

# Electronic Media

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MAY 16, 1988



## Say it 'VY-a-com'

Sumner Redstone  
striving to unify  
diverse media giant

By DIANE MERMIGAS  
Senior reporter

At a recent gathering in Phoenix of Showtime/The Movie Channel employees, a veteran sales representative came up to Sumner Redstone, chairman of parent company Viacom Inc., and shook his hand.

"Thanks for buying the company," he told Mr. Redstone.

"I've never met one of the big executives before. For the first time we feel like there will be something worth fighting for out in the trenches," the salesman said.

In fact, few of Viacom's leading executives had even met each other before Mr. Redstone's new chief executive officer, Frank Biondi, assembled the company's division heads for their first face-to-face meeting last fall.

Such powwows have occurred weekly ever since that time.

In contrast to his longtime friend Laurence Tisch, who took over as president and chief executive officer of CBS Inc. 20 months ago by means of a more discreet and painful takeover, Mr. Redstone is working to improve morale among Viacom's rank and file.

Mr. Redstone has vowed to preserve and expand Viacom's basic businesses; infuse its program and cable operations with cash; and explore new ways of generating revenues through increased cooperation among the company's diverse interests.

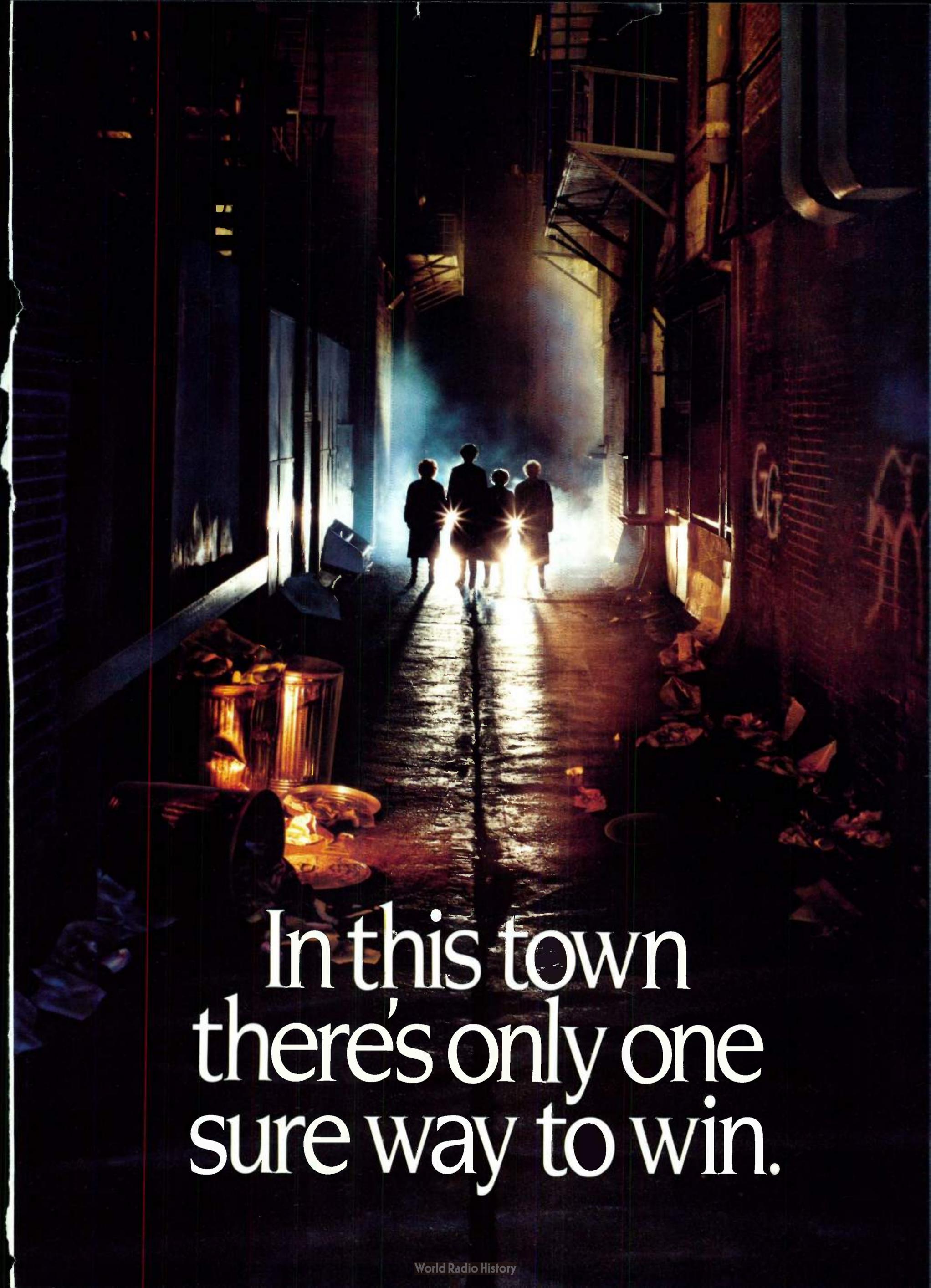
Mr. Redstone, a 64-year-old theater owner who made his millions running his family's drive-in business, won Viacom for \$3.4 billion after a bidding war with the previous management.

He says now that "Viacom is the only business I ever fell in love with," and has even gone so far as to insist far and wide that the company name be pronounced "VY-a-com."

(Continued on Page 18)



  
Buena Vista  
Television



In this town  
there's only one  
sure way to win.

# Make them laugh till it hurts.

In a business where funny is money, GOLDEN GIRLS is the funniest show of its time.

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GOLDEN GIRLS has never lost an award (or an audience) to the competition. That's why it will totally dominate any daypart, any audience, and every other station in town.

NBC proved this by picking GOLDEN GIRLS to anchor Saturday night, the night they had to win to become America's dominant television choice. Viewers proved it by making the show absolutely, unarguably #1. Now it's your turn to take advantage of the only super-show coming to syndication for at least the next five years.

GOLDEN GIRLS. It's the breakthrough comedy to keep you laughing all the way to the bank, all the way through the 1990's.

The toughest bunch of mothers on TV.  
Available for Fall, 1990 or 1991.

## THE GOLDEN GIRLS



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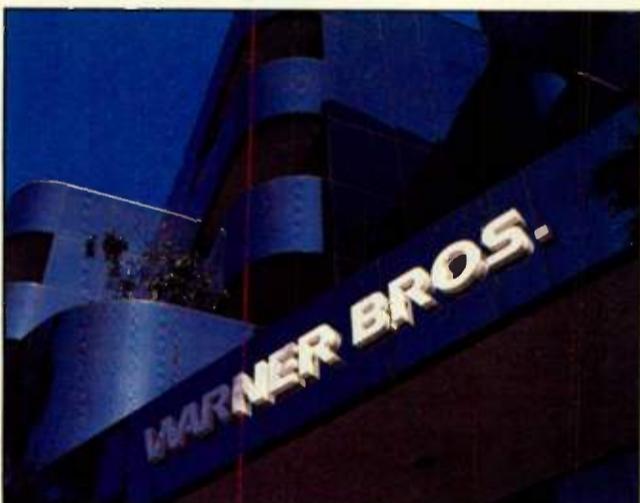
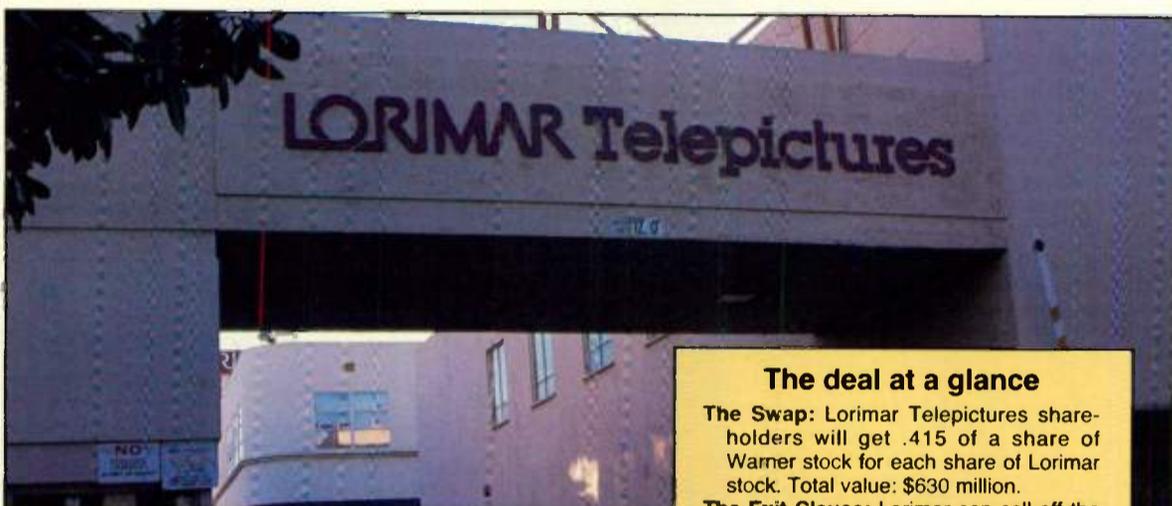
## AT PRESS TIME

### HBO, Fox ink deal

LOS ANGELES—HBO has obtained exclusive pay-TV rights to all Twentieth Century Fox feature film releases for the three-year period beginning next January in a deal reportedly worth \$300 million. HBO battled Showtime/The Movie Channel for the Fox deal.

### Emmis selling WFAN-AM

NEW YORK—Emmis Broadcasting Corp. is close to an agreement to sell all-sports WFAN-AM here to New York-based Spanish Broadcasting System, which already owns WSKQ-AM in the market, Emmis President Jeff Smulyan said Friday. Mr. Smulyan confirmed that Emmis will move WFAN's sports format from the current 1050 khz to 660 AM, the frequency currently occupied by WNBC-AM, the NBC radio station being bought by Emmis. A source said Spanish Broadcasting System will sell WSKQ, a less-powerful station. (Continued on Page 40)



### The deal at a glance

**The Swap:** Lorimar Telepictures shareholders will get .415 of a share of Warner stock for each share of Lorimar stock. Total value: \$630 million.

**The Exit Clause:** Lorimar can call off the deal if it fails to yield a price equal to at least \$15 per Lorimar share.

**The Current Value:** Warner traded last week at about \$32.50, which would amount to less than \$13.50 per Lorimar share under the prescribed formula.

**The Steps:** Deal subject to approval by companies' boards and shareholders.

**The New Look:** Lorimar's TV distribution, home video, motion picture divisions folded into Warner structure.

**The Top Brass:** Lorimar Chief Executive Merv Adelson becomes Warner vice chairman. Lorimar's David Salzman, Dick Robertson and Michael J. Solomon report to Robert Daly, chairman of Warner Bros. TV and movie unit.

**The Hook:** If Lorimar backs out, it pays Warner a \$10 million fee, and an option kicks in that allows Warner to buy 18.5 percent of Lorimar at \$15 a share.

## Davis clouds Warner deal with Lorimar

By MARIANNE PASKOWSKI  
New York bureau chief

NEW YORK—Two days after Warner Communications announced an agreement to buy Lorimar Telepictures Corp., Denver oil baron Marvin Davis re-entered the already complicated picture as a possible bidder.

In a letter delivered Thursday afternoon to Lorimar, Mr. Davis said he was again "contemplating" making an offer for the company's outstanding shares, but this time for only \$15 each.

That's \$2 less than the

\$17-a-share offer he floated—but never officially submitted—in a letter to the Lorimar board last March.

Executives from Lorimar and Warner said they weren't taking Mr. Davis' latest overtures seriously and that they expected their deal to close by the end of the summer as planned.

News of the Warner-Lorimar deal caught the entertainment industry by surprise when it surfaced last Tuesday.

Some senior executives at both companies said they, too, were surprised, but euphorically so.

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The entertainment industry was caught by surprise by last week's announcement of a merger between Lorimar Telepictures, Culver City, Calif., and Warner Communications, Burbank, Calif.

## Jilted ABC affiliate wins \$3.5 million judgment

By DIANE MERMIGAS  
Senior reporter

A \$3.5 million judgment was handed down last week against Capital Cities/ABC, which was found to have unjustifiably yanked its affiliation from a Springfield, Mo., television station.

A jury in the U.S. District Court

in the Western District of Missouri said on May 10 that Cap Cities/ABC had "fraudulently misrepresented" its intentions to maintain its affiliation with broadcaster Charles Woods' station, KDEB-TV.

A spokeswoman for Cap Cities/ABC last week said the company believes the verdict is "contrary to

(Continued on Page 39)

## FCC to vote this week on phasing in exclusivity

By DOUG HALONEN  
Staff reporter

WASHINGTON—The Federal Communications Commission is prepared to vote on new syndicated exclusivity rules on Wednesday, but the agency is planning to provide a transition period before they take effect.

The rules might not go into effect for anywhere from six months to a year, according to agency sources.

Those sources said the FCC wants to give superstations enough time to adjust and to permit cable companies to install whatever equipment is needed so they can put their own programming over whatever shows they have to drop.

Under the FCC's game plan, cable operators, after the transition, could be forced to black out syndicated programs on superstations and other

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## INSIDE:

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The first night game at the Chicago Cubs' Wrigley Field has two networks and a superstation competing for TV rights.

### 23 The stuff of dreams

A New York sportscaster hopes to take a version of "NBC Sports Fantasies" into syndication.

### 30 Syndication talks resume

The TV networks and Hollywood studios are talking again about reform of financial interest rules.

## NEWS SUMMARY

**Denver oil man Marvin Davis** said in a letter to Lorimar Telepictures last week that he is again contemplating making an offer for the company, which had just announced plans to merge with Warner Communications. (Page 1)

**Although the FCC is getting ready** to vote on new syndicated exclusivity rules this week, those rules might not go into effect for quite some time. (Page 1)

**A District Court jury last week** decided Capital Cities/ABC had unjustifiably pulled its affiliation from a Springfield, Mo., TV station and ordered the company to pay \$3.5 million. (Page 1)

**CBS President Laurence Tisch** told shareholders at a raucous annual meeting in New York last week that ad revenue for CBS-TV has not measured up to the company's projections so far this year. (Page 3)

**The first-run sitcom "Throb"** has been picked up by USA Network. USA will get 48 episodes and have the option to produce more episodes in the future. (Page 3)

**Derk Zimmerman has been named** president and chief executive officer of Group W Productions, just three weeks after leaving his job as head of Fox Television Stations. (Page 3)

**The fate of the Cassandra** Ranking Report of syndicated TV shows remained uncertain following a recent meeting between A.C. Nielsen Co. executives and disgruntled syndicators. (Page 3)

**The motion picture and cable TV** industries continued their sparring at a Congressional hearing last week. Cable representatives continued to defend themselves against allegations that cable is a monopoly in need of constraint. (Page 3)

**"Golden Girls,"** which is widely regarded as one of the more attractive off-network offerings to come along in some time, entered the syndication marketplace last week. (Page 4)

**City council members in Kansas City** are seeking to change the city's franchise agreement with a local cable system in an effort to block a proposed Ku Klux Klan program from airing on a public-access cable channel there. (Page 4)

**Burt Sugarman is continuing** his effort to buy out Media General, but the company is continuing to shun his advances. (Page 4)

**When the Chicago Cubs** play their first night game in Wrigley Field sometime this year, both NBC and ABC would like to carry it—but WGN-TV would, too. (Page 4)

**Video stores would be barred** from divulging customer records if a bill introduced in Congress last week becomes law. (Page 16)

**"ALF" has been cleared** in Phoenix, Ariz.; Columbus, Ohio; and CHCH, a station in Hamilton, Canada, where the sale was part of a much larger \$33 million deal involving other product. (Page 16)

**The host of "NBC Sports Fantasies"** wants to take a version of the show into national syndication. (Page 23)

**A new computer program** called the Syndicated Network Audience Processor simplifies the process of analyzing TV ratings in individual markets. (Page 26)

**Cable needs to act swiftly** to gain the edge over broadcasters in high-definition television, NCTA attendees were told recently. (Page 26)

**A Chicago news radio station** and an easy-listening station in that city have worked out a 52-week cross-promotion campaign. (Page 31)

**The expansion of barter-supported** syndicated TV programming will continue to be the chief goal of the Advertiser Syndicated Television Association, says Brian Byrne, the group's new president. (Page 32)

**Joseph Dembo, who is stepping down** as head of CBS Radio news, says he has no intention of writing "a kiss-and-tell" book about his experiences. "Let others dabble in revisionism. I harbor only gratitude," he says. (Page 32)

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# Kansas City tries to block planned KKK cable show

By JANET STILSON  
Staff reporter

Kansas City, Mo., is taking unusual steps to block a proposed Ku Klux Klan program from airing on a public-access cable channel there.

Local city council members are seeking to change the city's franchise agreement with a local system, American Cablevision, to turn the public-access channel into a local-origination channel.

Under federal regulations, cable systems have no say over what appears on public-access channels; however, they do have editorial control over the local-origination services.

On May 11, after 23 people voiced pro and con opinions at a heavily attended public hearing, the council's planning and zoning committee unanimously passed the resolution for the local-origination channel.

