

# Electronic Media

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APRIL 25, 1988

## AT PRESS TIME

### TBS eyes Olympic stake

NEW YORK NBC Sports and TBS are working out a deal in which TBS would purchase cable TV rights for 60 hours of 1988 Summer Olympics coverage, according to informed sources. TBS would pick up NBC's feeds from the games in Seoul, South Korea. TBS could use the coverage of the Sept. 15-Oct. 4 Olympics on its new TNT service, a move that likely would prompt moving up its Oct. 3 start-up date. TBS declined to comment Friday; NBC would not confirm the deal.

### IRS revokes PTL status

WASHINGTON—The Internal Revenue Service revoked the PTL Ministry's tax-exempt status Friday. "(The ministry) was supposedly set up as a religious organization or church when in fact there were some profit-motivating aspects to it," said IRS spokesman Jeff Krasney. A PTL spokeswoman said the decision didn't come as a surprise to the  
(Continued on Page 57)

## Rogers' systems for sale

By RICHARD TEDESCO  
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Toronto-based Rogers Cable Systems International plans to sell its U.S. cable systems, with the intention of reducing its debt of more than \$1 billion.

The systems together serve about 525,000 subscribers and include a system in San Antonio, Texas, that is the fourth largest in the United States.

Rogers has been in a dispute with the San Antonio city government, which has been considering buying the system.

That, however, was not cited as part of Rogers' reasons for selling its U.S. systems.

Instead, Ted Rogers, RCI's president and chief executive, said in a statement that the company's debt "substantially exceeds \$1 billion, and we must take action to reduce it significantly. The sale of our U.S. interests will accomplish that."

Also, Mr. Rogers said, the sale would reduce foreign ownership in Rogers Communications, the cable company's Canadian parent, and thereby place it in compliance with the Canadian Broadcasting Act.

At press time, no buyer had surfaced for the systems. But San Antonio city officials recently said the system there had attracted the attention of many potential buyers, including other mul-  
(Continued on Page 57)



Shelley Duvall heads Think Entertainment, a cable production company.

## Thinking big Duvall leads production charge

By JANET STILSON  
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Shelley Duvall the actress gained much of her fame by playing klutzy characters such as Olive Oyl in the movie "Popeye."

But Shelley Duvall the producer—and chairman and chief executive of Think Entertainment—is widening her reputation as a hard-driving businesswoman.

As head of Think, a Los Angeles-based company which she and four multiple cable system operators created last January,

Ms. Duvall is at the forefront of cable's drive to increase its original program productions.

And in playing that role, Ms. Duvall's proving that she's no Olive Oyl.

Think, she says, has already struck production deals with Showtime/The Movie Channel and Turner Broadcasting System, and it is garnering strong interest from The Discovery Channel, The Disney Channel and USA Network.

"Doggedly persistent" is the way John Hendricks, chairman and chief executive of The Dis-  
(Continued on Page 36)

## ABC, CBS, NBC battle new erosion

By WILLIAM MAHONEY  
and ADAM BUCKMAN  
Staff reporters

An unprecedented 9 percent plunge in prime-time viewing for the recently completed television season has left network programmers scrambling to find ways of slowing the downward spiral next season.

After the 1988-89 season closed on April 17, senior executives at ABC, CBS and NBC conceded that the irritating trickle of audience erosion that they dismissed just a few years ago has turned into a flood that could drastically change the way they do business.

The strategies contemplated for 1988-89 run the gamut.

"I think the answer is to put the best programming on the air that you can," says ABC Entertainment President Brandon Stoddard, whose network finished in second place behind NBC, according to A.C. Nielsen Co. ratings figures for the 1987-88 season.

For Mr. Stoddard's network, he suggested that may mean doing away with expensive shows such as "Dolly" and "Moonlighting" in favor of promising new programs such as "The Wonder Years" and blockbuster miniseries such as "War & Remembrance."

