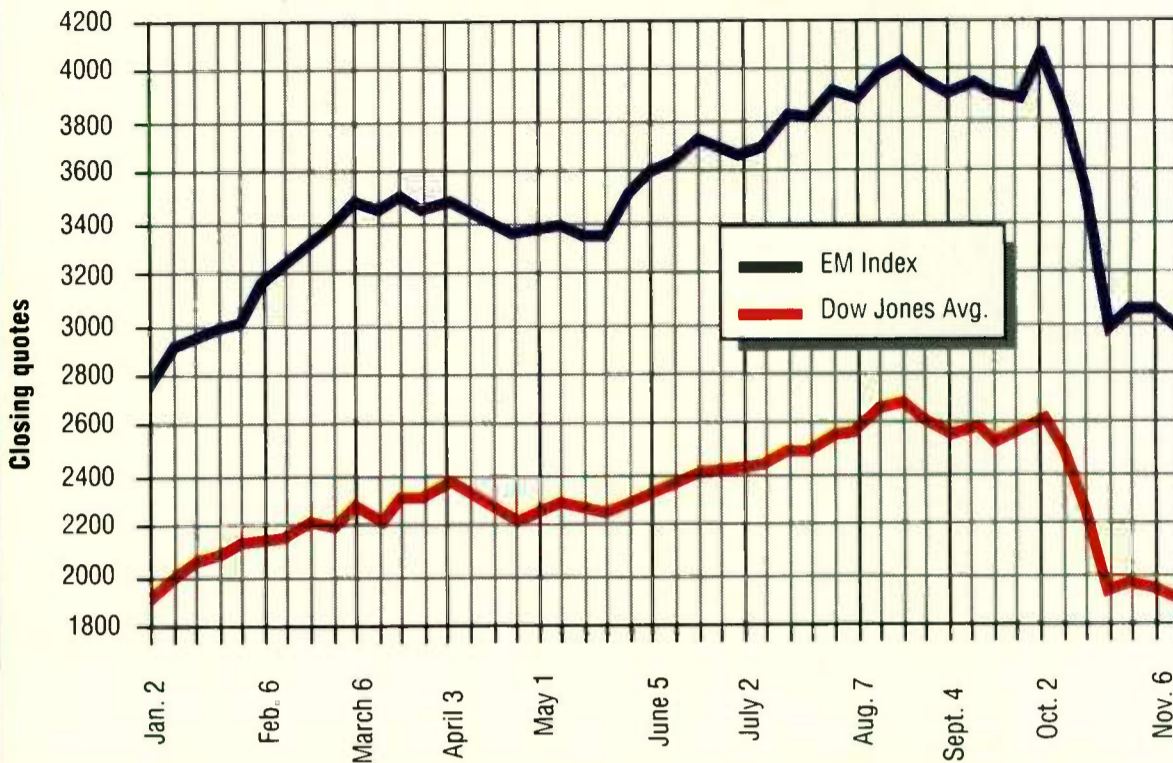
Time executives say there is no consideration being given to further defense measures or taking the company private.

Despite the depreciation problem, company officials insist they stand ready to make new investments. As proof, they point to Time's recent participation in the \$550 million group-MSO investment in Turner Broadcasting Systems, which ultimately could put Time in control of CNN.

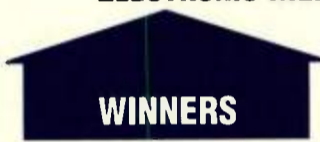
Time officials also deny there's any consideration being given to further altering its relationship with ATC, such as spinning off the subsidiary in an outright sale or leveraged buyout to management. There is too much synergy to be realized between ATC and Time's program interests, such as HBO and its TBS investment, they say.

But for the foreseeable future, ATC isn't showing much appetite for expansion, either. #

## ELECTRONIC MEDIA stock index vs. Dow Jones average



## ELECTRONIC MEDIA stock index results for the week ended Nov. 13



	Nov. 6	Nov. 13	Change
Cablevision	\$21.63	\$23.00	6.33%
Turner Broadcasting	\$8.75	\$9.00	2.86%
CBS	\$169.75	\$173.88	2.43%
Jones Intercable	\$9.88	\$9.88	0.00%
Viacom	\$16.50	\$16.50	0.00%
Gannett	\$36.25	\$36.25	0.00%