A full council vote that would make the change official is expected May 19.

The resolution is unprecedented, say civil rights organizations and white supremacist groups contacted by

ELECTRONIC MEDIA.

"Everybody has known that (changing the status of an access channel to local origination) has been an alternative," said Michael Lieberman, the Anti Defamation League's counsel in Chicago, who is familiar with the Kansas City case.

"But this is a last resort for a city," Mr. Lieberman added. "They are deciding that they want the cable operator, as the First Amendment speaker, to choose what goes over the airwaves."

Other systems have opted to place controversial programs in undesirable time slots, sandwich them between shows with opposing views or run disclaimers, he said.

Tom Metzger, who is director of the White Aryan Resistance and currently distributes his series "Race and Reason" to public-access channels in 50 markets, agrees that "it's unusual for people to go to these lengths."

Mr. Metzger, who is a former Grand Dragon of the California Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and who has also campaigned for seats in both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives, says that the cable-

(Continued on Page 37)

## Strike revives old shows

By RICHARD MAHLER  
Los Angeles bureau chief

LOS ANGELES—The networks are using new tactics to keep fresh programming before TV viewers as the Writers Guild of America strike enters its 11th week.

All three networks have dusted off previously rejected shows, an apparent sign that they are running short of new programming.

Meanwhile, efforts are under way to finalize independent contracts with some small production companies, although a WGA spokesman said deals likely won't be announced until May 23 at the earliest.

Among the shows that have been given new life are ABC's "Juarez," a Hispanic-oriented drama that has been shelved twice this year. A one-hour episode will air on May 28.

The program is a recut version of the pilot episode, shot in and around El Paso, Texas. ABC insists it's not airing "Juarez" to pacify Hispanic activists who protested its initial postponement. (Continued on Page 39)

## Rogers seeks to flee San Antonio bind

By RICHARD TEDESCO  
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Rogers Cablesystems is seeking a way out of an awkward option clause in the franchise agreement of its San Antonio, Texas, cable system to clear the way for the planned sale of all its U.S. cable properties.

One source said Rogers has put a cash offer on the table to remove the clause, which gives the city of San Antonio an option to purchase the 225,000-subscriber system later this year, after the franchise marks its 10th anniversary.

The exact amount of money being offered could not be determined.

San Antonio City Manager Lou Fox last week said, "What we've talked about are contractual arrangements with the city that could be beneficial to both parties."

He declined to go into details on what form the arrangements would take, saying only that he had recently met with Rogers executives to discuss a resolution of what could become a sticking point in the Toronto-based company's plans to sell its U.S. systems.

The San Antonio franchise option clause, which permits the city to buy the system at a 5 percent discount off market value, could give a potential purchaser pause about



COLIN WATSON  
Rogers Cablesystems' president

making a deal with Rogers.

"Our intention is to leave the potential purchaser with as few problems as possible," said Colin Watson, president of Rogers Cablesystems.

Without providing details, he said Rogers was trying to "quietly proceed to a resolution" of the San Antonio situation in a way that would be mutually beneficial to the city and the cable company.

San Antonio had been contemplating the prospect of buying the system and operating it through its electric utility company, reselling it at a substantial profit to another multiple system operator or becoming an equity partner with Rogers.

The San Antonio system is a centerpiece of Rogers' U.S. systems and represents nearly half of the MSO's subscribership in the United States. It is the nation's fourth-largest cable system and is considered a state-of-the-art outfit.

A San Antonio source said the company has estimated a market value of \$500 million for the system in that city.

At current market value, Rogers' U.S. systems, with 525,000 subscribers, figure to be worth about \$1 billion, an amount which Rogers says it needs to pay off debts.

Mr. Watson said the company will not sell its U.S. properties for less than the current market rate, about \$2,000 per subscriber, and hopes to realize "substantially more than that." #

## Fashion Channel rescue fails; new partner sought

By JANET STILSON  
Staff reporter

Just when The Fashion Channel thought it had been rescued from its financial headaches, a deal with a new backer fell apart.

The Carson, Calif.-based Fashion Channel last week said it broke off its \$6 million agreement in principle with Sarasota, Fla.-based Video Marketing Network.

TFC has gone back into talks with J.C. Penney Co.—which operates, among other companies,

two home-shopping services and a video-shopping service, Shop at Home—regarding a possible equity investment.

Along with the breakdown of the VMN deal, Robert Murley, VMN president and chief executive officer, was removed as TFC's acting chief executive. He said a disagreement arose over VMN's request that it be given control over financial decisions.

VMN, as part of a \$6 million investment, was to have supplied TFC with a down payment of \$500,000, but TFC said that had not materialized. #

# USA Network picks up first-run sitcom

By JANET STILSON  
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—The USA Network has picked up 48 episodes of the sitcom "Throb" that aired in first-run syndication over the last two years, and the cable service has an option to produce more episodes in the future.

The two-year deal with Worldvision Enterprises is worth an estimated \$70,000 to \$100,000 per episode, according to television reps and media analysts.

This is one of the few times a first-run sitcom production has moved directly to basic

cable, marking a new step for cable in the off-network programing area.

"The deal is more significant for Worldvision than it is for USA," said Larry Gerbrandt, a senior analyst at Paul Kagan Associates.

"It represents the creation of a new window for first-run productions."

Distributors are particularly interested in the possibility that cable networks will produce enough extra episodes of short-lived first-run series for the show to be stripped in syndication in the future.

In the past, that strategy has worked for

off-network series such as "Airwolf," which is now in syndication after USA put the show back in production for its own extended play.

"Throb" will begin running in USA's Saturday afternoon sitcom block when its syndication run ends this fall, says Neil Hoffman, USA's vice president of programing.

"Down the road," he said, "we may expand its usage," stripping it in the summer months.

USA is also looking for a companion sitcom for "Throb," Mr. Hoffman said.

Among the shows he's looking at are recent, short-lived off-broadcast-network sitcom series and three series from the NBC affiliates'

prime-access checkerboard that failed last year.

Those shows are: Paramount Television's "Marblehead Manor," MGM/UA Telecommunications' "We Got It Made" and LBS Communications' "You Can't Take It With You."

Joe Abrams, MGM/UA vice president of pay television, said he's "in constant touch with USA about 'We Got It Made' as well as other programs."

An LBS spokesman, however, said that company is not offering "You Can't Take It With You" to the cable market.

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## Nielsen opens discussions on Cassandras

By RICHARD MAHLER  
Los Angeles bureau chief

The fate of the Cassandra Ranking Report of syndicated TV shows remained uncertain following a May 10 meeting between A.C. Nielsen Co. executives and a nine-member committee of disgruntled syndicators.

Kathryn Creech, the New York-based vice president of communications for Nielsen Media Research, said further discussions between Nielsen officials and the Cassandra report subscribers will take place at a time and place to be announced.

Ms. Creech said several areas of concern were laid out by the syndicators. Some of the syndicators have called for scrapping the quarterly digest that's regarded as a primary source of syndicated show ratings.

"Nothing has been resolved yet," she said.

Last month, Nielsen, in response to requests from unspecified clients, withdrew distribution of the Cassandras to the news media.

The press embargo followed complaints from a number of syndicators that Nielsen's current Cassandra report yields a confused and sometimes skewed national syndication picture.

The issue centers on the summary's reliance on diary-based local market data rather than meter-based audience samples.

Also in dispute is the policy of including programs with limited frequency and distribution in the report.

Among the program syndicators that have voiced concern over the Cassandra ranking report are King World, Paramount, Buena Vista and Lorimar Telepictures.

Last week's session at Nielsen's tabulation center in Dunedin, Fla., was part of a scheduled biannual meeting between the research company and its Cassandra subscribers. #



Ted Turner (l.) and Jack Valenti chat prior to the House subcommittee meeting.

Photo by Tom Reed

## Cable, Hollywood bicker at hearing

By DOUG HALONEN  
Staff reporter

WASHINGTON—The motion picture and cable TV industries appear to be making a genuine effort to bury the hatchet—in each other's backs, judging from the sparring between representatives of the two groups here last week.

At a hearing before the House telecommunications subcommittee, Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, and others were voicing their allegations that cable is a monopoly in need of constraint.

John Malone, president and chief executive officer of Tele-Communications Inc., led cable's counterattack, charging that it's the movie studio industry, not

cable, that's seeking an anti-competitive advantage.

In an interview with ELECTRONIC MEDIA, Mr. Malone said the motion picture industry's inability to decide what it wants has been thwarting ongoing efforts by the two industries to reach an accord on regulatory issues.

At the hearing, Mr. Malone and Ted Turner, chairman of the Turner Broadcasting System, said they wouldn't challenge an effort to legislate reasonable must-carry rules.

Since January, cable and Hollywood officials have been discussing possible compromises on copyright and other issues dividing the two industries.

The officials met two weeks ago in

(Continued on Page 37)

## CBS chief takes heat at meeting

By ADAM BUCKMAN  
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Advertising revenue for CBS-TV in the first half of 1988 has not measured up to the company's projections so far, and CBS doesn't expect the situation to improve in the third quarter.

That was the message that CBS President Laurence Tisch delivered to company stockholders at a raucous annual meeting here on May 11.

The meeting, held in an auditorium at New York's Museum of Modern Art, was characterized by sharp criticism aimed at Mr. Tisch by dissatisfied stockholders.

Those shareholders, among other things, demanded that the CBS chief executive explain how he plans to invest billions of dollars in proceeds from the sales of CBS's record and magazine divisions.

In response, Mr. Tisch said CBS is shopping for more TV and radio stations, though it has no interest in making the type of cable TV investment recently made by NBC.

Regarding CBS ad revenues, Mr. Tisch told the audience that the broadcasting industry has not yet realized the windfall it's been expecting from election-year ad spending.

Because of that, "the first and second quarters have not proved to be as strong as originally estimated," he said. "The industry outlook for the third quarter is less optimistic than anticipated."

Mr. Tisch emphasized, however, that "no severe drop in anticipated earnings is likely" because "our budgeting for 1988 was prudent enough and our cost control efforts have taken hold."

The day of the meeting, May 11, CBS stock closed at \$150.12 on the New York Stock Exchange, down \$2.88 per share.

While shareholders meetings often are characterized by testy exchanges, this one seemed to have more than usual.

One shareholder, who said he was a former employee of CBS Records, accused Mr. Tisch of "stingi-

(Continued on Page 37)

## Group W Productions taps Zimmerman

By RICHARD MAHLER  
Los Angeles bureau chief

LOS ANGELES—Derk Zimmerman, who quit his job as president and chief operating officer of Fox Television Stations only three weeks ago, has been named as the new president and chief executive officer of Group W Productions here.

Mr. Zimmerman, who had been pursued by the program producer and distributor since the voluntary resignation of Ed Vane last March, moved into his Group W office last Thursday.

"I was kind of headed down another path, but they offered me everything I was looking for," Mr.

Zimmerman said last week in an interview.

Mr. Zimmerman said late last month that he was anxious to find an equity position in a programing venture.

But he abandoned those plans when Burt Stanier, Westinghouse Broadcasting Co.'s chairman and chief executive officer, resumed negotiations with him after he had been released from a long-term contract with Fox.

"This (new job) is a terrific situation for me," he said.

In a prepared statement, Mr. Stanier cited Mr. Zimmerman's 28-year broadcasting career as a resource that "will enable us to build

a large and successful programing operation."

Group W had suffered a series of major setbacks during the past year, including the failure of this year's daily hour-long "The Wil Shriner Show" and the proposed "Getaway" travel strip.

Also, its "Hour Magazine" is facing stiff competition, and the trailblazing "PM Magazine" has been turned over to a consortium of stations.

The company has also been buffeted by a fallout in the children's animated programing market that has hurt its Filmation division, producer of "Bravestarr," "Ghostbusters," "He-Man and the Masters of

the Universe" and "She-Ra: Princess of Power."

Then, Mr. Vane left "for personal reasons."

At that time, sources said he wanted to spend more time with his ailing wife.

Mr. Zimmerman is expected to follow the Fox model in using Group W's five owned-and-operated stations to develop and nurture in-house programing that can gradually be introduced to the broadcast or cable syndication markets.

It's also anticipated that Group W will expand its involvement in network, international and home video programing. #



DERK ZIMMERMAN

Left Fox only three weeks ago

# Networks renew poll projection promises

By **ROBERT HOMAN**  
Staff reporter

WASHINGTON—News executives from all three networks told a Senate committee last week that they intend to keep their promises not to project election winners before voting polls close.

Their reassurances followed public criticism of NBC News' recent coverage of the New York primary in which, hours before polls closed, anchor Tom Brokaw said Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis "may well be headed for a victory."

Also, NBC News President Lawrence Grossman told an audience at the National Association of Broadcasters convention last month that his network was re-examining its 1985 commitment regarding election projections.

But last week, Thomas Ross, senior vice president of NBC News, told committee members that its New York primary coverage was an "inadvertent aberration" that "will not happen again."

The day following the New York primary, Rep. Al Swift, D-Wash., chairman of the House subcommittee on elections and the congressman who struck a compromise with the

networks in 1985, said NBC "did not adhere to the spirit of its policy, however one might argue the letter of it."

A videotape of all three networks' election evening coverage of the New York primary was played at last week's hearing.

The hearing was called to consider creating a uniform national poll closing time of 9 p.m. (ET). A similar measure sponsored by Rep. Swift was approved by the House last year.

"It only takes one network to ruin the effect of the law we are proposing," Rep. Swift testified before the Senate Rules Committee.

Sen. Brock Adams, D-Wash., a member of

the Senate committee holding the hearing, said, "If I choose to go to my polling place in Seattle after the polls have closed in the East, I do not want to hear anyone—and I mean broadcasters, pollsters or stargazers—telling me who they predict has won or lost the election."

Warren Mitofsky, director of the election and survey unit at CBS News, testified that even though the network intends to stand by its commitment, "withholding information from the public under these circumstances is not a practice with which any news organization can feel entirely comfortable."#

## Let there be light

### Cubs' first home night game sparks TV battle

By **RICHARD TEDESCO**  
Staff reporter

When the night lights go on for the first time at Wrigley Field this season, the occasion figures to be a gala television event for the Chicago Cubs.

But the question of who will carry the first night game ever played in the 74-year-old National League ballpark remains unresolved.

The Cubs want WGN-TV, the local superstation that carries nearly 150 games of their regular-season schedule, to get the nod.

But both ABC and NBC have expressed interest in carrying the first evening game from Wrigley Field as part of their national TV schedule under broadcast rights from Major League Baseball.

"We would like to televise it on WGN," Don Grenesko, executive vice president of business operations for the Chicago Cubs, said last week. "It's the primary carrier, and we think it's appropriate for them to do the game."

Before that game can take place, three light towers must be constructed on the first-base line and wiring must be completed on those structures and on the three light towers already in place on the third-base line.

Since the Cubs are playing in their home park through most of May, work on the towers cannot resume until next month, says Mr. Grenesko. He said he expects the first night date will be scheduled in July or August.

"We do 150 (Cubs) games a year. I feel confident we're going to carry the first night game," said Dennis FitzSimons, vice president of WGN-TV. (Continued on Page 37)



The lights are still being installed at Wrigley Field, so the question of who will carry the first night game may not be resolved for some time.

Wide World photo

## Disney expects 'Golden Girls' to be golden

By **RICHARD TEDESCO**  
Staff reporter

NEW YORK—Buena Vista Television last week unveiled its plans to syndicate "Golden Girls," heralding the show as syndication's next "M\*A\*S\*H" or "The Cosby Show."

Indeed, "Golden Girls" is widely regarded as one of the more attractive off-network offerings to come along in some time. As it entered the syndication marketplace, the question was not whether it would sell, but at what price.

Bob Jacquemin, senior vice president of Buena Vista, the syndication unit of the show's owner, Walt Disney Co., said the NBC sitcom is being sold on a straight cash basis for airdates that start in the fall of either 1990 or 1991. The company guarantees 130 episodes.

Although Buena Vista executives declined to discuss prices, one source said the company was hoping to pull in about 65 percent of the reported \$600 million earned by "Cosby."

Mr. Jacquemin, in a press briefing last week, called the show the "biggest program" to hit the syndication market since "M\*A\*S\*H."

Prime access and late fringe are the time periods where he expects the show to run.

Richard Frank, president of Walt Disney Studios, the production arm of the Walt Disney Co., said a base "reserve price" will be set for each market, but he declined to indicate the price range.

The range could be "from zero to 'Cosby,'" Mr. Jacquemin said.

"It is a program that we call 'appointment television,'" he said. "People make a conscious effort to watch this show."

But executives at TV rep firms, who are scheduled to hear Buena Vista's pitch this week, weren't as certain about the potential for "Golden Girls."

"There's a definite reaction to 'Cosby' at this point, which is nervousness in general," said Dick Kurlander, vice president and director of programming for Petry Television. "The bottom line is, they're not going to get close to 'Cosby' prices."

He called the show a "quality affiliate buy" that would be a good companion to "Who's the Boss?" or "Growing Pains" in early fringe and a strong news lead-in because of its adult audience draw.

John von Soosten, vice president and director of programming for Katz Television, pointed out that some TV stations are already "spent out" in terms of programming commitments, although he feels "Golden Girls" is an excellent syndication vehicle.