For ratings champ NBC, it is likely to involve more first-run summer series, a hefty 1988 Summer Olympics promotion and deliberate cable counter-programming.

For CBS, third-ranked for the first time ever, it is expected to mean a nearly complete schedule overhaul that it hopes to put in effect right after Labor Day.

Those moves would come in the wake of some alarming statistics released last week during separate post-season wrap-up sessions convened by the networks for reporters, advertisers and affiliates:

- The networks experienced an overall 9 per-  
(Continued on Page 57)

## INSIDE:

# Cable

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## NEWS SUMMARY

**Network programmers are scrambling** to find ways of slowing the downward spiral of their prime-time viewing audience, which dropped an unprecedented 9 percent this TV season. (Page 1)

**Rogers Cablesystems International** intends to reduce its debt of more than \$1 billion by selling its U.S. cable systems. The systems serve about 525,000 subscribers. (Page 1)

**Actress Shelley Duvall** is making a name for herself as a businesswoman, thanks to her role as chairman of Think Entertainment. The new company specializes in original program productions for cable. (Page 1)

**The board of TVX Broadcasting** has approved a new agreement with Salomon Brothers that will make the New York investment banking firm a permanent TVX equity partner with an ownership interest of about 77 percent. (Page 3)

**The writers' strike** and belt-tightening by the major networks have resulted in the scheduling of few blockbuster programs for the upcoming May sweeps. (Page 3)

**Bidding for broadcast rights** to the 1992 Winter Olympics will take place in New York on May 24. Cable rights for the Games will be included in the broadcast rights, meaning it will be up to the Big 3 to determine whether cable will get a piece of the action. (Page 3)

**Tele-Communications Inc.** has taken a first step toward putting up a 32-channel direct broadcast satellite system in the mid-1990s. (Page 3)

**Many observers believe** the telephone companies are going to increase their profile in the cable TV business. (Page 3)

**MIP-TV in Cannes, France**, is expected to attract more than 6,500 buyers and sellers of TV shows, representing at least 1,500 companies. (Page 4)

**ABC's "Nightline" will try** to do the seemingly impossible in this week's live broadcasts from Israel: bring Palestinians and Israelis together to peacefully discuss their differences. (Page 4)

**Westwood One agreed to buy** its first radio station last week. It plans to buy NBC's WYNY-FM in New York—but from Emmis Broadcasting. (Page 4)

**ML Media Partners, a limited partnership** organized by two former ABC-TV executives, has agreed to purchase WIN Communications, a Cleveland-based radio group. (Page 4)

**A TV station in Sacramento** last week dropped a lawsuit against a local newspaper that charged the paper's TV critic had violated California trade secrets in publishing the results of a study on the station's news personalities. (Page 4)

**NBC News was criticized** last week by Rep. Al Swift, D-Wash., for supposedly violating its promise not to project election winners prior to poll closings. (Page 8)

**Major League Baseball officials** say they're serious about possibly putting their own cable network in place for the 1990 season. (Page 8)

**Almost all of the 17 fresh programs** that the networks have already commissioned for the fall include one well-known name. (Page 16)

**Merv Griffin is starting** a new career as one of the nation's biggest innkeepers. (Page 20)

**NBC News will unveil** its first major attempt to co-produce a TV series with an overseas partner this week. (Page 33)

**NATPE executives will rethink** the agenda for next year's convention due to this year's record-breaking international attendance. (Page 33)

**An Australian production company** has formed a U.S. subsidiary to produce films in both countries and sell the TV rights to distributors. (Page 33)

**ABC has jumped into the video publishing business** through its ABC Video Enterprises division. The company's first project is a TV magazine for private airplane pilots. (Page 36)

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# Cable going to NCTA prosperous, yet wary

By JANET STILSON  
and ROBERT HOMAN  
Staff reporters

Elation, tempered by apprehension, is expected to be the predominant mood at the upcoming National Cable Television Association convention.