	Nov. 6	Nov. 13	Change
General Electric	\$46.13	\$46.00	-0.28%
Tribune Co.	\$35.63	\$35.50	-0.36%
A.H. Belo	\$49.75	\$49.25	-1.01%
Scripps Howard	\$79.00	\$78.00	-1.27%
Lorimar Telepictures	\$9.00	\$8.88	-1.33%
Disney	\$54.00	\$52.88	-2.07%
United Cable	\$23.25	\$22.75	-2.15%
Gulf & Western	\$69.50	\$68.00	-2.16%
TCI	\$21.63	\$21.13	-2.31%
Coca-Cola	\$39.75	\$38.63	-2.82%
Time Inc.	\$82.63	\$80.00	-3.18%
Home Shopping	\$6.50	\$6.25	-3.85%
Cap Cities/ABC	\$324.00	\$311.00	-4.01%
MCA	\$39.50	\$37.63	-4.73%
Comcast	\$20.88	\$19.88	-4.79%
Multimedia	\$48.50	\$45.50	-6.19%
King World	\$17.88	\$16.50	-7.72%



Source: Nordby International

# Detroit FM station to be sold

New York-based **Inner City Broadcasting** will sell its Detroit radio station, WKSG-FM, to Philadelphia entrepreneur Ragan Henry under an agreement reached last week. Pending FCC approval, Mr. Henry's National Radio Associates will buy WKSG for \$6.75 million, according to an announcement from Mahlman Co., Bronxville, N.Y., which arranged the deal.

In an effort to stave off unfriendly takeovers, Denver-based **United Cable Television** is distributing to shareholders one preferred stock purchase right for each outstanding share of United Cable common stock. The rights are exercisable only if a person or group acquires 20 percent of United Cable's stock, or attempts to gain control of 30 percent by way of an exchange offer or tender offer.

**Premier Broadcast Group** has agreed to buy WOUR-FM and WUTQ-AM in Utica, N.Y., from Devlin & Fer-

rari Broadcasting for \$3 million. Premier also owns WKLL-FM and WABY-AM in Albany, N.Y. Blackburn & Co. brokered the deal.

Providence, R.I.-based **Outlet Communications** has closed the sale of WMMJ-FM, Bethesda, Md., to Almic Broadcasting for \$7.5 million. Outlet also announced that it expects this week to close the purchase of WASH-FM, Washington, from Metropolitan Broadcasting Corp.

**CBS Inc.'s** board has declared a cash dividend of 75 cents per share on the company's common stock, payable on Dec. 12. Also, a 25-cent cash dividend was declared on the company's series A preference stock, payable on Dec. 31.

Pasadena, Calif.-based **Falcon Cable** has acquired three cable TV systems

from Century Telephone CATV serving more than 5,100 basic subscribers in Michigan, Arkansas and Louisiana. Terms were not disclosed. Daniels & Associates brokered the deal.

**B & B Broadcasting Inc.** has purchased KEZJ-AM/FM, Twin Falls, Idaho, from Ontario, Ore.-based KSR Inc. for \$970,000. The transaction is subject to FCC approval. Chapman Associates brokered the deal.

Stamford, Conn.-based **Vestron Inc.**, a diversified entertainment company, reported a third-quarter loss last week of \$9.8 million, compared to last year's third-quarter earnings of \$1 million. Vestron also announced it has formed a new unit, Vestron International Group, which will encompass five existing divisions: Interaccess Film Distribution, Vestron Video International, Vestron Pictures International, Vestron Television International and Locus Video Group. #



# Arledge working to keep Koppel at ABC

(Continued from Page 1)

**EM:** Is it true that Ted Koppel has asked for an ownership position in 'Nightline'?

**Mr. Arledge:** I really can't talk about it because I don't want to negotiate openly about it.

**EM:** But is this the kind of issue that could keep him from remaining at ABC?

**Mr. Arledge:** He obviously has had a lot of offers from a lot of people in syndication, where they can offer him that kind of arrangement with a show. In that case he would be like an Oprah Winfrey or Phil Donahue.

That is one of the alternatives that exists for him, but I don't think we're going to lose him.

**EM:** Is there anything you feel you could offer him that would offset his interest in gaining some ownership interest?

**Mr. Arledge:** Ownership is your word. There are a lot of things that a lot of us could do if we wanted to be in different parts of the business. There are a lot of attractive options that Ted has.

I don't think we're trying to offset specific possibilities. What we're talking about is a continuing relationship with a guy who has been here for a long time.

**EM:** Do you think Mr. Koppel was sincere when he said he wanted to leave TV for a government post like secretary of state?

**Mr. Arledge:** That was kind of a joke.

If I remember the story that grew out of it correctly, it was Marvin Kalb who said he should be secretary of state. It was not Ted saying that was what he wanted to do. We all started teasing him about it.

I think Ted has had a lot of opportunities presented to him, including college presidencies and things like that. He's weighing all sorts of possibilities.

**EM:** How would you characterize the status of your negotiations with Mr. Koppel?

**Mr. Arledge:** We've been talking a lot, but more on philosophical terms. We haven't entered into hard negotiations yet.