"I think Disney will get very good prices, but I think they have perception problems," he said.

Messrs. Frank and Jacquemin said the show has drawn a 61 share among younger television audiences on Saturday night, in addition to a 55 share it has averaged among women over its three years on NBC.#

## Media General rebuffs latest Sugarman takeover bid

By **DIANE MERMIGAS**  
Senior reporter

Burt Sugarman keeps trying to court Media General, but the company continues to shun his advances.

Mr. Sugarman, who has been in hot pursuit of Media General, last week raised his bid for the company to \$1.8 billion, or \$70 a share, for stock he doesn't already control.

He also said he may increase the offer if company officials conduct discussions with him.

However, James Evans, president of Media General, said that in a special meeting on May 9, the board determined it is "inappropriate to reconsider" Mr. Sugarman's proposal.

Mr. Evans said the board's determination was made on the basis of a recent U.S. District Court decision that Mr. Sugarman's initial bid for the company could not be adopted without approval of holders of Media General's Class B stock.

Based upon continued opposition by the Bryan family, which controls the Class B stock, "any further consideration by the board would be futile," Mr. Evans said last week.

Mr. Sugarman and his two Beverly Hills, Calif.-based companies—Giant Group Ltd., a cement maker, and Barris Industries, a program producer—own more than 10 percent of the company's Class A common stock, which has limited voting rights. Mr. Sugarman has spent more than \$100 million to ac-

quire his shares.

In the recent court fight, Mr. Sugarman insisted that Media General's own corporate charter provides that all classes of shareholders be allowed to vote on the merits of a takeover proposal on an equal "one share-one vote" basis.

Media General Chairman D. Tennant Bryan, in an interview last week with ELECTRONIC MEDIA, said that he doesn't see how "this latest proposal by Mr. Sugarman could be given any better chances of survival than the last one," given the recent court ruling in the company's favor.

He reiterated that the Bryan family shares of Media General, a Richmond, Va.-based newspaper, broadcasting and cable company, are "not for sale at any price."

Mr. Sugarman last week declined to comment on his interest in the company or to respond to the Media General board's latest denial.

His proxy fight for three of the board's nine seats will come to a head at Media General's annual meeting on Friday.

Mr. Sugarman argues in his proxy solicitation that he and two other business associates could provide "truly independent representation" for Media General shareholders on the company's board.

His latest bid represents about a \$20-per-share premium over what Media General stock has been trading at. The stock closed at \$49 per share, up \$2.25, the day his second offer was announced.

He initially offered \$1.6 billion, or

\$61.50 per share. Media General had quickly rejected that offer.

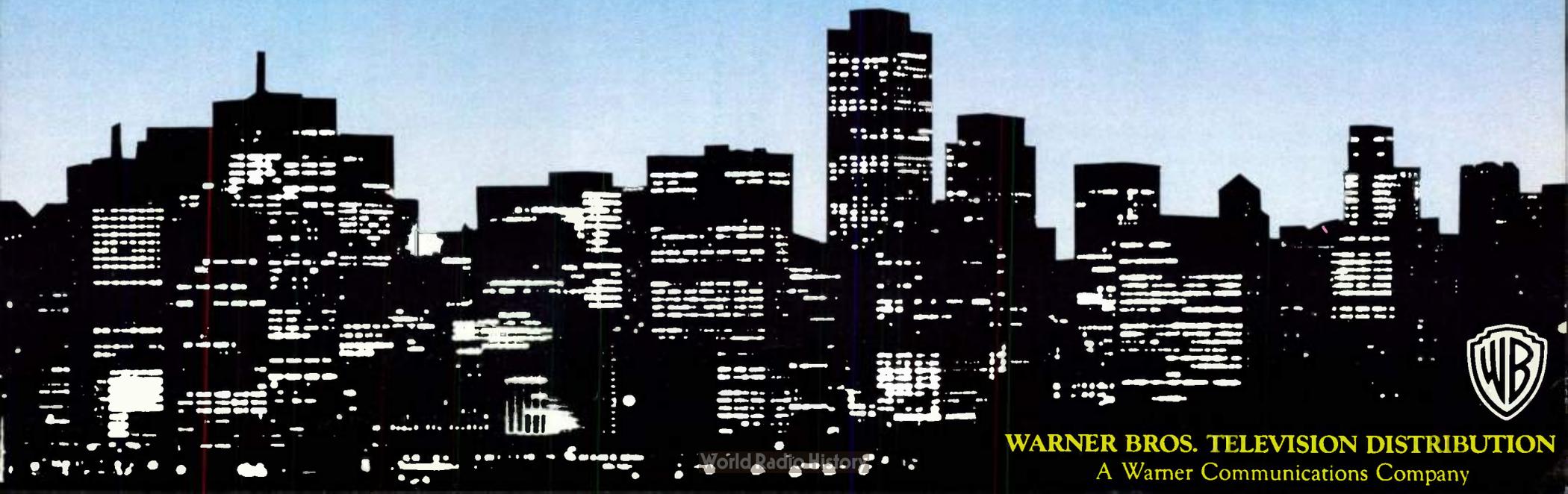
Industry observers said last week it is likely that Mr. Sugarman and Media General will continue to wage their battle in the courts even after this week's annual meeting.

Meanwhile, for Mr. Sugarman, the tides may be taking an ironic turn. A group that includes Boston-based FMR Corp. has reported that it holds an 11.25 percent stake in Giant Group Ltd.'s outstanding common shares, which it has acquired for investment purposes.

The group said in a recent Securities and Exchange Commission filing that it may sell or buy more shares of the company's stock depending on market conditions and other factors.#

# Night Court

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in Men  
18-49?**



Source: NTI

**ALF: Why should I?  
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Mark Gastineau!**



**ALF**

alien productions

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# 'St. Elsewhere' spat settlement near

MTM Enterprises and the American Association of Neurological Surgeons are close to settling their spat over an episode of "St. Elsewhere." Back in April, the AANS took MTM and NBC to court, seeking \$10 million in damages because it says the organization was portrayed in the episode as "devoted to adultery, philandering, male chauvinism and law breaking." But AANS lawyers say they're satisfied with efforts by both MTM and NBC, which have agreed not to release the episode in syndication or repeat it this summer. A final decision on a settlement is expected tomorrow.

\* \* \*

Sources in New York were laying odds that Michael Garin, the Lorimar Telepictures executive who resigned just days before Lorimar's announcement of its merger with Warner, will eventually rejoin the new company. Mr. Garin, who was based in New York, left because the focus of Lorimar's business had shifted to the West Coast. Sources reason that Warner would be a logical fit for Mr. Garin, who has stated that he intends to stay in the entertainment business in New York. He says he has not decided what his next step might be, that he's fielded some "remarkable" phone calls about pursuing a career on Wall Street, accepting a role at Harvard University and getting involved in government, as well as other entertainment-related jobs.

\* \* \*

There is unhappiness inside CBS with the way the company's communications operation is running these days, sources report. It seems that Alice Henderson, who replaced George Schweitzer last summer as communications vice president when Mr. Schweitzer suddenly resigned to take a job with Young & Rubicam, is running a sleepy ship, or so the grumbling goes. Indeed, the aggressiveness and anticipation that characterized the department when Mr. Schweitzer was aboard have all but disappeared. One source predicts that improvements are on the way; another, from a prominent perch inside the company, wonders why the improvements

## THE INSIDER



**MORTON DOWNEY JR.**  
Putting his opinions on paper



**EDDIE FRITTS**  
Objects to children's TV mandate

are so slow in arriving.

\* \* \*

It appears unlikely that some of the 1988 Summer Olympic Games will end up being aired by Turner Broadcasting System. Insiders close to the situation say TBS executives thought they had a done deal, but the potential Summer Olympic Games pact seems to be on the back burner in the wake of NBC's deal to purchase the Tempo cable television service. Last week, an NBC Sports source said nothing has happened since Ted Turner approached the network with his offer. If a deal happens, the source said, "it would take something extraordinary."

people meter. ABC, he estimates, picked up about 21 percent of the \$150 million to \$160 million that advertisers generally spend in the children's network upfront market.

\* \* \*

There was a crackdown on illegal aliens in Northern California recently—illegal ALFs, that is. Seems that several merchandisers decided to cash in on the character's popularity by making and selling their own ALF toys without consent. U.S. Marshalls seized a large quantity of pirated ALF merchandise at a flea market in Galt, Calif., and a department store in Sacramento. #

—Written by Marianne Paskowski from bureau reports

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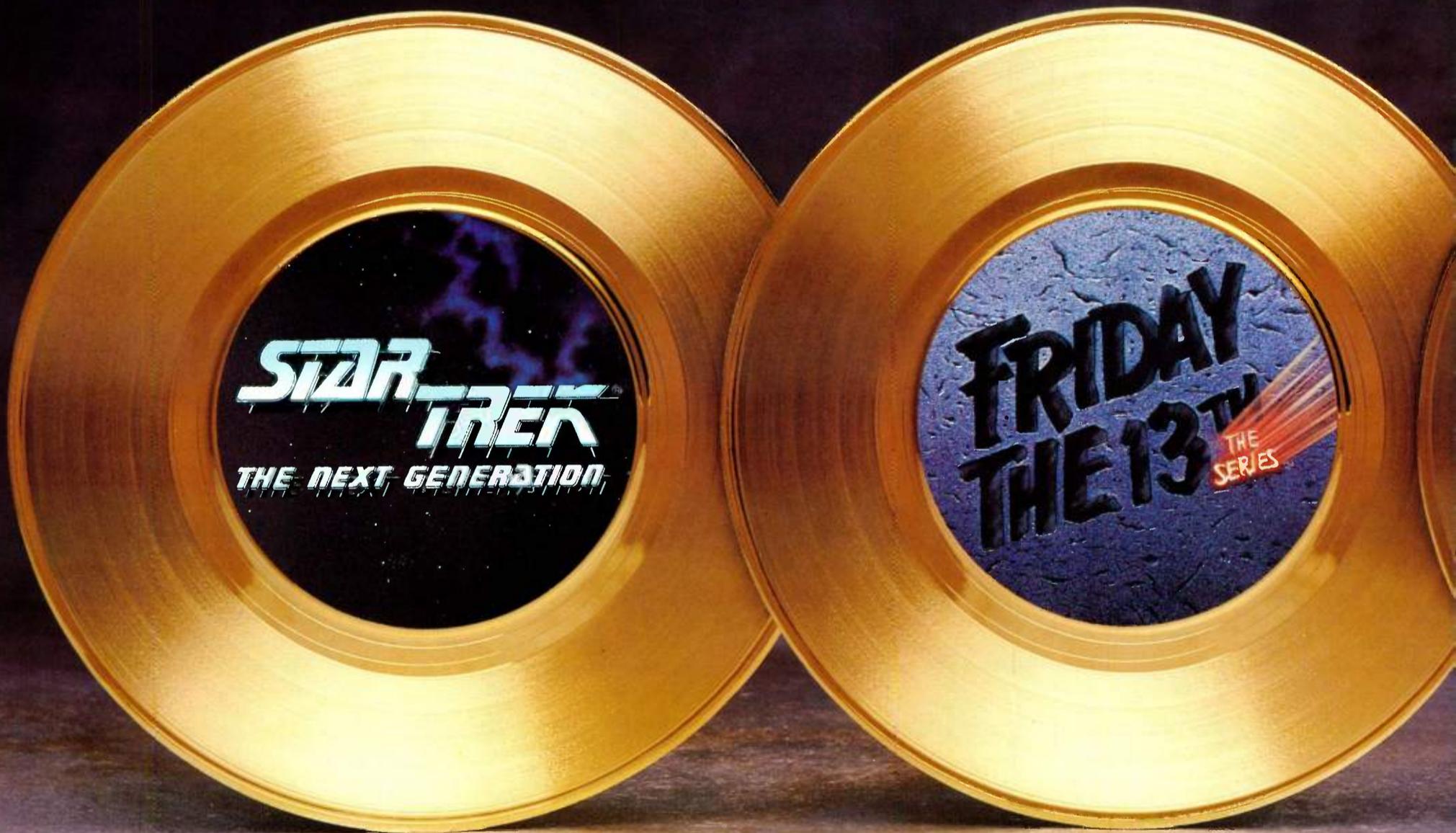
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# One Year Ago, They Were Now They're Top



This year, the biggest hits in syndication are all on one label.

Paramount.

Beginning with "Star Trek: The Next Generation" — still #1 with men after a record-breaking launch.\*

And if that's not enough to sing about, listen to this: "Friday The 13th" is #2 on the charts, second only to "Star Trek" among men.\* No wonder it's moving to prime time and prime access in 60% of the country this fall.



\*Source: NSS Pocketpiece, Season to date through Feb. 1988 Sweep Period.  
\*\*Source: NSI Cassandra, Feb. 1988 Ranking Report.  
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# ere The Temptations. he Four Tops.



But our record collection doesn't stop there. "Family Ties" went straight to the top in its first syndicated season — first with women and #1 in all households among all sitcoms in off-network syndication. \*\*

And on the flipside, "Cheers" ranks #2 among all syndicated sitcoms and first with men 18-49 as well as men and women 25-54. \*\* You know, with success stories like these, maybe we should have called our shows "The Supremes."



# Ed Joyce's troubling book

"Prime Times, Bad Times," the book written by Ed Joyce about his rise to and fall from the presidency of CBS News, contains more food for thought than the various excerpts and press accounts suggest.

Beneath the tantalizing kiss-and-tell tidbits about such matters as Dan Rather's ego (not to mention his \$36 million contract) is material suggesting fundamental shortcomings high in the broadcasting industry.

For example, the book shows CBS News to be a labor-intensive organization where about half of its payroll goes to about a fifth of its employees, which makes cutting costs extremely difficult and painful.

Some CBS stars, and at least one agent, are powerful enough to occasionally dictate news coverage and personnel decisions, according to Mr. Joyce.

Then there is the character issue, which Mr. Joyce exposes perhaps more completely than he intended in a book that is generally more self-serving than not.

While painting himself in one breath as a champion of journalistic ethics, Mr. Joyce reveals himself in the next as a CBS executive who lied without a whimper or a yelp while toeing the company line.

He publicly pretended to take lightly Ted Turner's plan to take over CBS when privately he knew it to

be deadly serious. He never quite admitted that CBS's documentary on Gen. William Westmoreland was as ethically flawed as he knew it to be. And at least once he pretended, as part of a carefully contrived negotiating ploy, that he was battling his own boss, Gene Jankowski, to fatten an employee's contract.

Elsewhere, Mr. Joyce describes other CBS executives as considerably more dishonest and deceitful. It's almost as if they had accepted such transgressions as a necessary part of doing business, even in a news division. The reader can't help but wonder if the public's suspicion of the media is somehow an outgrowth of this moral slippage.

We would feel better if the seemingly sensitive Mr. Joyce were a bit more self-conscious about his own questionable deeds. Indeed, we are left wondering if he even sees the questions.

We'd feel better, too, if the whistles he blows in his book had been blown before he took his \$1 million severance settlement and parachuted safely out of CBS.

Instead, we are simply troubled by "Prime Times, Bad Times"—troubled by what it says and by what it implies. #

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Central-Showtime story misleading

Your piece about Central TV and Showtime (ELECTRONIC MEDIA INTERNATIONAL, April 28, The Insider, Page 8) was misleading.

Although it is perfectly true that we had conversations with Showtime about a possible investment, the reason we did not pursue the opportunity was that it did not meet our strategic objectives.

We never even began to talk money. Showtime will be a great investment for somebody else—what we are looking for is a syndication company.

**Kevin Morrison**  
president  
Central Independent Television  
New York

### We must learn about equipment to survive

Mark Mandernach's article on radio stations updating their equipment (ELECTRONIC MEDIA, April 4, Page B7) recalls a phrase I both love and hate, and I think a good number of broadcast people see it coming: "No one here would know how to use it." It's endearing and frustrating all at once, and I know very few people who have not heard it at least once.

It's great when a station commits itself to

new gear, and the sight of an Otari 5050B II or the ITC 99 cart deck have been the answers to a producer's prayers. To that end I loudly applaud all of the stations in the article (and I wish I were there). But for those of us who have ventured in with the brochure for a new piece of equipment to have been hit with "Nobody here would know how to use that!" there is a serious doubt as to whether some stations will ever move out of 1971, let alone move into the 1990s.

Or how about the new special effects box the station across town just got? The one that can do flanging, echoing, "Max Headroom"-type sampling and pitch shifting? Why can't "we" get one? Simple—"Nobody here would know how to use it. Everything would sound like garbage. And besides, I don't like what they're doing at that station with that thing."

Speaking for several thousand creative radio production people (who, no doubt, would also like a full-blown multitrack studio with synthesis), I can tell anyone who approaches new gear with trepidation: We all do. We can use it and make good things happen with it. And if somebody on the staff doesn't know, a good 20 minutes will fix all of that. I've been personally showing the workings of a Yamaha SPX-90 to members of a station that bought two of them... and I'm only part time there!

The fact is, we are moving forward as an industry, and I believe in this: Production people should do all they can to learn about *everything* they can so when that new machine arrives, you're ready. And stations should know their people are

doing this and can give solid input as to what their needs will grow to be.