The Los Angeles gathering is set for April 30 to May 3 and is expected to attract more than 13,000 participants.

The cable industry is on a roll, but it's watching over its shoulder to see if prosperity and a favorable regulatory climate will last.

"A lot of people think (the state of the cable industry) is just fantastic, and wonder whether it can

continue to get much better," says Thomas Freston, president and chief executive of MTV Networks. "It's like walking on eggs."

Bob Thomson, vice president of government affairs at Tele-Communications Inc., says the optimism is fueled by the economic success of most leading cable enterprises and the continued audience erosion of the broadcast networks.

"But at the same time, there's a need to have realistic discussions about the efforts of other industries (concerning) what they perceive as our competitive advantages," he said. "There should be an effort at the convention to solidify the industry's consensus on public policy."

The convention's location—in Hollywood's backyard—couldn't be more appropriate, adds Decker Anstrom, NCTA executive vice president.

The programming community has been pricking up its ears to the widening production opportunities in cable.

MCA TV Group President Robert Harris said MCA will be among those entertainment companies with a greater presence at this year's show.

"We're on the verge of a programming explosion in cable," he said.

Also, both the National Association of Public Television Stations and Fox Broadcasting Co. are setting up booths for the first time. #

## TCI commits subscribers to new TNT

By JANET STILSON  
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—An agreement reached last week between Tele-Communications Inc. and Turner Broadcasting System could ultimately result in 7.5 million new subscribers for Turner Network Television.

Those households would represent about 8 percent of all U.S. TV homes, which number 88.6 million.

TCI, a TBS investor and board representative, committed 75 percent of its 3.5 million basic-subscriber base to TNT, which launches Oct. 3.

But the pact also gives cable systems that are partially owned by TCI the option to commit 75 percent of their viewer base. TCI's total subscriber count, including the partially owned operations, totals 7.5 million homes.

Some of those systems have made commitments to the new service. But others, including United Cable, which has 1.2 million subscribers, have yet to sign on.

In addition to the TCI pact, Turner said it also made seven other system agreements in recent days.

At present, TBS has a minimum of about 6 million subscribers on line for the new network, a number that puts a heavy dent in any system channel capacity problems faced by TNT (see related story, Page C2).

Included in the agreements are Media General Cable of Fairfax, Va., which committed 100 percent of its 153,000 subscribers; Enstar Communications of Atlanta, which pledged most of its 70,000 households; and the Lenfest Group, which committed 102,000 households.

Agreements were also reached with Cencom Cable Associates in Missouri, which serves about 220,000 subscribers, and Western Telecommunications (in which TCI has an interest) with 267,000 households. But both have yet to determine how many subscribers they can commit to TNT. #

## Murdoch puts Boston outlet on sale block

By ROBERT HOMAN  
Staff reporter

WASHINGTON—Despite a recent victory in his battle against cross-ownership restrictions, media mogul Rupert Murdoch announced last week that he is putting Boston's WFXT-TV up for sale.

Mr. Murdoch said he's selling WFXT, one of his Fox TV Stations, because it has "suffered as a result of the regulatory cloud" placed over his Boston properties due to a congressional effort to retain the cross-ownership rules.

In December, the congressional bid, led by Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C., resulted in a new law barring the relaxation of the rules, which prohibit ownership of stations and newspapers in the same market.

Mr. Murdoch, sensing that the effort was aimed at preventing him from owning both WFXT and the Boston Herald newspaper in that market, filed a lawsuit. He won last month when a federal appeals court struck down the law.

The court action cleared the way for Mr. Murdoch to apply for an extension to his current rules waiver, allowing him to hold onto both of his communications properties.

But last week, Mr. Murdoch said: "There remains great uncertainty as to the FCC's position regarding waiver extensions in these circumstances."

Representatives of Mr. Murdoch declined to reveal how much is being asked for the station, which he purchased 1½ years ago for a reported \$28 million. #

## EM names marketing director

Bruce Weissman, 36, has been named marketing director of ELECTRONIC MEDIA, effective today.