**EM:** Do you think you will have this settled by the time his contract expires on Dec. 4?

**Mr. Arledge:** I don't know. But if not, there's not going to be any violent change. Ted is not going to leave us high and dry if he decides not to stay here. But I'm confident that he will decide to stay.

**EM:** I understand you've put some new ideas on the table for programs that the news division could develop in the half-hour following 'Nightline.'

**Mr. Arledge:** We are not currently developing anything. Entertainment is. There are a lot of possibilities.

We talked about putting Larry King in there, but he just re-signed with Cable News Network.

**EM:** ABC News often logs the highest ratings of the three networks when there is live coverage of a crisis. Yet that strength hasn't translated into success in the evening news race.

**Mr. Arledge:** It's very frustrating. A lot of people have talked about our old three-anchor concept as being ill-fated.

What they forget is that it took ABC News from being in the third-place position to a place where we were first a number of times and being second the rest of the time. Those kinds of improvements take time.

I think there are so many factors that influence the ratings of the evening news programs that have nothing to do with their real worth or value, whether it's lead-ins or what time you're played, or the prime-time ratings of the network.

When you get outside of the major markets, the strength of the facility's signal is a major factor. CBS does very well partly because their stations in the rural parts of the country are stronger than ours or NBC's.

It's frustrating because our anchor, Peter Jennings, is No. 1 in the overnight ratings, which reflect the top markets. He also attracts the best demographics.

Our sales department tells me that it hasn't sold 'World News Tonight' on a ratings basis for years. They sell it on demographics, and we usually get more for our program than either CBS or NBC gets for theirs.

So I don't know how you evaluate all these things.

**EM:** Are you concerned that the ratings system is an inaccurate reflection of viewing habits?

**Mr. Arledge:** I personally think this whole Nielsen system is silly. It has affected us some, but it's affected CBS and NBC more. They've just done a flip-flop.

"NBC's Nightly News" was No. 1 during the summer. Now they put people meters in and overnight CBS is No. 1 again. Did the world change over a weekend?

What other multibillion-dollar industry can you think of that allows itself and its whole economy to be based on numbers that everybody agrees are sometimes farther off than any poll we might take ourselves?



They appear to be saying that either their methodology was no good in the past or it's no good now. You can't have it both ways. It leaves us in a quandary.

Somehow, in this quagmire of contradictory information, you have to keep a steady view of what you're trying to do.

You can't base it on what the ratings might be because there are other equally important factors to look at, and tomorrow they could decide to change the ratings system again.

**EM:** What has become of the prototype changes for

'World News Tonight' that you were considering earlier this year?

**Mr. Arledge:** They were never as dramatic as was reported. We have had a number of ideas we would like to incorporate into the broadcast. I asked Paul Friedman to come over from our London operation to work on them.

We tried some different concepts, but nothing we looked at would ever result in a revolutionary change.

**EM:** What did you learn from that exercise?

**Mr. Arledge:** Just a lot of little things, some of which we already do. One possibility was shortening some news stories so that we can take more time to explore others. But we're not going to do 'MacNeil/Lehrer.'

I would like to see 'World News Tonight' evolve into a more competitive evening news broadcast, whatever form it takes.

**EM:** How important is election coverage these days in terms of network competition?

**Mr. Arledge:** You have to look at it several ways. It is no longer the case that the network that gets the biggest audience (on) election night is then the leading network for the next four years.

We all cover the elections well. There also are other stories that are just as big as the elections, at least in the viewers' minds. I think the elections will point up the uniqueness of networks. Local stations, the Cable News Network, Fox Broadcasting do not do a lot of the polling and analytical work that the networks do because they don't have the same capacity.

If the election is like it has been the last couple times around where it's pretty much a decided issue, I don't think you'll see any great sea of change of any relative importance.

But if the elections become a big story, then I think people will recognize how network news is unique and has the ability to do things the other ones don't.

**EM:** How different will election coverage be as a result of the new bottom-line orientation?

**Mr. Arledge:** We started looking right after the elections four years ago at the way we did things. The effort to be more efficient started well before we had new owners. I don't think any of the networks will be able to tell you how we're going to cover these elections until we get closer to the time and see how they unfold.

This may well be the first time in a long time that the conventions really mean something for both parties and have all the old-time interest that conventions used to have, since there is no incumbent and there are no apparent favorites.

(Continued on Page 24)

## Roone Arledge's career

Roone Arledge was in Calgary, Alberta, last week, preparing to oversee his 10th Olympics telecast in February.

For the 56-year-old group president of ABC Sports and ABC News, the stint as executive producer of ABC's exclusive 1988 Winter Olympic Games telecast offers a rare chance to participate in sports coverage.