Listen, when the first Synclavier Digital Direct-to-Disc system makes it to a radio station, I hope I'm there; like many of us, I'm anticipating it and ready for it.

If cost is a factor, I agree—go with what can be afforded. But an intimidating panel or personal feelings shouldn't affect a move into the future of radio. There will always be people who know how to use things or can figure them out quickly.

Personally, I'm a little insulted when a 17-year-old kid playing rock guitar has a more modern and better-equipped studio in his bedroom. He knows how to use all that gear.

**Alan Peterson**  
owner and operator  
"S.O.B.! The Sounds of Blandford"  
Blandford, Mass.

## Write to us

EM welcomes letters to the editor. If you want to speak out, write to Viewpoint, ELECTRONIC MEDIA, 740 Rush St., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

All letters are subject to publication provided they are signed and neither defame nor libel individuals or organizations.

Letters may be shortened and grammatical errors corrected.

As a matter of policy, writers' names are published. However, exceptions to this policy may be granted. #

## QUICK TAKES

### Should the networks' evening newscasts be 60 minutes long?



**Steve Hunsicker**  
news director  
WCJB-TV  
(ABC)  
Gainesville, Fla.

"No. Thirty minutes is just fine. I don't think there's any reason for a 60-minute newscast, and I don't think we'd want to give up the time. You can do a good local newscast in 30 minutes; you can do a good national newscast in 30 minutes."



**Lee Giles**  
news director  
WISH-TV  
(CBS)  
Indianapolis

"I think every news person would like more air time. But it's difficult to fit in an hour of network news. I think the networks are doing a fine job with the time constraints they have, and there are plenty of other opportunities for the networks to get out information."



**Paul Paolicelli**  
news director  
KPRC-TV  
(NBC)  
Houston

"I think ideal would be 45 network and 45 local. That would be mutually beneficial for both of us. The networks' economy scale would come more in line with what they're spending every year. And local stations sometimes have to stretch to fill an hour."

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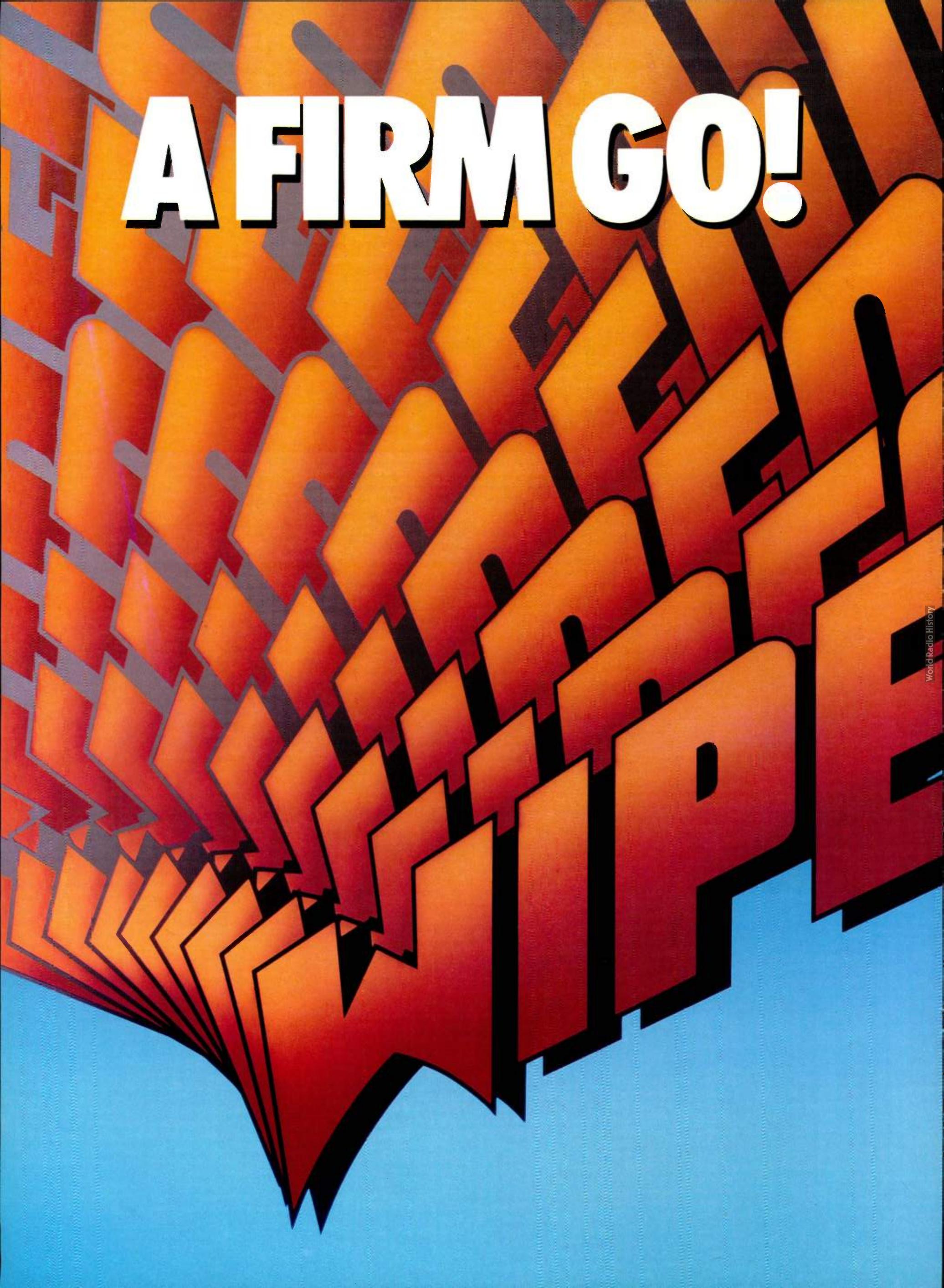
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World Radio History

# Video rental privacy bill introduced

By **ROBERT HOMAN**  
Staff reporter

WASHINGTON—Several members of the Senate Judiciary Committee introduced a bill in Congress last week that would bar video stores from divulging customer records.

The action was prompted by a newspaper article published last fall revealing the videos rented under a store account held by the wife of Robert Bork, then a Supreme Court nominee.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., one of the bill's sponsors, said he was "outraged" that a story was published about Judge Bork's taste in videos during the course of the nominee's confirmation hearings.

"That's a mockery of privacy," Sen. Leahy said of the article, which was published in City Paper, a free weekly newspaper in Washington. "I don't think it is anybody's busi-

ness what any of us checks out of the library to read, or what any of us takes out of a video store to watch."

Sen. Leahy added that the bill is also aimed at barring employers from investigating prospective employees' preferences in books and videos.

Stores or libraries that leak such information could be sued for more than \$2,500, plus punitive damages.

However, the police would still be permitted to obtain the records with

a court order.

Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., another co-sponsor, said there's a "reasonably good" chance the bill will be approved by the judiciary committee in light of its sponsorship by four committee members, including Sen. Alan Simpson, R-Wyo., and Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa.

The bill has the backing of the Video Software Dealers Association, which represents 20,000 home video retail outlets in the country, and the American Civil Liberties Union.

A similar bill was introduced in the House last fall by Rep. Alfred McCandless, R-Calif. That bill has 25 co-sponsors.

No hearings have been scheduled on either the Senate or House version of the legislation.

Some states are also moving to protect the privacy of video customer records.

The Maryland Legislature, for example, recently passed a bill, which is now awaiting the governor's signature. #



**SEN. PATRICK LEAHY**  
"Outraged" by rental disclosure

## 'ALF' deal takes alien to Canada

By **MARIANNE PASKOWSKI**  
New York bureau chief

NEW YORK—Lorimar Telepictures' off-network half-hour comedies "ALF" is picking up some steam in syndication, although it still has not been cleared here or in San Francisco.

Dick Robertson, office of the president of Lorimar Telepictures, said "ALF" has been cleared on KNXV-TV, Phoenix, Ariz.; WBNS-TV, Columbus, Ohio; and CHCH, a station in Hamilton, Canada, where the sale of "ALF" was part of a much larger \$33 million deal involving other properties.

Michael J. Solomon, office of the president of Lorimar Telepictures, said the deal with CHCH included two deals for "ALF."

CHCH, like NBC in the United States, carries the original episodes of the program. In addition to renewing for another year of original "ALF" episodes, the station also entered a syndication deal for the "ALF" repeats, valued at more than \$45,000 an episode, the highest price the station ever paid for repeat programming, according to Mr. Solomon.

The CHCH price tag, he said, also included renewals on two first-run syndicated strips, "Mama's Family" and "It's a Living."

Meanwhile, on the domestic front, Mr. Robertson remained upbeat about prospects for "ALF" in syndication, even though the company has not yet been able to sell the program in New York or San Francisco.

"Deals involving the acquisition of major off-network shows take a little longer, and we obviously want as much money as we can get," he said.

In Phoenix, Lorimar opened bids at \$55,000 an episode, a figure Mr. Robertson admits he was not able to fetch, but adds, "we got a great price."

At KNXV-TV in Phoenix, Stuart Powell, the station's general manager, said "When this indy sees a chance to go after male viewers, we don't fool around."

In Columbus, WBNS-TV, the CBS affiliate, paid \$15,000 an episode for "ALF," one of the highest prices ever paid for an off-network show in the market, Mr. Robertson said. #



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# Some listeners will do anything for a buck

It's amazing the lengths radio stations will go to in concocting outrageous promotions.

Even more absurd, however, is the depths to which their listeners will sink just to participate in these rather bizarre rituals.

This is for real: Two weeks ago, WYHY-FM, a top 40 station in Nashville, Tenn., offered 10 lucky (lucky?) listeners the chance to don their bathing suits, be covered with honey and roll around in a drained swimming pool filled with dollar

bills for 30 seconds. Whatever stuck went home with the stickee.

"We have very creative people here," says Scott Baker, the station's promotion director.

Participants for the "Rollin' in the Dough" promotion, as it was called, were chosen by calling in during a specific song that was identified at 7:30 a.m. that day.

The money pool contained \$100,000 in \$1 bills. Because of the hefty sum, the location was kept under wraps, except to the partici-



**MARKETING**

Susan Spillman

pants and the media, which turned out in full force. Coverage included

all three network affiliates.

The participants were dunked in a rubber blow-up kiddie pool filled with honey.

"It was pretty nasty," admits Mr. Baker.

Not only that, "it was embarrassing," says Phyllis Lowe, 45, one of the honey-dipped contestants. "The whole thing was humiliating. I didn't tell any of my friends."

Still, \$638 richer, Ms. Lowe, who plans to put the loot toward her son's college tuition, says she'd do it

again, even though her turn in the pool preceded a thunderstorm by about 30 seconds.

A storm may not be unusual for spring in Nashville. Still, it's better than if the station waited until summer, says Mr. Baker. Then there might have been bugs to contend with as well.

The 10 contestants took home a little more than \$7,000. As for the remaining \$92,000-plus in the pool, Mr. Baker says, "it was sticky with honey, so we had to put it into the washing machine. We laundered the money—literally."

\* \* \*

Playing off a topical entertainment program has become a standard tool for local TV news, but one that sometimes has raised more than a few critics' eyebrows.



Phyllis Lowe of Franklin, Tenn., was literally "Rollin' in the Dough" for WYHY-FM's contest.

A recent example of a tie-in between entertainment and news shows came on the night of March 21, when ABC aired a painfully touching TV movie called "God Bless the Child."

It starred Mare Winningham as a young mother who, along with her daughter, become homeless when their tattered apartment building is torn down.

Following the movie, KABC-TV's 11 p.m. newscast ran a feature about real Los Angeles homeless families who'd found their way back. And following that, Ted Koppel spent a half-hour discussing the wrenching issues of homelessness on "Nightline."

Most news directors agree with Jay Newman of WCAU-TV in Philadelphia, who admits: "There aren't that many entertainment programs that warrant that type of coverage. There's a line between news and make believe, and you have to watch not to cross it."

"But if it's a real story that we could legitimately do on any other day, then we'll do it," adds Eric Sorenson, news director at KCBS in Los Angeles. "We're in the 20th century, and we do know that ratings are important, and we want to get as many people to watch as possible."

To that end, when CBS's "Knots Landing" airs its season cliffhanger this year, ending Joan Van Ark's tenure with the prime-time soap, KCBS's entertainment reporter will interview Ms. Van Ark at 11 p.m.

"The question isn't whether it's an entertainment piece, but whether I could see any other station's entertainment reporter doing it," says Mr. Sorenson, who concludes that he could.

Mr. Sorenson adds that a legitimate tie-in can improve a newscast's ratings by 10 percent to 15 percent. #



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# Redstone explores Viacom refinancing plans

(Continued from front cover)

But he's also a man who knows what he likes on the bottom line.

When he first took over, he expressed an initial distaste for the rock music played on MTV. After checking the balance books, he says he has since learned to appreciate the music network for its true value to the company.

Having inherited a fairly lean operation, the need for corporatewide streamlining has so far been limited. Instead, primary changes have come in hiring well-regarded, cable-honed executives, including Mr. Biondi, 43, whose presence has lent invaluable credibility to Viacom's future plans.

Five of the seven top executives recently named to new positions at Viacom previously worked at Time Inc.'s competitive HBO—a connection likely to go a long way in the rebuilding and strengthening of Showtime/The Movie Channel.

Those appointees include Tony Cox, chairman and chief executive officer of Showtime/The Movie Channel; Neil Braun, senior vice president for corporate development; Henry Schleiff, chairman and chief executive officer of Viacom's entertainment and broadcasting groups; and Mr. Biondi.

A recent proxy statement to Viacom shareholders indicates the new managers, who also include two Viacom officials promoted from within, collectively are making less money than was paid to the company's previous upper echelon.

Still, Mr. Redstone and his lieutenants are taking a hard line on controlling costs—especially program production deficits that much of the time run 20 percent to 30 percent above the license fee paid by a network.

At the same time, the corporate coffers are being fueled by the record-breaking profits from syndication of "The Cosby Show" and the company's interests in production, broadcasting, basic cable and pay cable.

With all that, it's no wonder Mr. Redstone can candidly look even the most ardent skeptic straight in the eye and declare, "We're going to grow this company."

"I think the sleeping giant has begun to explode," he said during a recent interview with ELECTRONIC MEDIA at Viacom's Manhattan headquarters. "There are no major businesses of the company we want to get out of. We may sell a single asset here or there if it was part of our long-term strategy and if the price was right, only to reinvest some of the proceeds in the same area," he said.

"We do not have in mind selling a division. But we do have in mind recapitalizing the company."

Mr. Redstone and his top executives are considering at least a half-dozen alternatives for refinancing the company's \$2.4 billion debt. Decisions are expected within 30 days.

A key factor in the company's refinancing



Photo by Catherine Noren

**'One of the great advantages of a company as diverse as ours is that one never can foretell where the future is going to be. That's one of the reasons I have been reluctant to consider getting out of any business we're in.'**

—Sumner Redstone

will be the sale of at least a \$250 million equity interest in Showtime/TMC to a group of individual multiple system operators who, in turn, will increase the services' distribution base.

Tele-Communications Inc., the nation's largest MSO, has been identified as a likely buyer of up to 50 percent of the cable services, perhaps in a consortium of operators.

However, sources close to the discussions indicate that agreements are being negotiated individually with various MSOs. Among the interested cable operators are Jones Intercable, Continental, Comcast, Cablevision, Cox and the newly merged United Cable.

The cable operators would agree to carry the two pay-TV networks on their systems—which could add 5 million to 10 million subscribers to the services' tally—and commit promotional and marketing dollars as well.

Some of the cable operators also may simultaneously enter into deals to participate in Viacom's growing direct-satellite program transmission business, which caters to consumers not

served by cable TV, Mr. Redstone said.

However, one firm condition of selling up to 50 percent equity in Showtime/The Movie Channel will be Viacom's continued operational control of the services, he said.

Both he and Mr. Biondi stress that they would not offer the sale of such equity for money alone.

Mr. Biondi said, "We wouldn't agree to equity partners if they couldn't bring something other than money to the arrangement—like programming or distribution. We will proceed with this sale because it makes strategic sense, not to pay down some bank loan."

He added, "The recent explosive growth of Showtime/The Movie Channel has left us not as hungry to do a deal, but we will do one eventually."

Viacom's complicated refinancing could occur in stages any time this year beginning as early as June.

Mr. Redstone said the aim is to eventually reduce the company's overall debt to \$1.3 billion to \$1.5 billion, a level he is more comfortable with.

"As I have come to know the company and understand its assets and their internal growth potential—for instance, our cable systems are worth in excess of our entire bank debt—I am more comfortable with the debt level," he said.

"But our long-range objectives are to reduce our bank debt, do away with the high yield instruments, eliminate the difficult covenants with the banks and turn expensive—which is my normal instinct."

Viacom is required to submit a firm refinancing plan to the company's creditors next month.

Company executives say a likely refinancing alternative would eliminate virtually all of the company's current \$2.2 billion bank debt through a combined sale of securities and several assets—probably one TV station and one cable system.

Mr. Redstone has declined to identify specific properties, but sources say he's prepared to place some assets on the sale block as early as mid-year.