He comes to EM, a Crain Communications business publication, from a similar job with two magazines in Geneva, Ill.—Communications News and Telephone Engineer and Management. Until a recent management buyout, those publications were owned by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Mr. Weissman, who holds a bachelor's degree in English from Illinois State University and an M.B.A. in marketing from DePaul University, has been in publishing 10 years.

He has been responsible for a wide range of duties, including direct mail, media advertising and sales promotion.

In naming Mr. Weissman, Ron Alridge, editor and publisher of EM,



BRUCE WEISSMAN  
To be based in Chicago

said, "Bruce is a seasoned pro who should bring a new level of expertise to our marketing promotion ef-

forts.

"He will work closely with both sales and circulation and will also keep fully abreast of editorial plans, developments and objectives. He'll also be heavily involved with our 'NATPE News' video project."

Mr. Weissman lives in Chicago, where he will be based. #

## CORRECTION

On Page 20 of the April 18 issue, in a story about television in 1968, it was incorrectly stated that Fred Silverman replaced Bob Wood as head of CBS programming in 1970. Mr. Silverman, in fact, became vice president of CBS programming, replacing Mike Dann. Bob Wood was the president of CBS from 1969 through 1976. #

# Telephone industry forcing way into cable

By DOUG HALONEN  
Staff reporter

Telephone companies are showing renewed interest in increasing their profile in the cable TV business, and many observers believe they're going to do just that.

For years, there has been talk—and concern in the cable industry—about telephone companies stepping onto cable's turf. But aside from telephone companies engaging in wiring and technological experiments, little has occurred so far.

However, recent events suggest that telephone companies are trying to force a change. Among the indicators are:

- Northwestern Indiana Telephone Co., which serves 10,000 customers around Hebron, Ind., is challenging a federal law that prohibits telephone companies from owning cable TV systems in their own service areas.

The company, in a filing in federal court in Hammond, Ind., says the telephone-cable cross-ownership restriction, as embodied in the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, is a violation of the First Amendment.

- Over cable industry objections, the deregulation-minded Federal Communications Commission staff has granted a GTE Corp. telephone unit a waiver from the cross-ownership rules so that it can construct a top-of-the-line cable system in Cerritos, Calif., a Los

Angeles suburb. GTE is planning to test a variety of technologies there, including fiber optics and "video-on-demand" services.

Many of the major telephone companies are conducting similar tests of advanced technology elsewhere. And, in some cases, they are contending that cable operators won't put that classier kind of equipment into place because they have no competitive reason to do so.

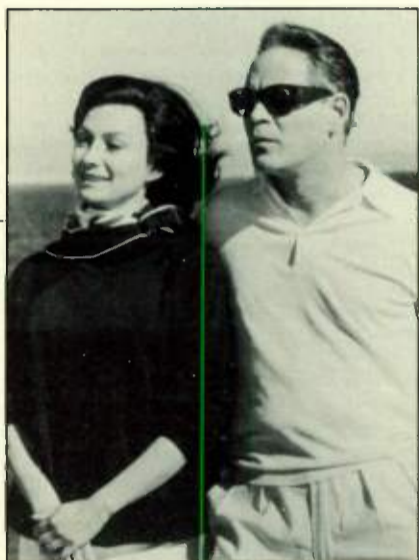
- In the name of competition, the FCC is also expected to soon recommend that the cross-ownership laws and rules that keep the phone companies out of cable be revised or eliminated altogether. Rep. Howard Nielson, R-Utah, has introduced legislation intended to accomplish the same end, and his proposed

change in the law is expected to be addressed at cable TV hearings in June, according to an aide.

While some on Capitol Hill insist that cable operators have no cause for near-term panic, the telephone industry drive comes at a time when some congressmen appear to perceive cable TV systems as monopolies in need of competition.