Those hands-on opportunities have been few and far between since Mr. Arledge was named group president of the sports and news divisions in January 1986. He's also president of ABC News, a position he's held since 1977.

With his 1986 promotion, however, he surrendered the title of ABC Sports president, which he had since 1968.

Over the years, Mr. Arledge has played a pivotal role in making ABC a competitive force in both news and sports.

In news, he has introduced such innovations as "Nightline," "Viewpoint" specials and the early-morning "World News This Morning."

He rejuvenated Sunday morning programming with "This Week With David Brinkley" and last year's introduction of "Business World." He also shepherded the 1986 Saturday morning debut of "The Health Show."

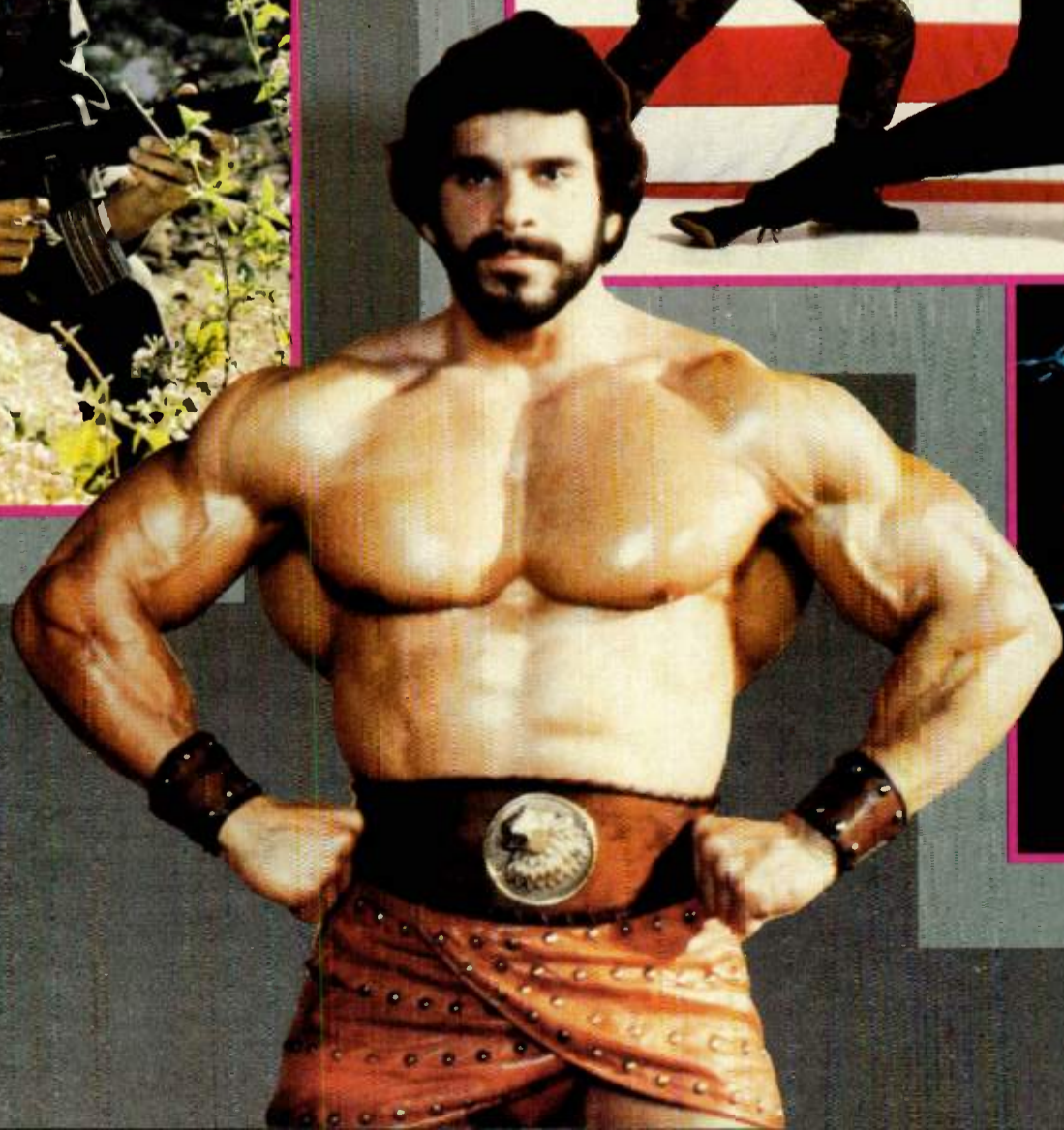
In sports, Mr. Arledge has built his reputation with such revolutionary techniques as slow motion, instant replay, advanced graphics and split-screen technology. He also encouraged sportscasters to take a more journalistic approach to covering the field and established "ABC's Wide World of Sports" as a benchmark anthology.