Another possibility would be to refinance debt with the current bank lenders or with a new bank group by stretching payments out over 20 years or more and lowering the interest rate that currently is close to 10 percent. The result would be smaller, more infrequent payments.

A minimum of \$200 million on the loan is

due by year's end, and a total payment of nearly \$700 million is due over the next 13 months.

Viacom executives say they also are seeking to eliminate restrictive loan agreement covenants requiring such things as the sale of certain assets and the maintenance of a particular debt-to-equity ratio.

The company is likely to reduce its line of bank credit, since it currently pays interest on about \$50 million of available but unused funds.

The company also is likely to retire nearly \$400 million of preferred stock that was issued at the time of the Viacom takeover to help finance the transaction and which increases in value by nearly 16 percent annually.

"There are people in this company who argue that it is quite likely our overall growth rate will exceed 16 percent and that, therefore, funds could be better used for other things than retiring even that high amount of debt," Mr. Redstone concedes. "But I would like to see the preferred stock called because I'm not happy with anything that generally sounds like 15 or 16 percent interest."

If Viacom decides to sell some properties, Mr. Redstone believes it will have no trouble finding interested buyers.

"We have not talked to anyone about selling anything where we have initiated the discussions. We've had a lot of interest in all of our assets right from the start," Mr. Redstone said.

"We've had offers coming in over the transom. It got so bad, particularly before I had my new management team in place, that I was almost writing form letters in response to the inquiries and interest, particularly about our broadcast properties."

The only other Viacom asset whose future is in question is the money-losing Viewer's Choice pay-per-view operation.

The company has been in talks with Home Premiere Television aimed at the possibility of a merger between the two operations, a move that could minimize the PPV operation's costly start-up expenses and risk.

"One of the great advantages of a company as diverse as ours is that one never can foretell where the future is going to be," Mr. Redstone said. "That's one of the reasons I have been reluctant to consider getting out of any business we're in."

Indeed, even the 400-screen theater chain Mr. Redstone brought with him to Viacom last June has significantly expanded the company's already diverse asset base and offered some interesting new synergies—such as promoting Showtime/TMC on National Amusement's big screens and playing the music of Viacom radio stations in its theaters.

Clearly, Mr. Redstone's new corporate mandate leans more toward adding to, rather than subtracting from, Viacom's assets.

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of that has been in the cable program networks.

The company, for example, has sought to boost TMC, which has been reformatted and received a multimillion-dollar promotional shot in the arm, unveiled at the recent National Cable Television Association convention.

On the strength of 25 percent more marketing, Mr. Redstone said he would like to see TMC's subscriber base expand from about 8.7 million to 10 million this year.

Meanwhile, Showtime/TMC has added more than 100,000 new subscribers each month since January, for a total of about 400,000 in the first quarter alone.

Future plans call for creating a new "super basic" tier of Showtime that would involve advertising.

There also will be a growing effort to expand Viacom's successful Nickelodeon network for children and to take it abroad by selling equity pieces of the service in countries such as France and England.

MTV, which recently passed the 40 million subscriber mark and has been generating additional ad revenues, will continue its global expansion, Viacom executives said. Its sister service, VH-1, also

(Continued on next page)

## Viacom at a glance

**The bottom line:** Pro forma earnings from operations of \$100.9 million in fiscal 1987, ended Dec. 31, compared to \$45.3 million in fiscal 1986; pro forma operating income (earnings from operations plus depreciation and amortization of goodwill) of \$237.1 million in fiscal 1987, compared to \$172.9 million in fiscal 1986.

**Revenues:** The company's overall pro forma revenues were \$1.01 billion in fiscal 1987, up from \$919.2 million in fiscal 1986.

**Programming:** Viacom's Entertainment Group includes Viacom Productions, which makes network series including "Frank's Place," "Jake and the Fat Man," and "Matlock"; and Viacom Enterprises, which syndicates "The Cosby Show" and other programs.

**Stations:** Viacom's Broadcast Group includes WVIT-TV (an NBC affiliate), Hartford-New Haven, Conn.; WNYT-TV (NBC), Albany-Troy, New York; KSLA-TV (CBS), Shreveport, La.; WHEC-TV (CBS), Rochester, N.Y.; and KMOV-TV

(CBS), St. Louis. Radio stations include WLTW-FM, New York; WLAK-FM, Chicago; KIKK-AM/FM, Pasadena, Texas; WMZQ-AM/FM, Washington; WRVR-AM/FM, Memphis; and KBSG-FM, Seattle/Tacoma.

**Cable systems:** Viacom's Cable Television Division includes 16 cable systems with about 1.1 million basic-cable subscribers.

**Cable networks:** Viacom's Networks Group includes MTV Networks, which operates basic services MTV, VH-1, Nickelodeon, Nick at Nite; Showtime/The Movie Channel, which operates pay services Showtime and The Movie Channel; and the pay-per-view service, Viewer's Choice.

*\*Pro forma results mean the results for both 1986 and 1987 have been restated as if the merger of Viacom and National Amusements had occurred at the beginning of 1986. The deal closed in June 1987. Post-acquisition results are not fully comparable to 1986 results because of increased operating expenses, depreciation and amortization relating to the merger.*

## NEWS OF RECORD

The following are items released by the Federal Communications Commission from May 5 to May 11.

## Radio station sales

**City and station:** Jerseyville, Ill., WJBM 1480 AM (500 watts daytime) and WKXX 104.1 FM (50,000 watts).

**Seller:** Gateway Radio Partners Limited Partnership, Nashville, Tenn.

**Buyer:** Gateway Radio Partners Limited Partnership, Maryland Heights, Mo. Sheldon Davis, president, secretary, treasurer and 100 percent control.

**Price:** \$115,167.75.

**Date granted:** April 27.

**City and station:** Concord, N.H., WJYY 105.5 FM (1,720 watts).

**Seller:** Rumford Communications, Concord, N.H.

**Buyer:** Empire Radio Partners Ltd., Schenectady, N.Y. Hurst Hill Partners, General Partnership, the owner, comprised of officers, directors and stockholders including Dennis Israel, president and 90.5 percent owner and R. Andrew Brothers, vice president.

**Price:** \$3.75 million.

**Notes of interest:** Empire Radio Partners Ltd., is licensee of WGY-AM/WRFM-FM, Schenectady, N.Y. Several principals of Empire Radio Partners Ltd. have an interest in Empire State Radio, which is the licensee of WIPS-AM/WXTY-FM, Ticonderoga, N.Y. Mr. Brothers is the sole general partner of Northeast Broadcast Limited Partnership, which recently filed an application for a new FM at East Lyme, Conn.

**Date granted:** April 28.

**City and station:** Lenox, Mass., WCWL 91.3 FM.

**Seller:** Berkshire Christian College, Lenox, Mass.

**Buyer:** Berkshire Christian Communications, Lenox, Mass. James Bisgrove, president.

**Price:** \$5,000.

**Date granted:** April 29.

**City and station:** Buffalo Gap, Va., WSPV-FM.

**Seller:** Digby Solomon, Annandale, Va.

**Buyer:** Erika Broadcasting, Annandale, Va. Digby Solomon, president.

**Price:** \$24,213.10.

**Date granted:** April 29.

**City and station:** Saginaw, Mich., WWWS 107.1 FM (2,000 watts).

**Seller:** Mayle Broadcasting Co., Saginaw, Mich.

**Buyer:** WTL Inc., Flint, Mich. Taylor Broadcasting is 51 percent owner and Lamont-Alexander Broadcasting is 49 percent owner.

**Price:** \$650,000.

**Date granted:** May 2.

**City and station:** Weatherford, Texas, KADE 89.5 FM (368 watts).

**Seller:** Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, Dallas.

**Buyer:** KADE Radio, Weatherford, Texas. Robert Robinson II, president and 25 percent membership; Earl King, Dorothy Taylor and Robert Erkins are each directors and 25 percent membership.

**Price:** \$55,000.

**Date granted:** May 2.

**City and station:** Jacksonville, Ala., WJXL 810 AM (50,000 watts).

**Seller:** HMS Broadcasting Company of Jacksonville, Ala., Houston, Miss.

**Buyer:** Bussey-Hayes Communications, Jacksonville, Ala. William Bussey Jr., president and 50 percent voting-stock owner and Troi Hayes, vice president, secretary, treasurer and 50 percent voting-stock owner.

**Price:** \$800,000.

**Date granted:** April 29.

**City and station:** Kensett, Ark., KMOA 1190 AM (500 watts daytime).

**Seller:** Harvey Fritts, Seargy, Ark.

**Buyer:** Red River Broadcasting, Bald Knob, Ark. Shirley Capps, president and 100 percent voting-stock owner.

**Price:** \$55,000.

## Key FCC actions

**Poughkeepsie and New Paltz, N.Y.** Designated for hearing the application of WMHT Educational Telecommunications for a new non-commercial educational FM station on Channel 204A (88.7 MHz) at Poughkeepsie, together with the mutually exclusive application of State University of New York for the same channel at New Paltz. Mass Media Docket 88-202 by Order, delegated authority 88-614, adopted April 21 by the Chief, Audio Services Division.

The FCC has granted the application of **Ca-loosa Television Corp. to change the power, antenna location and height of WEVU-TV, Channel 26, ABC, Naples, Fla.** Action by the commission April 28 by memorandum opinion and order, FCC 88-164. Report Mass Media-322, Mass Media Action.

**Atlantic, Iowa.** Effective June 20, amended the FM table by substituting Channel 279C (103.7 MHz) for Channel 279C1, and modified the license for KJAN-FM to specify operation on the higher-powered channel. Mass Media Docket 87-535 by report and order, delegated authority 88-634, adopted April 7 by the Deputy Chief, Policy and Rules Division.

**Dennysville, Maine.** Effective June 20, amended the FM table by allotting Channel 275A (102.9 MHz) to Dennysville as its first local FM service. The filing window opens June 21, closes July 21. Mass Media Docket 87-361 by report and order, delegated authority 88-636, adopted April 6 by the Deputy Chief, Policy and Rules Division.

**Boulder City, Nev.** Effective June 20, amended the FM table by substituting Channel 288C2 (105.5 MHz) for Channel 288A at Boulder City, and modified the license for KRRI-FM to specify operation on the higher-powered channel. Mass Media Docket 87-519 by report and order, delegated authority 88-635, adopted April 6 by the Deputy Chief, Policy and Rules Division.

**Copenhagen, N.Y.** Effective June 20, amended the FM table by allotting Channel 294A (106.7 MHz) to Copenhagen as its first local FM service. The filing window opens June 21, closes July 21. Mass Media Docket 87-500 by report and order, delegated authority 88-599, adopted April 7 by the Deputy Chief, Policy and Rules Division.

The FCC is requesting data, empirical studies and other information concerning the availability of broadcast signals on cable TV systems, so as to provide a basis for formulating any future policies in this area. Comments are due July 8, replies August 8. Mass Media Docket 88-138 by notice of inquiry, FCC 88-129, adopted March 24 by the Commission.

**Date granted:** April 29.

**City and station:** Gardner, Mass., WGAW 1340 AM (1,000 watts).

**Seller:** Vondy Rowe, executrix of estate of C. Edward Rowe, Athol, Mass.

**Buyer:** Vondy Rowe, Athol, Mass. Douglas Rowe, president. New England Broadcasting Co. has 100 percent control.

**Price:** \$0.

**Notes of interest:** New England Broadcasting Co. is an 88 percent shareholder of WSRO Inc., licensee of WSRO-AM, Marlborough, Mass. Douglas Rowe is a 10 percent shareholder of WSRO Inc.

**Date granted:** April 29.

**City and station:** Marlborough, Mass., WSRO 1470

**Monticello, Ark.** Effective June 20, amended the FM table by allotting Channel 260A (99.9 MHz) to Monticello as its second local FM service. The filing window opens June 21, closes July 21. Mass Media Docket 87-184 by report and order, delegated authority 88-637, adopted April 13 by the Deputy Chief, Policy and Rules Division, Mass Media Bureau.

**Bremen, Ind.** Effective June 24, amended the FM table by allotting Channel 245A (96.9 MHz) to Bremen as its first FM service. The filing window opens June 25, closes July 25. Mass Media Docket 87-453 by report and order, delegated authority 88-656, adopted April 13 by the Deputy Chief, Policy and Rules Division.

**Ellettsville, Ind.** Effective June 24, amended the FM table by allotting Channel 286A (105.1 MHz) to Ellettsville as its first local FM service. The filing window opens June 25, closes July 25. Mass Media Docket 87-35 by report and order, delegated authority 88-655, adopted April 13 by the Deputy Chief, Policy and Rules Division.

**Ida Grove, Iowa.** Effective June 24, amended the FM table by substituting Channel 225C2 (92.9 MHz) for Channel 224A (92.7 MHz) at Ida Grove, and conditionally modifying the license of KIDA-FM to specify operation on the C2 channel. Mass Media Docket 87-508 by report and order, delegated authority 88-626, adopted April 7 by the Deputy Chief, Policy and Rules Division.

**Roland and Heavener, Okla.** Effective June 24, amended the FM table by allotting Channel 222A (92.3 MHz) to Roland as its first local FM service; denied request by Double Eagle Broadcasting Corp. to amend the FM table by substituting Channel 223C2 (92.5 MHz) for Channel 223A at Heavener. The filing window for Channel 222A at Roland will open June 27, close July 27. Mass Media Docket 87-393 by report and order, delegated authority 88-625, adopted April 5 by the Deputy Chief, Policy and Rules Division.

**Kannapolis, N.C.** Approved settlement agreement between Kannapolis Television Co., A Joint Venture and Community Action Communications and conditionally granted Community's application for a new television station on Channel 64 at Kannapolis. Broadcast Dockets 82-259-260 by memorandum opinion and order, FCC 88-148, adopted April 18 by the Commission.

**Silver King Broadcasting Co.** In response to declaratory ruling request by Silver King, found that its program "In Your Interest" was a "bona fide news interview program" exempt from the "equal opportunities" requirement of Section 315 of the Communications Act. By Staff Ruling, delegated authority 88-700, adopted May 6 by the Chief, Fairness/Political Programming Branch, Mass Media Bureau.

AM (5,000 watts daytime).

**Seller:** Vondy Rowe, executrix of estate of C. Edward Rowe, Athol, Mass.

**Buyer:** Vondy Rowe, Athol, Mass. Douglas Rowe, president and 10 percent control; New England Broadcasting Co., 88 percent control.

**Price:** \$0.

**Date granted:** April 29.

**City and station:** Greenfield, Wis., WMVP 1290 AM (5,000 watts).

**Seller:** Pinnacle Broadcasting Corp., Milwaukee.

**Buyer:** Suburbanair, Los Angeles. Willie Davis, president, treasurer and 100 percent voting-stock owner.

**Price:** \$750,000.

**Date granted:** April 29.

**City and station:** Lyons, Ga., WBBT 1340 AM (1,000 watts).

**Seller:** WBBT Inc., Lyons, Ga.

**Buyer:** Thompson Radiobroadcasting Co., Lyons, Ga. Harry Thompson Jr., president and 60 percent voting-stock owner and Michael Thompson, secretary, treasurer and 40 percent voting-stock owner.

**Price:** \$150,000.

**Date granted:** May 2.

**City and station:** New Orleans, La., WSMB-AM.

**Seller:** Norad, New Orleans, La., c/o MacMillan Ring-Free Oil Co., New York.

**Buyer:** Winston Communications Corp., New York. Marc Winston, president and 100 percent voting-stock owner.

**Price:** \$850,000.

**Date granted:** May 2.

**City and station:** Syracuse, N.Y., WFBL-AM.

**Seller:** First Broadcasting Corp., c/o MacMillan Ring-Free Oil Co., New York.

**Buyer:** WFBL-Syracuse, East Longmeadow, Mass. Donald Wilks, president and 50 percent voting-stock owner and Michael Schwartz, secretary, treasurer and 50 percent voting-stock owner.

**Price:** \$125,000.

**Notes of interest:** Messrs. Wilks and Schwartz are each 40 percent stockholders of WEEX-AM/WQQQ-FM, Easton, Pa. They are each 50 percent stockholders in each of the following: WIXY-AM, East Longmeadow, Mass.; WAQY-AM, Springfield, Mass.; and WKFM-FM, Fulton, Mass. Mr. Schwartz is 35 percent stockholder of WSRZ-FM, Sarasota, Fla.

**Date granted:** May 2.

**City and station:** Phoenixville, Pa., WYIS 690 AM (1,000 watts).

**Seller:** Sam Hart, Philadelphia.

**Buyer:** Radio Salvacion, Philadelphia. Sarraill Salva, president and one-third owner, Isabel Salva, secretary and one-third owner and Juan Vasquez, treasurer and one-third owner.