Also, the notion that telephone companies should be permitted to provide cable TV service is being advanced by some powerful players in the production and broadcasting communities, including Paramount Pictures and Fox Inc.

(Continued on Page 56)



May sweeps programing includes, from left, ABC's "The Richest Man in the World: The Story of Aristotle Onassis," the final episode of CBS's "Magnum, P.I." and "Something Is Out There" on NBC, a miniseries about an alien invasion.

## A quiet May

### Sweeps are slowed by frugality, strike

By WILLIAM MAHONEY  
Staff reporter

LOS ANGELES—There's little blockbuster programing planned for the upcoming May sweeps, a result of belt-tightening by the major networks and the strike by the Writers Guild of America.

Though the May ratings period traditionally lags behind the February and November sweeps in terms of splashy events, the schedule for the upcoming month seems particularly sparse.

May will be short on original series episodes and it won't have any mini-

series longer than four hours.

ABC has set three four-hour programs—two miniseries and a docudrama—while CBS and NBC have slated just one four-hour miniseries each.

Network officials cited fiscal restraint, the writers' strike and what one network programmer called a "general disenchantment with long-form programing."

The strike, which remained at an impasse last week, is expected to result in more reruns. It has prevented the production of an estimated 22 previously ordered series episodes.

Among series programs, ABC had planned an ambitious 3-D episode of "Moonlighting" as the series' finale during the sweeps, but dumped those plans because no script was available due to the strike.

But there are still some regular-season shows that could liven up the schedule.

CBS plans to air its two-hour final episode of "Magnum, P.I." on May 1, as well as the season finales of three prime-time soaps—"Dallas," "Knots Landing" and "Falcon Crest"—and fresh episodes of "The Smothers Brothers" (Continued on Page 57)

## Salomon saves TVX from debt

By DIANE MERMIGAS  
Senior reporter

TVX Broadcasting President Tim McDonald has once again pulled his struggling company out of the flames of debt.

Mr. McDonald last week said his company's board has unanimously approved a new agreement with Salomon Brothers that will make the New York investment banking firm a permanent TVX equity partner with an ownership interest of about 77 percent.

Under the plan, offered by Salomon earlier this month, TVX's outstanding debt essentially will be wiped clear.

As part of a \$135 million equity investment made by the investment banking firm, TVX will be provided with \$25 million in cash to cover transitional payments.

"Salomon is willing to do this because it is the best way to protect the assets of this company," Mr. McDonald said.

In 1987, Salomon had provided TVX with a \$300 million bridge loan for the company's purchase of five independent TV stations from Taft Broadcasting and additional related expenses.

After that, Mr. McDonald ran into difficulty making interest payments on the debt, requiring him to consider the sale of some assets.

His main problems were not being able to sell any of his stations for their full value and being unable to make a planned junk bond offering.

In an interview last week, he said some stations will still be sold, though he added that such sales were part of TVX's original plan. As for the rest of his company, it is free of its looming debt headaches.

Charles Phillips, Salomon managing director, said: "We (Continued on Page 56)

## Bids for '92 Winter Olympics limited to 3 major networks

By RICHARD TEDESCO  
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Bidding for broadcast rights to the 1992 Winter Olympics will take place here on May 24, but invitations have been extended only to the three broadcast networks.

Like the 1988 Olympics package, cable rights for 1992 will be included in the broadcast rights, meaning that it will be up to the Big 3 to determine whether cable or syndicators will get a piece of the action.

Barry Frank, senior corporate vice president of the Trans World International and TV consultant for the Albertville, France, organizing committee, said the Olympic charter prohibits a direct cable bid for the rights because of that medium's limited

distribution in the United States.

He said even if ESPN offered "\$1 billion," it wouldn't win the rights.

However, Mr. Frank did issue one major condition for the projected bidding format.

"Everything hinges on getting the numbers we want from the networks," Mr. Frank said. "If the American networks will not pay what we think it's worth, we'll go back to the drawing board."