Mr. Arledge has received nearly every major award in the broadcasting business, including several Peabody awards and 31 Emmys.

A Columbia University graduate, he began his broadcasting career in 1952 at the now-defunct DuMont Network. He then spent six years at NBC as a producer before joining ABC in 1960 as a sports producer.

Mr. Arledge is single and lives in Manhattan. #

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## ABC predicts cable TV will share '92 Olympics

(Continued from Page 2)

"I think the (bidding) process here was ill-conceived, and the result showed it," Mr. Arledge said.

"I think they have damaged the future of the Olympics."

Richard Pound, vice president of the IOC, denied any breach of faith had been committed in the Calgary bids, and indicated both networks had been apprised of the process.

"We encouraged everyone to come up with their best offer," he said. "The market was determined by the networks, not us."

NBC Sports President Arthur Watson was also displeased with the IOC's strategy.

"They wanted every dollar they could get," he said. "Calgary was a beef auction."

For the Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, NBC struck a \$300 million rights deal, with a revenue-sharing formula on its take in advertising above \$600 million.

Mr. Watson expects 1992 rights to come down "very substantially" but doesn't expect a change in the structure to include cable TV.

NBC bought the cable rights to Seoul as well. Mr. Watson said he doubts NBC Sports would consider seeking a cable partner at this point, but he indicated cable might be an after-market for later sales of the network's coverage. #

## Affiliates, NBC at odds over Olympic air time

By DIANE MERMIGAS

Senior reporter

NBC affiliates will receive an additional 30 seconds of air time for early news during the network's telecast of the 1988 Summer Olympics, the network said last week.

However, the affiliates and the network remain at odds over the late news window, currently set at three to five minutes. Affiliates are asking that up to eight minutes be allowed nightly for their late news and commercial inserts.

"It's a very difficult negotiation," said Jim Seiford, NBC affiliate chairman. "The network isn't likely to give up more of its time because of the commitment already made to

programming."

About one minute every night, or 13 minutes overall during NBC's prime-time telecast of the summer games, has been earmarked for political and election-related announcements.

During the annual closed-door meeting last week of affiliate board and NBC officials in Maui, Hawaii, station executives also continued pressing the network for full compensation for clearing the Olympic broadcasts. The network has said it will pay half-cash compensation for the telecasts.

Pierson Mapes, president of the NBC-TV Network, told the gathering he plans to unveil the second stage in his campaign to reduce on-air clutter in mid-December. #

## NBC, Turner discuss joint cable TV venture

(Continued from Page 1)

"I would categorize the talks as very, very serious," said one source close to the preliminary discussions who asked not to be identified.

"We're talking about something major here—not just putting money into the company, but NBC being an integral participant in what goes on."

TBS and NBC officials are expected to confer within the next week to determine whether the talks might lead to formal negotiations, sources said.

It would take at least two to three months to put such a deal together.

Robert Wright, NBC president and formerly president of Cox Cable Communications, has openly solicited interest from cable companies who are interested in entering deals with NBC.

"Bob Wright has floated a trial balloon for people to shoot at," said NBC affiliate Chairman Jim Seiford.

"From the way he (Mr. Wright) has described it to us, I don't think there would be much affiliate resistance to the idea."

TBS declined comment on the discussions.

However, an NBC spokesman downplayed the situation.

"NBC has talked to Turner for the past two years, and there's nothing new at all in terms of our discussion with Turner," said Tom Rogers, NBC vice president of policy planning and business development.

"We've been looking at a wide array of programming possibilities with cable networks," he said.

"It's caused us to talk to a whole lot of cable services. Many came in to talk with us since Bob Wright made his speech to the cable industry (at the San Francisco CTAM convention) in August. And they've created many possibilities."

While Mr. Rogers says talks between NBC and Turner have not accelerated in the past month, he adds, "I think what may have happened is the Turner board is now evaluating" the possibility of an NBC deal more closely.

Before General Electric's acquisition of NBC in mid-1986, NBC conducted serious talks with TBS about taking an equity position in CNN. The talks dissolved over the issue of control.

However, a source close to the situation said the chance for a successful meeting of the minds between the companies is much improved this time because some of the principal players are different.

"This time we're talking about more specifics. This time we're talking about Bob Wright, who before he became president of NBC a year ago worked in the cable industry, knows the people and is well-liked."

"This time we're talking about mutual needs," said one source.

TBS's most urgent need right now is to restructure the junk-bond financing of its outstanding debt by June and to pay dividends next spring to its new part-owners: 28 multiple cable system operators who invested \$550 million in exchange for a 36 percent stake in TBS.