**Price:** \$1.5 million.

**Date granted:** May 2.

**City and station:** Chillicothe, Ill., WBZM 94.3 FM (3,000 watts).

**Seller:** Magic Broadcasting Corp., Chillicothe, Ill.

**Buyer:** Peoria Satellite Radio Corp., Peoria Heights, Ill. William Bro, president and 100 percent voting-stock owner.

**Price:** \$425,000.

**Date granted:** May 3.

**City and station:** Waterbury, Conn., WWCO 1240 AM (1,000 watts daytime, 250 watts nighttime).

**Seller:** Greater Radio, Middlebury, Conn.

**Buyer:** Winthrop Broadcasting Corp., Waterbury, Conn. Richard Barbieri Jr., president; Douglas Duncana, vice president; Ralph Carpiella, vice president; Jo Ann Rander, treasurer, secretary; and James O'Hearn are each 20 percent owners.

**Price:** \$450,000.

**Date granted:** April 28.

**City and station:** Greenwood, S.C., WGSW 1350 AM (1,000 watts daytime).

**Seller:** Radio Greenwood, Valdosta, Ga.

**Buyer:** WGSW Inc., Greenville, S.C. Alex Kinlaw, president and Charles Watt, secretary and treasurer are each 50 percent voting-stock owners.

**Price:** \$350,000.

**Date granted:** May 4.

**City and station:** Benton, La., KDKS 92.1 FM (3,000 watts).

**Seller:** Benton Broadcasting Corp., Shreveport, La.

**Buyer:** The Dowe Co., Dallas. Kenneth Dowe, president and 50 percent voting-stock owner and Dorothy Dowe, secretary, treasurer and 50 percent voting-stock owner.

**Price:** \$2 million.

**Notes of interest:** The Dowe Co. is licensee of KRLB-AM/FM, Lubbock, Texas.

**Date granted:** May 3.

**City and station:** Detroit, WDTX 99.5 FM (21,000 watts).

**Seller:** Metropolis Broadcasting of Detroit, Royal Oak, Mich.

**Buyer:** WDTX Inc., Dallas. Hoker Broadcasting 100

percent voting-stock owner.

**Price:** \$11.8 million.

**Notes of interest:** Hoker Broadcasting owns 100 percent of the stock of KCFX Inc., licensee of KCFX-FM, Harrisonville, Mo.

**Date granted:** May 5.

## Proposed stations

**Location:** Macon, Ga.

**Station:** 88.9 FM.

**Applicant:** Middle Georgia Community Radio, Macon, Ga.

**Location:** Wildwood Crest, N.J.

**Station:** 93.1 FM.

**Applicants:** Dox Radio Partnership, Brick, N.J. Jack Murray, Ocean City, N.J.

**Location:** Olathe, Kan.

**Station:** 92.3 FM.

**Applicants:** Pamela Jones, Baltimore. Commuter Broadcasting, Kansas City, Kan. East Kansas Radio Group, Lawrence, Kan. Dorothy Cordell, Gardner, Kan. MC Broadcasting Company Limited Partnership, Kansas City, Mo.

**Location:** Macon, Ga.

**Station:** 93.1 FM.

**Applicants:** Ocmulgee Radio Partners, Atlanta. MBM Broadcasting Co., Jacksonville, Fla. Cooper Communications, Greensboro, N.C. Southeast Communications Limited Partnership, Macon, Ga.

**Miracle Macon Radio Limited Partnership, Atlanta.**

**Chizoman, Macon, Ga.**

**Location:** Louisa, Ky.

**Station:** 92.3 FM.

**Applicants:** Louisa Broadcasting Corp., Louisa, Ky. Louisa Communications, Louisa, Ky.

**Location:** Kankakee, Ill.

**Station:** 95.1 FM.

**Applicants:** Webster Broadcasting, Ingleside, Ill. Baldridge Shelton Partnership, Bourbonnais, Ill. Andrew Perry Adst, Millford, Ill.

**Location:** Jacksonville, N.C.

**Station:** 92.3 FM.

**Applicants:** Jacksonville Broadcasters, Jacksonville, N.C. Ferguson Radio Partnership, Jacksonville, N.C.

**Location:** Peoria, Ill.

**Station:** 92.3 FM.

**Applicant:** B&G Broadcasting Limited Partnership, Peoria, Ill.

**Location:** Carterville, Ill.

**Station:** 95.1 FM.

**Applicants:** Pyracom, Energy, Ill. Carterville Broadcasting, Carbondale, Ill.

**Location:** Fargo, N.D.

**Station:** 88.9 FM.

**Applicant:** Brightness Ministries, Jeffersonville, Ind.

**Location:** Frederick, Md.

**Station:** 88.1 FM.

**Applicant:** Hood College, Frederick, Md.

**Location:** Griffin, Ga.

**Station:** 88.9 FM.

**Applicant:** Georgia Foundation for Public Broadcasting, Griffin, Ga.

**Location:** Midland, Texas.

**Station:** 95.1 FM.

**Applicants:** Clyde Butter, Odessa, Texas. Southwest Educational Media Foundation of Texas, Grand Prairie, Texas. Ruben Velasquez, Odessa, Texas. Three Card Enterprises, Houston.

**Location:** Killeen, Texas.

**Station:** 92.3 FM.

**Applicant:** Killeen Community Broadcasting, Cincinnati, #

# Viacom tunes up cable efforts, searches for next 'Cosby'

(Continued from previous page) will be developed in new directions.

"VH-1 already has 25 million subscribers and lots of shelf space," Mr. Redstone said. "I think we can make it into a much more vibrant programing service than it is. And programing—whether it's for cable or the networks or whatever—is where our focus is for the future.

"We view both cable and programing as growth areas, and we're going to invest all the money that's needed in them."

Mr. Redstone said Viacom spends more than \$100 million at any given time on all forms of programing, including miniseries, movies and series for cable and commercial television.

"On cable and programing in general, we are spending as much money as we could reasonably and rationally want to spend," Mr. Biondi said. "I would like to spend even more on acquiring programing and on the cable networks, but there is nothing that is burning a hole in my pocket."

Mr. Redstone and his management team

view the ability to supply themselves with programing as a critical hedge to the changing fortunes of the syndication business.

By producing much of what it needs through its Viacom Enterprises, the company will minimize first-run production costs by syndicating the programs to other domestic and foreign outlets.

Mr. Schleiff also said the company is keeping down production costs by working with new, lesser-priced talent, exploring co-production financing and working in locations outside of Los Angeles.

This year, the company begins collecting on more than \$600 million in receipts that will be generated by its syndication of "The Cosby Show."

But Viacom already is in search of its next "Cosby," aggressively developing new programs, including "Double Dare" and "Finders Keepers," off its cable networks.

"We get a lot of bang for the dollars at Viacom," Mr. Redstone said.

"We have become a major player with less

monies expended on writing teams, and so on, than other companies spend. So, at least for now, it appears we are not overspending for the potential rewards."

Still, Viacom is holding the line on license fees and is even prepared to decline producing projects if it has to, "in order to keep our ultimate risk modest," he said.

"We'd like to be producing more for the networks. We have five half-hour series pilots being considered by them now for the new season. But we want whatever we do for them to make economic sense," he said.

The changing economics of the business and the runaway cost of production are reasons why Mr. Redstone says he is not interested in buying a studio, despite his 25 percent interest in Orion Pictures Corp.

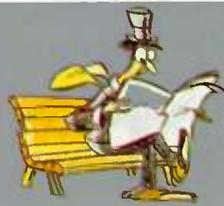
The recently increased 41 percent interest held by Metromedia chief John Kluge overshadows any hope Mr. Redstone may have had of making a tender offer for Orion, although he has maintained his is solely an investment interest.

Over the years, he has made some shrewd

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DALLAS  
FT. WORTH  
**KTXA**

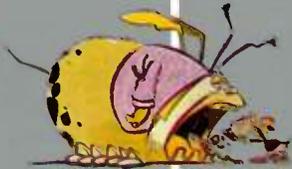


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TACOMA  
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SACRAMENTO  
**KTXL**



MILWAUKEE  
**WCGV**



WASHINGTON, D.C.  
**WDCA**

MIAMI  
**WDZL**



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**WNUV**

NASHVILLE  
**WCAY**



HOUSTON  
**KTXH**



PITTSBURGH  
**WPGH**



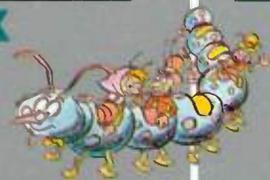
INDIANAPOLIS  
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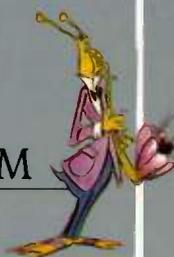
**KHNL**

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# ALL DAY

America's favorite robot

## #1 in Daytime

Saturday-Sunday

HH Share

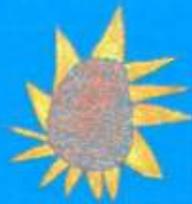
<b>Small Wonder</b>	<b>13</b>
Charles In Charge	13
Mama's Family	12
She's The Sheriff	11
9 To 5	10
Dom DeLuise Show	10
Out Of This World	10
What's Happening Now!!	9
New Gidget	9
It's A Living	8
Marblehead Manor	8
Throb	7
We Got It Made	7
Bustin' Loose	6
You Can't Take It With You	5

## #1 in Early Fringe

Saturday-Sunday

HH Share

<b>Small Wonder</b>	<b>13</b>
Mama's Family	13
Dom DeLuise Show	12
Out Of This World	11
What's Happening Now!!	11
Charles In Charge	9
She's The Sheriff	9
It's A Living	9
New Gidget	9
Bustin' Loose	8
Marblehead Manor	8
9 To 5	7
You Can't Take It With You	7
Throb	7
We Got It Made	6



# WONDER



is #1 around the clock!

## #1 in Prime Access

Monday-Saturday	HH Share
<b>Small Wonder</b>	<b>13</b>
Mama's Family	11
Dom DeLuise Show	11
9 To 5	10
Out Of This World	10
Charles In Charge	10
She's The Sheriff	9
What's Happening Now!!	9
It's A Living	9
New Gidget	9
Bustin' Loose	8
Marblehead Manor	8
Throb	7
You Can't Take It With You	7
We Got It Made	7



## #1 in Prime Time

Monday-Sunday	HH Share
<b>Small Wonder</b>	<b>13</b>
She's The Sheriff	6
Out Of This World	5
Dom DeLuise Show	5
We Got It Made	4
Throb	3
Mama's Family	3
It's A Living	3
What's Happening Now!!	2
Charles In Charge	2
9 To 5	2
You Can't Take It With You	2
Marblehead Manor	2
Bustin' Loose	1
New Gidget	1



Source: NSI/Cassandra Ranking Report 2/88.  
First-run syndicated sitcoms, ranked by HH share. Subject to the limitations of the methodologies employed.

## New computer system aids in ratings analysis

By ERIC MANKIN

Special to ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Ratings used to be, if not a simple business, at least a manageable one, says Steven C. Leblang, vice president of research for Twentieth Century Fox Television Syndication.

"Ten years ago, you had only three metered markets," he says. "People meters were science fiction. Computers weren't in use. There were relatively few sources of syndicated programming. In this office, we would average ratings by hand."

While those days are gone, thanks to an accelerating avalanche of computer-processed raw numbers from the ratings services, a new system licensed by Media Solutions of Auburn, Calif., has been attempting to make Mr. Leblang's life more manageable for the last seven months.

Media Solutions' SNAP—Syn-dicated Network Audience Processor—system is an advanced version of the computer programs that independent TV stations use to analyze ratings in individual markets.

All of these computer systems allow an A.C. Nielsen Co. or Arbitron Ratings Co. subscriber to quickly manipulate and study the numbers from the ratings organizations.

But while the amount of data for a single market isn't overwhelming, adding information beyond that market is difficult for most systems.

That's where Media Solutions says it's at an advantage.

Based on a laser-disk system, SNAP allows a researcher with a personal computer to study and analyze ratings in all Nielsen and Arbitron markets over extended time periods stretching back through numerous sweeps.

When a station wants information on a specific show, SNAP can examine the entire range of ratings information to pull out reports of the program's ratings performance, including data on



ANDY ESHKAR  
Offering SNAP system

its lead-in, lead-out, competition and demographics.

If, for example, a sales rep is trying to sell a show to a station in a market with six stations—four VHF and two UHF—SNAP can locate every rated occasion the show has ever been broadcast in a market with four VHF and two UHF stations, including complete information on what the show competed against and how it did compared to both the competition and its own lead-ins.

Though Media Solutions doesn't press the comparison, Fox's Mr. Leblang says the system gives his department the in-house ability to create the same kind of cross-market studies that he used to have to special order as Nielsen Cassandra reports on syndicated programming.

(Arbitron ratings are compiled into Cassandra-like "Apollo" reports by another firm, Spot Quotations and Data, New York.)

From Mr. Leblang's point of view, there are advantages in doing the work at home.

With Cassandra, "we would first have to wait anywhere from a few days to a week for a report to be prepared. The cost of the report is \$20 to \$30 per page (Continued on next page)

## Cable advised to strive for HDTV advantage

By WILLIAM MAHONEY

Staff reporter

LOS ANGELES—Cable industry pioneer Chuck Dolan told the recent National Cable Television Association convention here that high-definition television presents program services and operators with an "opportunity to endear themselves with subscribers."

Others pointed out that cable may have a distinct advantage over broadcasters in implementing the new technology because cable is less limited in spectrum space.

Mr. Dolan, chairman of Cablevision Systems Corp., and other industry officials admit that associated costs will have to be passed along to subscribers as part of the switch to HDTV.

But they said that cable needs to act swiftly to beat broadcasters to the punch, thus gaining a competitive edge on their over-the-air brethren.

NCTA attendees heard the acronym HDTV at nearly all of the technical sessions, and demonstrations of the new technology proved to be some of the most popular on the convention floor.

Mr. Dolan told one session that cable needs to learn a lesson from what is currently taking place in Japan, as that country prepares to become the first with widespread HDTV transmission in 1990.

The Japanese are quickly snatching up 20-inch satellite dishes—about 500,000 so far he said—to enable them to receive the HDTV pictures via Ku-band satellite when implemented in 1990.

That development should serve as a warning that the cable industry in this country needs to act soon, Mr. Dolan said, in order to ensure that it first introduces HDTV here.

Many developers of HDTV systems maintain that cable enjoys a technical edge over terrestrial transmission systems.

"The broadcasters have a tighter spectrum constraint than the cablecasters do," said Richard Iredale, founder of the Del Rey Group, a developer of a single-channel HDTV system.



CHUCK DOLAN  
Sees HDTV opportunities

The Del Rey Group has been dealing with companies that own both broadcast and cable properties, such as Cox Communications and Tribune Broadcasting, which help fund the development.

"The cable guys, because it's a closed system, can in effect expand their capacity out to almost infinity," Mr. Iredale said. "But it will cost, and the question is how far can you push it before the costs get unreasonable."

However, he said, "there are those that say cable is facing equally severe constraints whether they realize it or not, because every new service that's coming down the pike in the future helps fill up all the channels they have available."

There are at least six other HDTV systems being developed that would work on a single six-megahertz channel, in addition to three others that employ a dual-channel plan that uses a main channel and an augmentation channel.

Three other wide-bandwidth systems, which require about 9.5 to 10.7 megahertz, are also being developed.

The current National Television System Committee (NTSC) standard uses six megahertz per channel.

Among the systems discussed at

NCTA were Mr. Iredale's HD-NTSC system, NHK's MUSE proposal (the Japanese standard) and the Advanced Compatible Television System that is a joint effort of NBC, RCA and the David Sarnoff Research Center.

Time Inc., which owns HBO and American Television & Communications Corp., recently threw its support behind that ACTV system.

While broadcasters are still wrangling with the Federal Communications Commission to get the additional spectrum they say they need for HDTV, cable should move into the forefront of HDTV, several officials said at the cable meeting.

One concrete move in that direction was the announcement of the creation of Cable Television Laboratories shortly after the convention closed.

The research and development cable consortium will have an annual operating budget of \$7.5 million. It was formed by Tele-Communications Inc., ATC, Continental Cablevision and Comcast Cable Communications.

Members must commit to three years of funding at a cost of 2 cents per subscriber per month effective July 1.

Early applications of that funding will be the development of HDTV and fiber optics, which is playing a larger role in cable and may pave the way for HDTV pictures to be transmitted to subscribers, according to some cable officials.

James Chiddix, senior vice president of engineering and technology at ATC, said converting part of the cable transmission system from coaxial cable to fiber optics has many advantages and will carry with it "a relatively modest cost."

Fiber optics will provide more reliable transmission, less noise distortion, more channels and will help cable prepare for HDTV by increasing capacity, he said.

Ed Horowitz, senior vice president of HBO, told NCTA attendees that HDTV "will make our business more valuable" by improving the product cable offers to subscribers.

"If we don't respond to the com- (Continued on next page)

## Panasonic unveils two full-feature CD players

The Panasonic Industrial Co. Audio-Video Systems Group has introduced two new full-feature compact disc players for a variety of professional audio applications. The SL-4300 single-platter compact disc player features a laser pickup transport, which includes a high-speed linear motor that can provide access to any track on a CD in less than one second. It also features a 10-key keypad for direct selection of any CD track plus the ability to set up pre-set playback sequences of as many as 20 track selections. The SL-4700 multi-platter compact disc player features a removable magazine that holds six CDs. This model is designed for the sequencing of music or effects during post-production sweetening, automated broadcasting and for background music systems. Panasonic Industrial Co., 2 Panasonic Way, Secaucus, N.J. 07094.