He and Albertville committee members declined to say just what they thought the right price would be, but Mr. Frank conceded that even the rights fees paid worldwide would not be as high as the \$309 million paid by ABC for the 1988 Winter Games in Calgary, Alberta.

In reaction to the plan, CBS

Sports President Neal Pilson said last week it would be awkward to fashion a cable package for the Winter Games. But he declined to elaborate about his network's bidding strategy.

Seth Abraham, HBO senior vice president of programing operations and sports, also agrees there may be no room for cable to play a role in the '92 Winter Olympics.

"It's very difficult to carve a meaningful cable package out of the Winter Games, unless you have a lot of luge fanatics among your subscribers," Mr. Abraham said. "It's very, very hard to have luge and bobsledding in prime time."

He projected that U.S. broadcast rights fees for Albertville at \$225 million to \$250 million.

(Continued on Page 57)

# Koppel to lead town meeting in Mideast

By DIANE MERMIGAS  
Senior reporter

ABC News' "Nightline" will attempt the seemingly impossible this week in its live broadcasts from Israel: bringing Israelis and Palestinians together to discuss and, perhaps, even settle some differences.

Even though that's something the U.S. State Department has been trying to arrange for years, "Nightline" anchor Ted Koppel denied in an interview with ELECTRONIC MEDIA last week that he's practicing an uncommon brand of diplomatic journalism.

"This is not TV diplomacy. It is TV journalism," Mr. Koppel said. "We are not representatives of the

U.S. government. This is an independent journalistic effort.

"I think our biggest challenge will be convincing both sides that there is value in participating in a situation like this, even if you don't settle anything," he said. "I think these will be tremendously useful broadcasts that will get an awful lot of information across."

"Nightline," which airs on most ABC stations at 11:30 p.m. (ET), has not tackled such an ambitious week-long project since broadcasting from racially torn South Africa in March 1985.

A major difference, however, is the unstabilizing violence that continues to rage in Israel and how that could interfere with the report-

ing process.

Each of "Nightline's" five live telecasts from Jerusalem will be expanded to at least one hour to examine the current problems in Israel, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and their impact on prospects for Middle East peace.

Among the scheduled events is a special three-hour town meeting on Tuesday, with 600 Israelis and Palestinians engaging in an unprecedented dialogue with ranking government officials and PLO representatives.

Last week, ABC News insiders said they still were wrestling with the reluctance of Israeli government officials to meet on camera with Palestinian representatives.

"The Israeli government has the perfect Catch-22. It says it doesn't want to sit down with the PLO, but it says that it won't negotiate with anyone other than the PLO's official representatives," Mr. Koppel said.

"There is an oftentimes legitimate criticism leveled toward television, that we never put the news stories we cover in their proper context. It's primarily because we don't have a great deal of time on television to do so.

"But we hope to give some context and prospect to this important ongoing situation in the Middle East by giving it seven to nine hours of time."

In recent months, the Israeli gov-  
(Continued on Page 55)