Missing the deadline for those commitments could mean losing more control of the company to the MSO consortium.

However, sources speculate that a GE infusion of much-needed cash likely would not come without TBS agreeing to a deal between NBC News and CNN.

Another potential snag could be protecting Mr. Turner's 51 percent stake in TBS.

Mr. Turner's control of his board was lost earlier this year when he brought in the MSO consortium.

"How much of an equity position can we let NBC in for if Ted wants to maintain his 51 percent and the MSOs have 36 percent? It's a delicate matter," said a source.

Sources said one possible alternative would be to set up TNT as a TBS subsidiary in which NBC or its corporate parent, General Electric, could have a controlling stake. #

Janet Stilson contributed to this report.

### AT PRESS TIME CONTINUED

● LOS ANGELES—Kansas City-based Hallmark Cards reached agreement Thursday to buy **Univision**, the largest supplier of Spanish-language TV programming, which is based here. Hallmark would not disclose the purchase price, but sources speculated the deal was worth \$325 million. Univision is a branch of Mexican-owned Univisa. Hallmark recently completed its acquisition of 10 Spanish-language TV stations for \$301 million.

● NEW YORK—Turner Broadcasting System and the National Basketball Association agreed to a \$50 million, two-year contract extension for the 1988-89 and 1989-90 seasons. TBS Sports will produce 50 regular-season and 25 playoff games each season.

● NEW YORK—The Big 3 TV networks may owe advertisers an estimated \$40 million worth of **Saturday morning ad time** because of the switch to people meters, according to Advertising Age magazine. The change in audience measurements has dropped ratings 25 percent to 30 percent for children's programming, sources said. ABC is threatening to abandon the daypart, sources said.

● WASHINGTON—A Senate judiciary subcommittee voted 5-4 last week to approve legislation that would prohibit **alcohol and tobacco ads** that promote consumption by those "under the legal purchasing age." The regulatory initiative on alcohol ads was attached to a bill concerning beer distribution by Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., who expressed concern in particular about Bud Light's Spuds MacKenzie ad campaign, which he thinks is targeted at young people. The tobacco aspects of the bill were added by Dennis DeConcini, D-Az. #

## Jones Intercable inks deal

By JANET STILSON

Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Jones Intercable announced an agreement last week to acquire four cable systems from some of its managed limited partnerships. The purchase price of about \$170 million is estimated to be 12 times the company's cash flow for next year.

Jones, the country's 12th largest multiple system operator, plans to

fund the purchase from cash available at the time of the sale's closing.

It said it also is using proceeds from its 25 percent interest as a general partner in the partnership, after it pays off debts and returns original investments to the limited partners.

The acquired systems serve an estimated 97,000 basic subscribers in Pima County, Ariz.; Oxnard, Calif.; Onalaska, Wis.; and areas in and around Gaston County, N.C. #

## CBS-owned station cancels its checkerboard

(Continued from Page 1)

utives say no decision has been made on the checkerboard's fate.

WCAU and the five NBC-owned stations air the same five sitcoms, but on different nights.

The shows are: LBS Communications' "You Can't Take It With You," Paramount's "Marblehead Manor," Lorimar's "She's the Sheriff," MGM/UA's "We Got It Made" and MCA's "Out of This World."

Shelly Schwab, president of MCA TV Enterprises, admits that the loss of the prime-access checkerboard would hurt his show's national ratings, but he also says the better first-run comedies can still succeed.

For example, he says his own "Out of This World" is cleared by 115 stations, covering 85 percent of the country, and pulling a 5 rating (percentage of TV homes) nationally.

"Clearly there's a market for this show as a once-a-week comedy," he said. "It's not a matter of whether the sitcom is in a checkerboard, but whether it's good and is working."

Similarly, Jack Smith, vice president of research at MGM/UA, says that although his show, "We Got It Made," is the lowest in household ratings of the five sitcoms, it still has very good demographics, second only to MCA's "Out of This World."

The show is currently carried on 87 stations, reaching 76 percent of the country, and Mr. Smith says he thinks it will stay in syndication even if NBC cancels the checkerboard.

Although sources speculated that NBC's acquisition of "Family Feud" might be the checkerboard's kiss of death, Wes Harris, vice president of programming for the NBC-owned stations, said that wasn't necessarily true.

Mr. Harris pointed out that "Family Feud" could air in a number of time periods.

Sources said that LBS had creatively marketed "Family Feud," offering stations three different price packages depending on whether the program would air in early fringe, prime access or late night.

"There are 20 different scenarios about

what will happen, and all of the pieces of the mosaic are not yet complete," Mr. Harris said.

Sources speculated that KNBC-TV in Los Angeles, a proponent of the checkerboard, would stick with the schedule but replace some of the shows with fresh sitcoms.