\* \* \*

Western Digital Corp. has extended its product line with an optical storage controller board, chip set and an encoder/decoder device. The WD1008-OPT optical storage controller board can support an optical drive with a transfer rate of up to 15 megabits per second. It includes built-in diagnostics and a 64K track buffer. The SCSI portion of the controller features an asynchronous data transfer rate of 1.8 megabytes per second and

### PRODUCT UPDATE



PANASONIC'S SL-4700 MULTI-PLATTER COMPACT DISC PLAYER

a synchronous data transfer rate of 4.0 megabytes per second. The modified ESDI portion of the drive features a data transfer speed of up to 15 megabits per second, optical commands and a continuous composite optical

format. The ADS-OPT8-SET3 chip set consists of the ADS-3570A buffer manager, the ADS10C00 disc controller, the WD33C93A SCSI bus interface controller, the WD60C80 Reed Solomon Error Correction device and the

WD60C31 optical encode/decode device. The WD60C31, a new element of the chip set, can be combined with the new controller board. The WD1008-OPT storage controller board will be available in sample quantities in May at an OEM 1,000 piece price of \$250 each, while the WD60C31 will be available for \$30 each. The chip set, including the chips on the WD1008-OPT board plus the WD60C31, will be available in sample quantities for less than \$100. Western Digital Corp., 2445 McCabe Way, Irvine, Calif. 92714.

\* \* \*

Blonder-Tongue Laboratories is offering its new ESHP high-output, SAW-filtered A/V channel processor. The heterodyne processor has an output level of plus-60 dBmV and is used to put off-air VHF and UHF broadcast channels on cable and satellite-master antenna TV systems. An adjustable aural carrier trap permits transmission of BTSC standard composite stereo signals. The ESHP has an optional automatic standby feature that's activated when the input signal drops to an unusable level. The ESHP also features a field-replaceable heterodyne converter board for both input and/or output channel changes. The ESHP has a three-wire AC convenience outlet. Blonder-Tongue Laboratories, 1 Jake Brown Rd., Old Bridge, N.J. 08857.#

# Computer aids in analyzing ratings results

(Continued from previous page)  
(with up to 100 pages in a report, or more)," he says.

"More important to us, we can afford to study the competition in greater depth than before, and more quickly. What would take us days before, we can now do in hours."

Rob Smith, 31, marketing director for Media Solutions, points out that his system makes it easier to prepare presentations of sales "stories."

Cassandra reports are on paper, which Mr. Leblang's department would have to manually type in to its documents.

SNAP material can be routed directly to word processors in electronic form, "which means we can immediately create a demonstration quality report," says Mr. Leblang.

Nielsen Cassandra spokeswoman Katherine Creech said Media Solutions' system is one of a number of systems on the market for analyzing Nielsen data.

"We are neither disturbed by another company doing this, nor alarmed at the prospect of competition," she said.

While Nielsen compiles its Cassandra reports on mainframe computers costing six figures, SNAP can do comparable studies on a small desktop personal computer, thanks to its laser-disk system.

Mr. Leblang's office, for example, receives its ratings information from Nielsen on original mainframe data tapes, in addition to the more familiar telephone book-sized volumes.

Since every national ratings sweeps contains about 50 megabytes of data (one megabyte equals about 250 single-spaced pages of text), the familiar 10 to 30MB hard-disk storage systems used in many desktop computers are inadequate. On the other hand, a laser disk, while it is slower to access, has an 800 megabyte capacity.

The data from the tapes is transferred as it becomes available to a single disk, which can hold, as Mr. Smith points out, "all the demographics, every program, every mar-

ket, every rated station, sign-on to sign-off," over several years' worth of sweeps.

The information on the master disk is processed with a software program especially written in C (a programming language) by MS President Andy Eshkar, 31.

Because there are not many companies that need this powerful a ratings system, Mr. Smith says Media Solutions' potential market is made up of syndicators; TV networks or would-be networks, such

as the Fox Network, which also uses the system; large station groups; and rep firms.

Among syndicators, Columbia, Lorimar and Embassy will be testing the system soon, according to Mr. Smith, who says that SNAP went on the market last August.

The system is not cheap.

The hardware cost is relatively modest—about \$8,000 for a laser-disk reader and a suitably equipped AT-type personal computer, preferably an ultrafast 386 model with an

expanded memory. SNAP's widest-range search, taking in all of the 215 markets in the country for an entire year's sweeps ratings, requires six megabytes of random-access memory.

System license costs are stiffer—as much as \$4,000 per month—plus the cost of ordering computer tapes of raw data from the ratings companies, which can run roughly \$1,000 per month more.

Mr. Leblang, who declined to say exactly how much he pays for the

service, says the cost is an acceptable fraction of his total research budget.

It's worth the investment in terms of "the increased productivity we are able to get out of our staff," he says.

"Competition is increasing at every level—the station level, the network level, the syndication level," says Mr. Leblang. "And as competition increases, whatever you think of them, ratings become even more important."#

## Cable told to prepare for HDTV

(Continued from previous page)  
petitive pressure of the VCR, it will be a mistake that will absolutely hurt us," he said, pointing to HDTV as one way to counter the home-video boom.

HBO has experimented with high-definition videotape to record some sporting events, he said.

"We have taped a series of boxing matches on high-definition tape just to see what it looks like" and it's "absolutely incredible," Mr. Horowitz said.

Addressing the increased costs that consumers will have to absorb, he said "consumers have indicated they will pay a premium for (receiving) the service but not twice as much for the equipment (to receive it)."

He said consumers appeared willing to pay "maybe within 20 percent more of what sets cost today" for equipment that can receive HDTV.

The statement reflects a major concern of adopting HDTV systems that aren't compatible with current NTSC equipment, since the television industry has invested an estimated \$100 billion in the NTSC standard since the FCC adopted it in 1941.#



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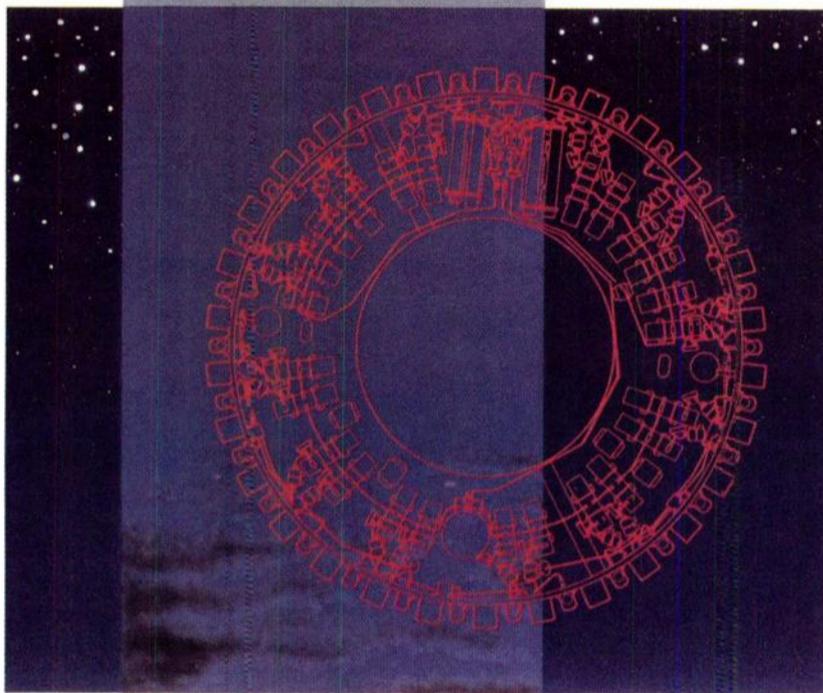
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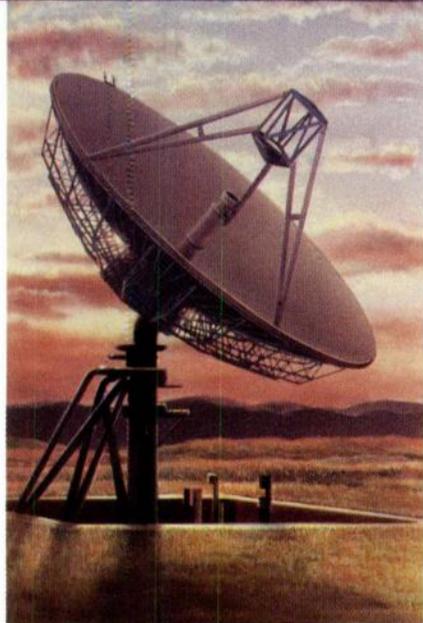
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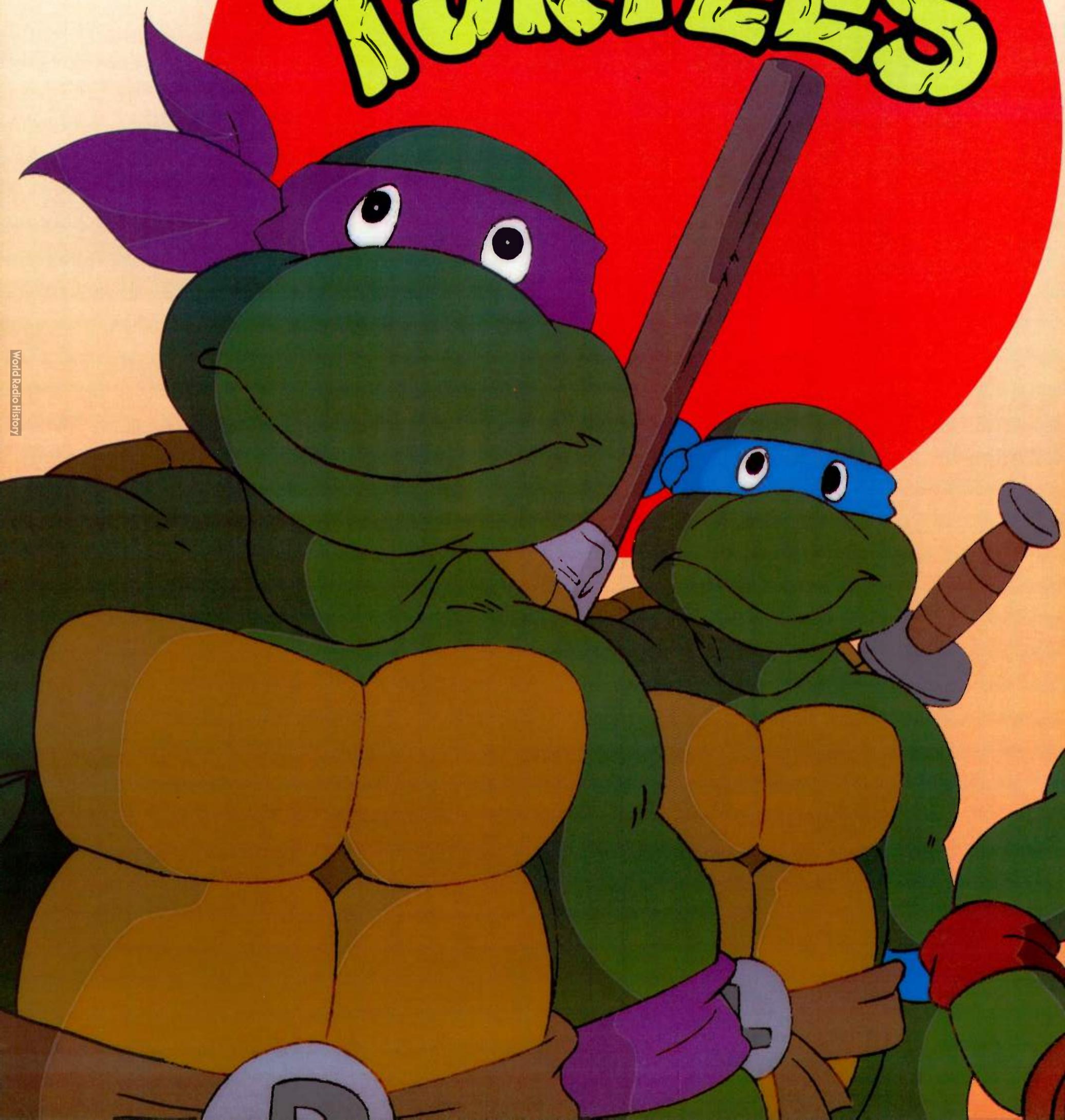
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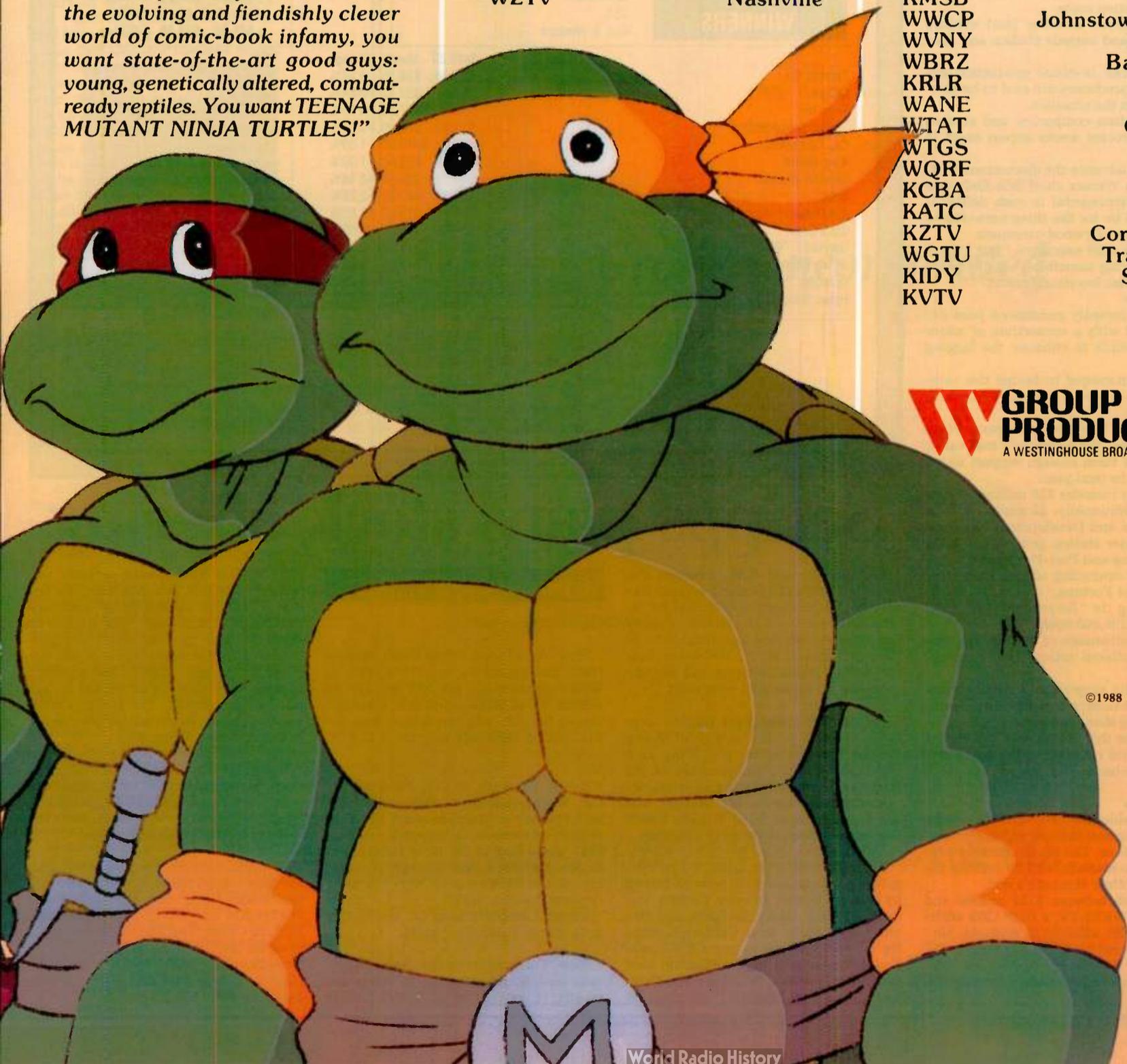
*"You can call in four hip heroes is what. Not Batman, Superman, Spiderman or Wonder Woman. Passe. Superman just turned 50! In the evolving and fiendishly clever world of comic-book infamy, you want state-of-the-art good guys: young, genetically altered, combat-ready reptiles. You want TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES!"*