**TED KOPPEL**  
To report from Jerusalem

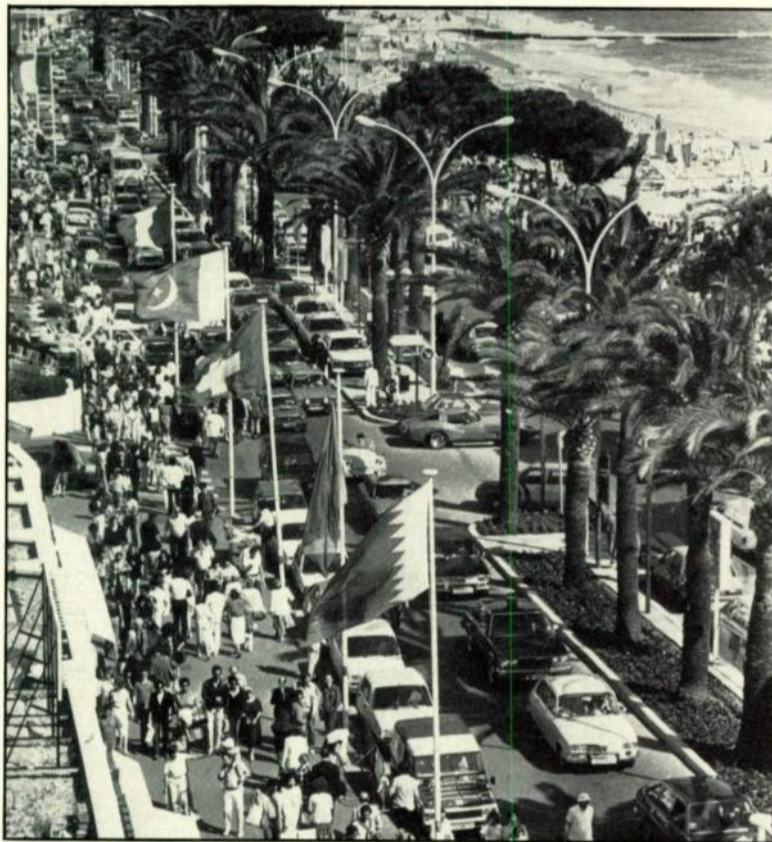
## A fine time in Cannes

Record crowd expected for 25th MIP-TV

By RICHARD MAHLER  
Los Angeles bureau chief

At age 25, the Marche Internationale des Programmes de Television—better known as MIP-TV—is entering its prime.

More than 6,500 buyers and sellers of TV shows, representing at least 1,500 companies, are expected to turn out from the four corners of the globe this week to help celebrate MIP-TV's Silver Jubilee at the Palais des Festivals in Cannes,



Cannes, France, is the site of MIP's international program market.

Global media profiles, Page 42.

France, this week.

The April 28-May 3 gathering is occurring at the international TV industry's high-water mark, spurred by the deregulation and privatization of television in Western Europe and other key regions.

Officials expect attendance to be up at least 10 percent over last year's record-breaking total, with U.S. registrations alone up 20 percent.

As always, there are complaints that MIP is taking place too early—three weeks before the May screenings in Los Angeles of new U.S.

the big daddy of 'em all," sums up Larry Gershman, president of World International Television, a recently formed production consortium. "More people go to MIP than any other exhibition of its kind."

However, this may be the year

be "seriously discussing" requests from some major exhibitors that next year's event be scheduled after the screenings of new network pilots in Los Angeles.

"I am very much in favor of having MIP in approximately the second week of June, after the screenings," says Michael Solomon, the member of Lorimar Telepictures' (Continued on Page 56)

## NBC radio station sold to Westwood

By ADAM BUCKMAN  
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Westwood One, the nation's second-largest radio network company, agreed to buy its first radio station last week.

Los Angeles-based Westwood agreed to purchase NBC's country WYNY-FM here for \$39 million in cash and other undisclosed considerations.

WYNY is still owned by NBC Inc., but it's in the midst of being sold to Indianapolis-based Emmis Broadcasting Corp.

Westwood reached its agreement to buy WYNY with Emmis—not NBC—despite the fact that WYNY's license won't be transferred to Emmis until the Federal Communications Commission approves Emmis' purchase of five NBC stations in several months.

Emmis agreed to buy WYNY in February as part of a \$121.5 million deal with NBC that also includes an AM station here, plus an FM outlet in Boston, Chicago and San Francisco.

Since Emmis already owns WQHT-FM in New York, the company was faced with selling either WQHT or WYNY to comply with the FCC's one-to-a-market owner-

ship rules, Emmis President Jeff Smulyan said.

Mr. Smulyan said Emmis was required by the FCC to have a potential buyer lined up for one of the New York FMs by the time the NBC licenses would be transferred to Emmis.