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, Stephen Cohen, vice president and general manager of WCAU, said the checkerboard didn't meet the station's expectations and would be replaced.

Competing against "Wheel of Fortune," which airs on ABC-owned WPVI-TV, the five sitcoms on WCAU averaged between an 8 and 9 share (percentage of sets in use). Mr. Cohen said he had expected them to do between an 11 and 13 share.

For the week ended Nov. 13, the five sitcoms averaged a 6 rating and a 9 share, according to A.C. Nielsen Co., a slip from their season-to-date average of 6.6/12 for the period of Sept. 14 to Oct. 23.

Mr. Cohen said the sitcoms didn't work in prime access and would be more appropriate

in a time period that draws more children.

He said that, although he was still awaiting the outcome of the November sweeps, would probably replace the five sitcoms in January.

Mr. Cohen was also entertaining the idea of moving some of the better-rated sitcoms, such as "She's the Sheriff" and "Out of This World," to other time periods.

Ratings for the checkerboard have been declining on the NBC stations ever since their high-rated premiere the week ended Sept. 18.

Average ratings that first week were: New York's WNBC-TV, 11/19; Los Angeles' KNBC-TV, 11.5/18; Chicago's WMAQ-TV, 9.9/18; Washington's WRC-TV, 10/18; and Cleveland's WKYC-TV, 8.5/16.

By contrast, ratings for the week ended Nov. 13 showed a dramatic decline for the sitcoms in all markets except Washington. That week, they averaged a 7.4/11 in New York and Los Angeles; a 5.7/10 in Chicago; a 10.2/16 in Washington; and a 6.9/11 in Cleveland. #

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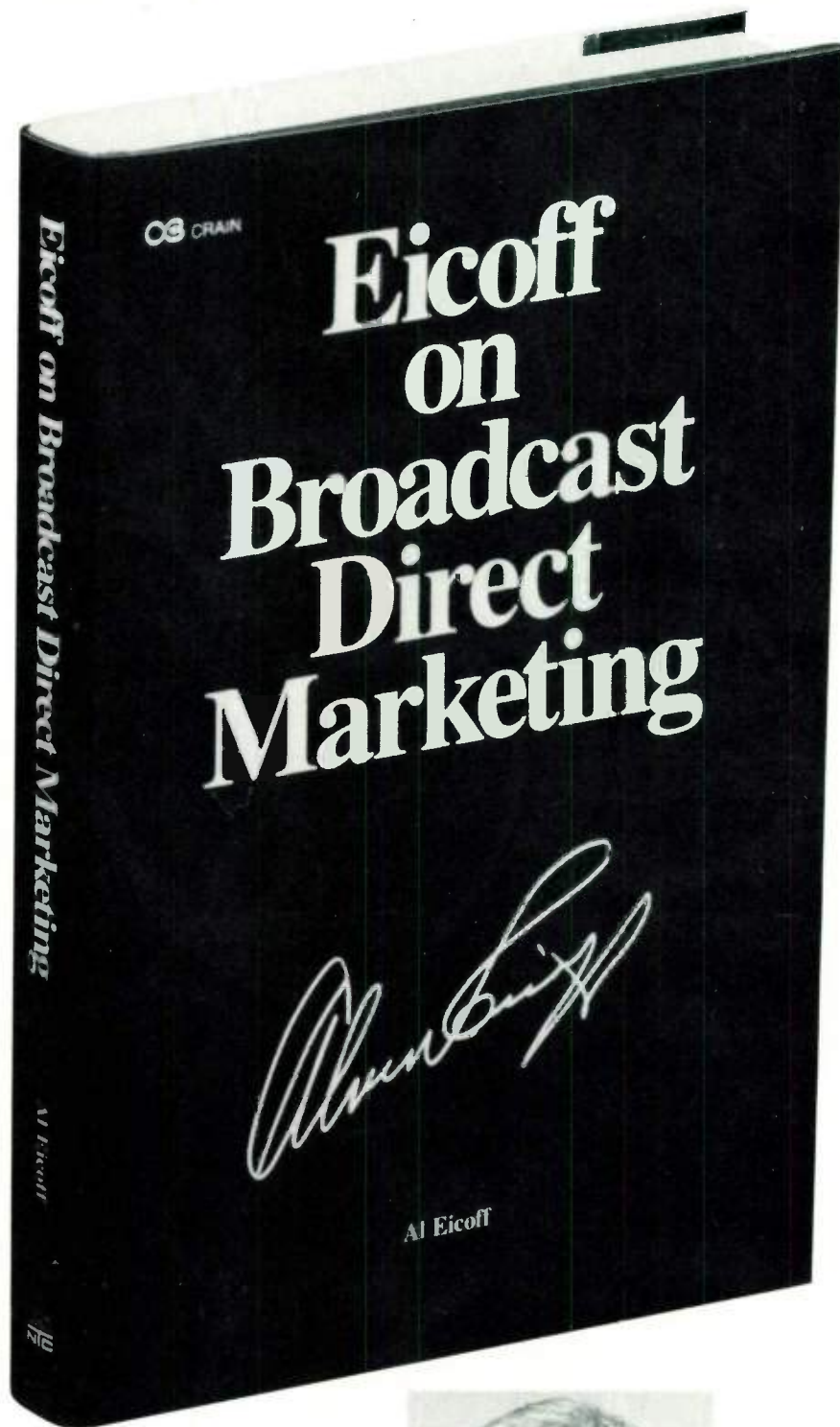
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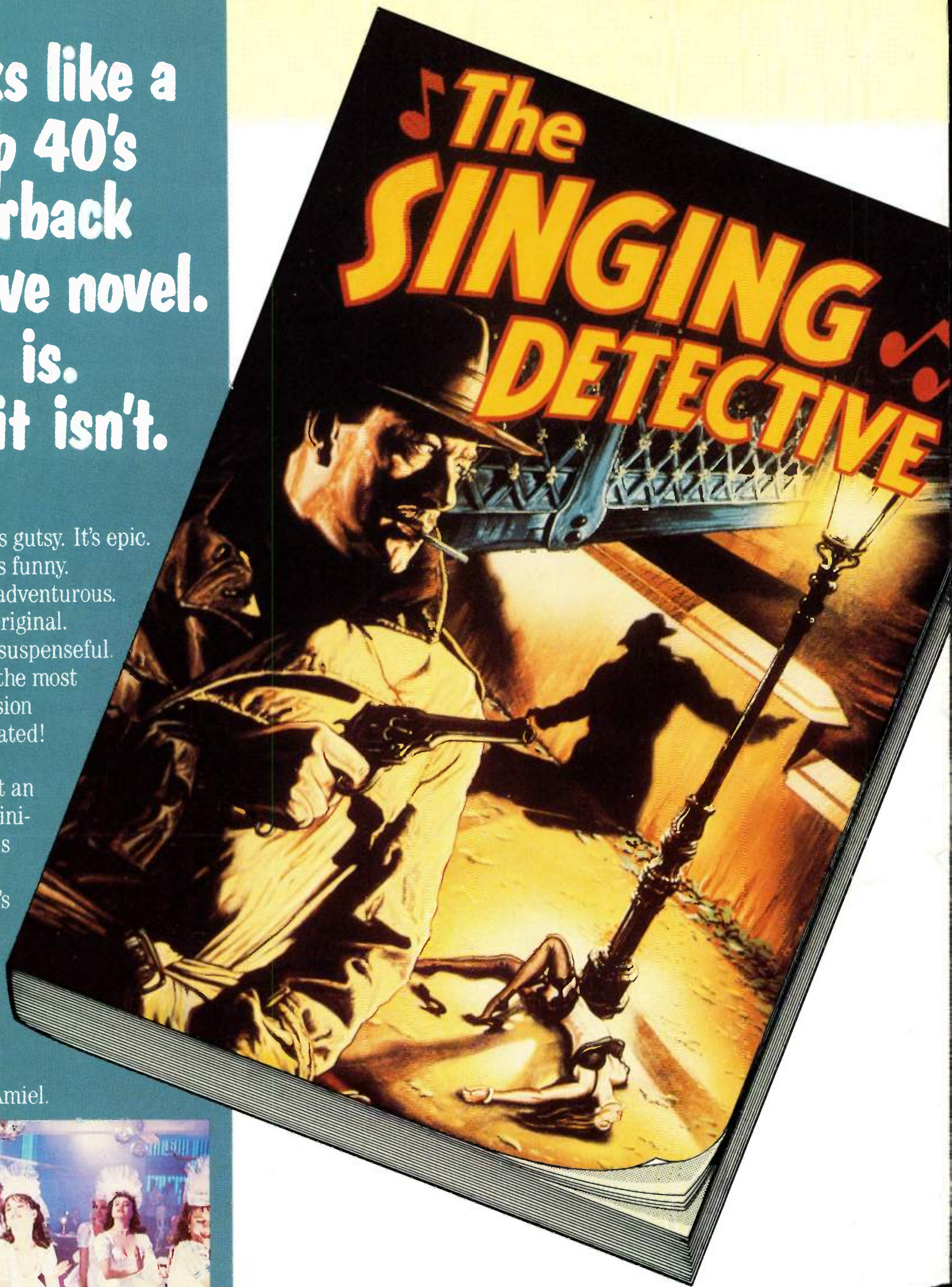
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