He said Emmis chose to sell WYNY instead of WQHT, known as "Hot 103," because the company has put a lot of work into developing WQHT, which carries a "hybrid" format of urban contemporary and Contemporary Hit Radio.

With the "hybrid" format, which was invented by Emmis and used successfully at the company's KPWR-FM in Los Angeles, WQHT's ratings have risen consistently in Arbitron Ratings Co. and Birch Consumer Research ratings books.

"We just couldn't ignore the incredible growth of 'Hot 103,'" Mr. Smulyan commented. "We couldn't give that up."

In an unusual twist, WQHT, which is located at 103.5 FM, will swap dial positions with WYNY at 97.1 FM when the Westwood/Emmis deal closes in a few months.

(Continued on Page 56)

## group

company's goal "is number of radio sta-

partnership, dubbed partners, has raised acquisitions.

New York, is a par-

only radio station E-FM in Norwalk,

include four easy-

FM in Cleveland;

is; WEJZ-FM in

EZ-FM, Tulsa. The

entry WIRE-AM in

Partners, another

Mr. Pompadur, is

quiries from poten-

tions it put up for

## Station drops suit against critic

By RICHARD MAHLER  
Los Angeles bureau chief

KCRA-TV in Sacramento last week dropped a lawsuit against the Sacramento Bee that charged the newspaper's TV critic had violated a California trade secrets law in publishing the results of a study on KCRA's local news personalities.

Columnist Bob Wisehart reported April 4 on the contents of an annual report, prepared for the NBC affiliate by Magid Associates, which claimed that viewers were losing interest in anchor Stan Atkinson, weather reporter Bette Vasquez and other KCRA regulars.

Kelly Broadcasting Co., the family-owned parent of KCRA, sought a temporary restraining order preventing Mr. Wisehart and his newspaper from disclos-

ing any additional information from the Magid study or future studies.

It also sought at least \$25,000 in damages from both McClatchy Newspapers, the privately held owner of The Bee, and its critic.

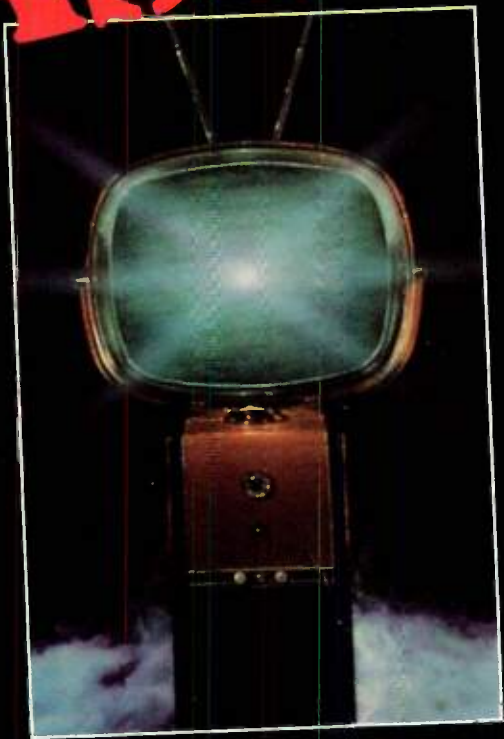
But Kelly attorneys withdrew the matter after Superior Court Judge Ronald Robie two weeks ago refused to grant the restraining order and set an April 22 court date to consider KCRA's other claims.

Both Mr. Wisehart and KCRA spokesman Val Nichols referred ELECTRONIC MEDIA to their attorneys handling the case, neither of whom returned calls by press time.

Gary Pruitt, general counsel for McClatchy, earlier told reporters he believed KCRA was "sacrificing the First Amendment principles that protect its news broadcasts in favor of promoting its public image." #

Two major motion picture packages from Vestron Television

# CASH CLEARED



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**Q: You're quite a lady's man. What's your favorite line to use on a woman?**