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WAXA  
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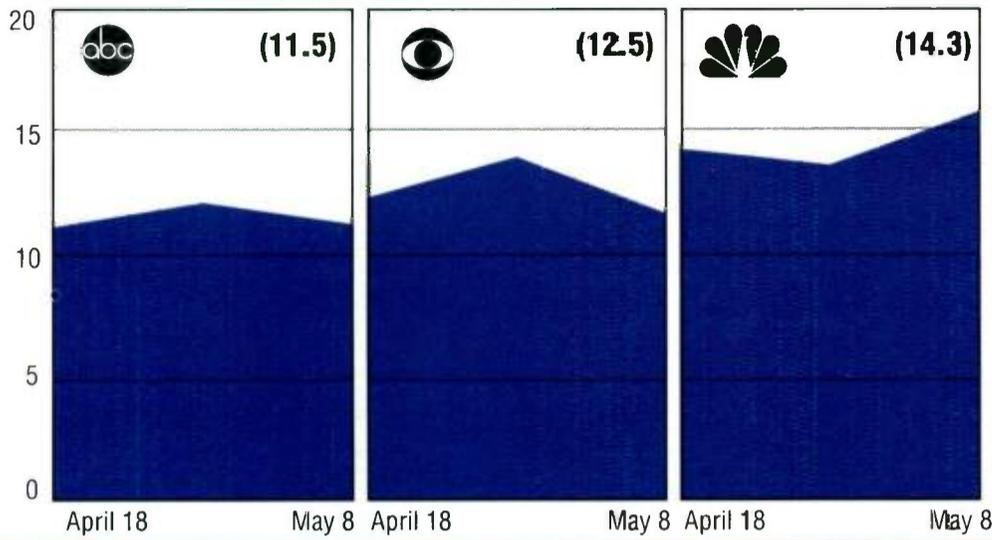
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**OFF-SEASON RATINGS (AVERAGES)**

**WEEKS 1-3: APRIL 18 THROUGH MAY 8**

**NETWORK PRIME TIME**



**IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

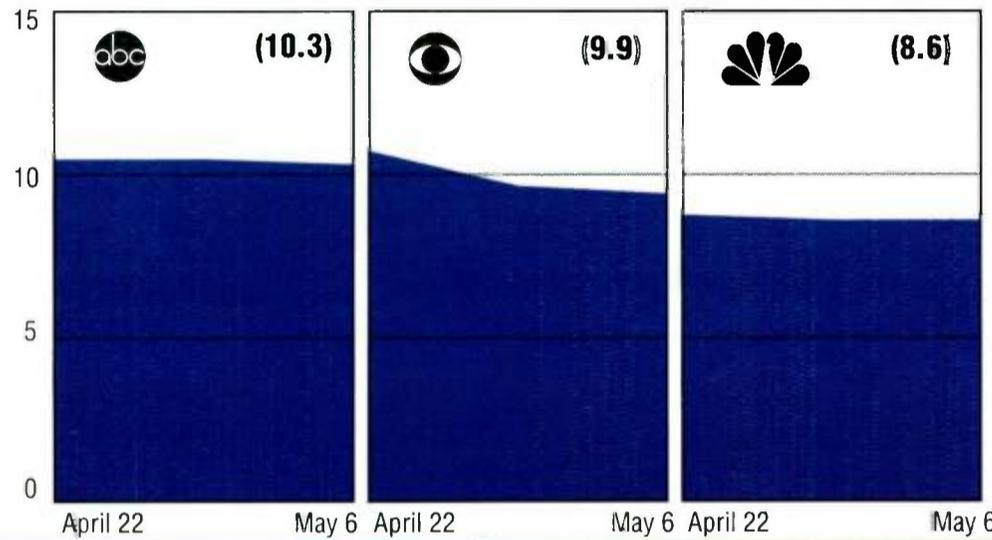


**'Family Ties' ratings/shares**

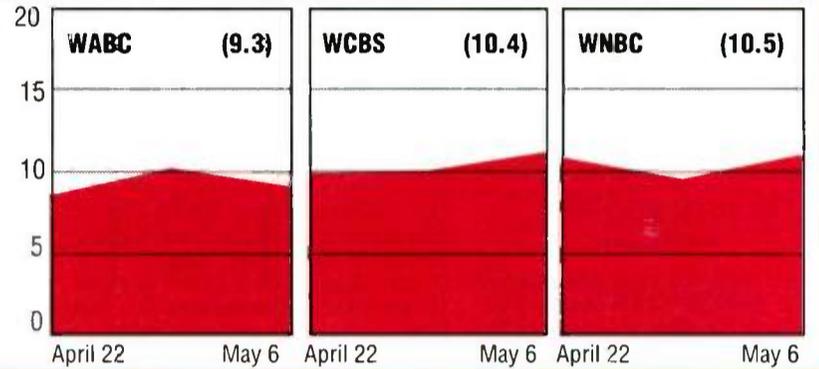
1982/83	15.1/23
1983/84	16.0/24
1984/85	22.1/33
1985/86	30.5/45
1986/87	32.1/49
1987/88	17.4/26

Michael Gross (l.) and Meredith Baxter Birney of "Family Ties."

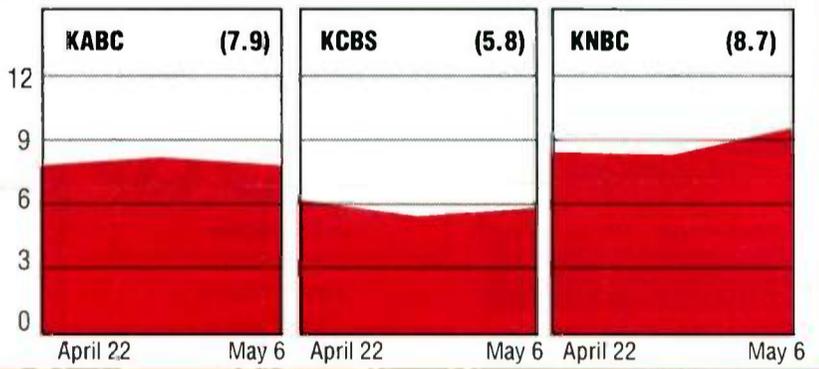
**NETWORK EVENING NEWS**



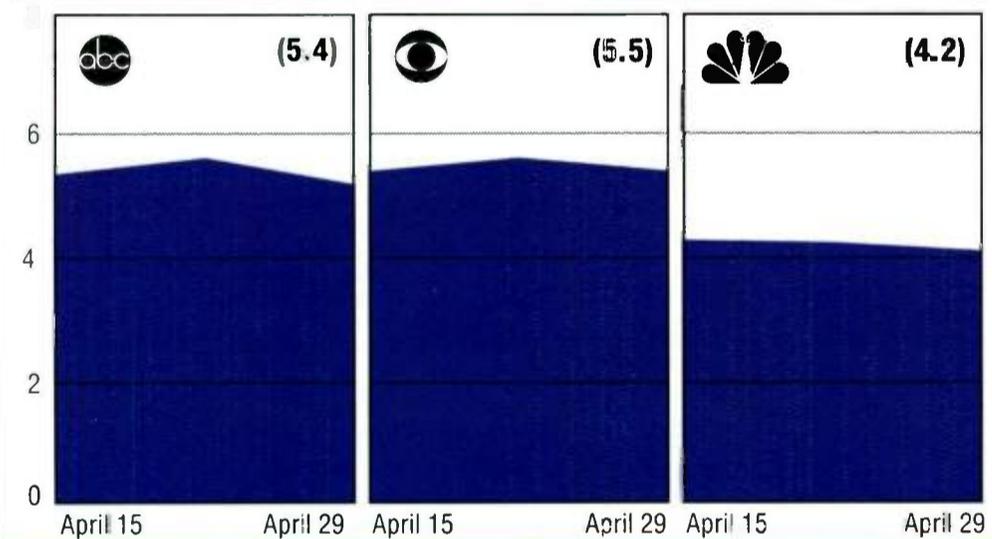
**NEW YORK 11 P.M. LOCAL NEWS**



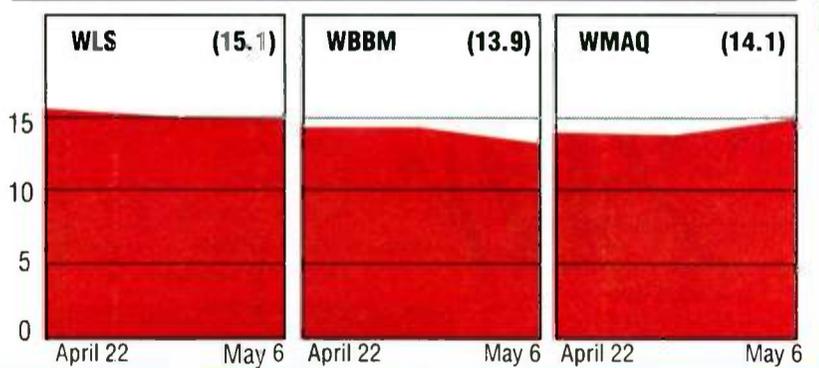
**LOS ANGELES 11 P.M. LOCAL NEWS**



**NETWORK DAYTIME-APRIL 15 TO APRIL 29**

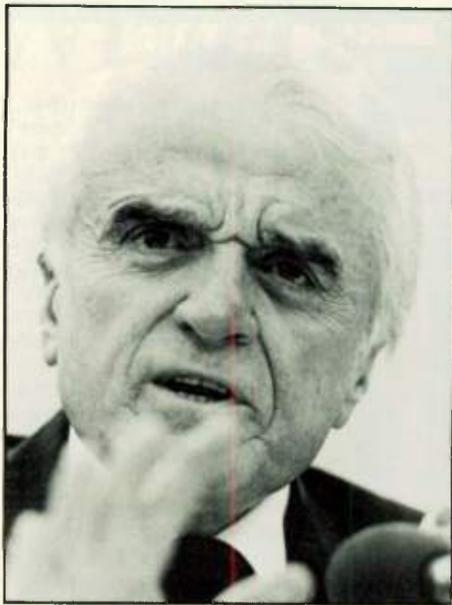


**CHICAGO 10 P.M. LOCAL NEWS**



**RATINGS/SHARES OF REGULAR PRIME-TIME NETWORK PROGRAMS FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 2 TO MAY 8**

1. Cheers	NBC 22.8/38	20. ALF	NBC 15.5/27	(t) Unsolved Mysteries	NBC 11.9/23	(t) Cagney & Lacey	CBS 9.4/15
2. A Different World	NBC 22.2/39	21. Head of the Class	ABC 15.4/25	(t) Highway to Heaven	NBC 11.9/19	59. Spenser: For Hire	ABC 9.3/18
3. Night Court	NBC 21.7/35	22. CBS Tuesday Movie	CBS 15.0/24	41. Miami Vice Special	NBC 11.6/21	60. Remembering Marilyn	ABC 8.3/14
4. The Cosby Show	NBC 21.5/39	23. Miami Vice	NBC 14.8/26	42. Designing Women	CBS 11.5/19	61. West 57th	CBS 8.2/16
5. Golden Girls	NBC 21.2/40	24. 227	NBC 14.7/30	43. Just in Time	ABC 11.4/18	62. Tour of Duty	CBS 8.1/15
6. L.A. Law	NBC 20.2/34	25. Valerie's Family	NBC 14.5/24	44. thirtysomething	ABC 11.2/19	63. Disney Sunday Movie	ABC 7.2/15
7. NBC Monday Night Movie	NBC 19.7/31	26. Hoopeman	ABC 14.0/23	(t) Jake & the Fatman	CBS 11.2/18	(t) Dolly	ABC 7.2/15
8. Amen	NBC 19.4/36	27. ABC Monday Night Movie	ABC 13.9/22	(t) Kate & Allie	CBS 11.2/19	(t) High Mountain Rangers	CBS 7.2/15
9. NBC Sunday Night Movie	NBC 19.3/31	28. In the Heat of the Night	NBC 13.6/21	47. 20/20	ABC 10.9/19	66. Our House	NBC 7.1/15
10. Who's the Boss?	ABC 18.7/32	29. Newhart	CBS 13.4/21	48. Eisenhower & Lutz	CBS 10.8/17	67. 'Slap' Maxwell	ABC 6.9/12
11. ABC Sunday Night Movie	ABC 18.5/30	30. MacGyver	ABC 13.3/22	49. Mr. Belvedere	ABC 10.7/19	68. Buck James	ABC 6.8/11
12. Murder, She Wrote	CBS 18.3/32	31. Falcon Crest	CBS 13.2/24	(t) Crime Story	NBC 10.7/18	69. Hotel	ABC 6.6/11
13. Just the Ten of Us	ABC 18.0/29	(t) Facts of Life	NBC 13.2/29	51. Full House	ABC 10.3/20	70. Houston Knights	CBS 6.5/11
14. 60 Minutes	CBS 16.3/34	33. Super Bloopers & Jokes	NBC 13.1/23	52. Smothers Brothers	CBS 10.0/17	71. Ohara	ABC 6.3/12
(t) Hunter	NBC 16.3/32	34. St. Elsewhere	NBC 12.8/22	53. Perfect Strangers	ABC 9.8/20	72. Max Headroom	ABC 4.8/9
16. Growing Pains	ABC 16.2/28	35. China Beach	ABC 12.6/22	(t) Beauty & the Beast	CBS 9.8/19		
17. Matlock	ABC 16.1/27	36. Aaron's Way	NBC 12.3/21	(t) Simon & Simon	CBS 9.8/16		
18. Knots Landing	CBS 15.6/26	37. Moonlighting	ABC 11.9/19	56. 48 Hours	CBS 9.4/17		
(t) Dallas	CBS 15.6/28	(t) Equalizer	CBS 11.9/21	(t) CBS Sunday Movie	CBS 9.4/15		



**JACK VALENTI**  
Hopes talks will continue



**TED TURNER**  
Says cable is terrific



**JOHN MALONE**  
Led cable's counterattack

Photos by Tom Reed

## Kansas City tries to bar KKK show

(Continued from Page 2)

casting of his program has raised hackles in communities over the years.

However, he says, those disputes have always ended with his show being allowed to air, or a similar, locally originated program has taken its place.

Mr. Metzger says he finds the Kansas City resolution particularly troubling because public access "is the only soap box on television that exists. It's the last vestige of free speech on television in the country. If access goes, it will radicalize people trying to get their message out to (the masses)."

He said violence is one alternative he would consider if his freedom of speech in the media was taken away.

American Cablevision, which is owned by Time Inc.'s American Television & Communications Corp., said freedom of speech isn't an issue in this case.

The city government "isn't denying them free speech, they're denying them a regular forum," said Carol Rothwell, director of public affairs at American Cablevision.

She said the community-service channel would allow the KKK and other organizations to air their opinions as guests on other programs.

Ms. Rothwell said one concern held by the cable system and city officials is the possibility of violence if KKK members produced their own local show at the system's inner-city facilities.

Two KKK members in Kansas City, who had not returned telephone calls at press time, originally asked the public-access channel to air Mr. Metzger's "Rights and Reason."

American Cablevision told them it only televised locally produced programs on the channel—a practice adopted by several cable companies around the country.

When the KKK members then proposed a local production, city council members formulated their plan to change the status of the channel, Ms. Rothwell said. #

## Cable 'monopoly' debated at hearing

(Continued from Page 3)

what sources close to the discussion described as a make-or-break point in their talks. They had hoped to reach an accord before last week's hearing.

In an interview last week, Mr. Malone blamed the Hollywood studios for the two industries' inability to cut a deal.

"I think they're having a terrible problem agreeing internally, so all they can do is throw rocks at us," said Mr. Malone. "As a result, all (Mr. Valenti) can do is engage in terrorism."

"It's just like the Palestinians. They can't agree on what to ask for, so they shoot Israelis."

Mr. Malone also said that, considering Mr. Valenti's testimony before the House telecommunications subcommittee last week, he isn't optimistic about working something out.

"Based upon (Mr. Valenti's) vitriolic attack on us, any optimism I had is rapidly evaporating," Mr. Malone said.

In response, Mr. Valenti said: "I'm hopeful

that we can continue to talk to find some resolution to this issue. MPAA has put on the table some specific proposals that the cable representatives just did not accept.

"But I believe cable is negotiating in good faith, as we certainly are," he added. "And while I can't be optimistic, I think it is worthy for us to continue to talk to see if we can find some common ground."

Earlier last week, Mr. Valenti had said the groups would keep talking, but that "frankly there is not much light at the end of the tunnel."

At the hearing itself:

- Mr. Valenti, in support of his allegation that cable is a monopoly, contended that consumers who are unhappy with their cable service have only two choices: "They can commit suicide or go bowling."

- "I think the gathering of cable power has to be dispersed or else consumers will get it where they always get it when monopolists assemble—in the neck," Mr. Valenti said.

- Mr. Malone said cable is not a monopoly "at this time," and even if it's so judged in

the future, the Federal Communications Commission already has the tools at its disposal to re-regulate the industry.

He also said that motion picture studio representatives have told him in private that their real concern is that cable will create too many channels and stimulate too much competition.

"So I get a little nervous when I hear Jack Valenti talk about the public interest," Mr. Malone said.

- Said Mr. Turner: "Cable is terrific. If it wasn't, people wouldn't be subscribing to it the way people are."

Meanwhile, cable TV representatives said they were pleased that the hearing was so low key. Not even the subcommittee's chairman, Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., stayed for the whole event.

"We were pleased that the issues were discussed in such a dispassionate atmosphere," said an NCTA spokeswoman.

In a March hearing, Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, had threatened to re-regulate cable if it didn't clean up its act. #

## First Cubs' home night game sparks a battle for TV rights

(Continued from Page 4)

president and general manager of WGN.

Despite the Cubs' allegiance to WGN, the question of who televises the debut of night baseball at the ballpark may not be the club's call.

"I don't think it's a matter of the Cubs' preference," Bryan Burns, senior vice president of Major League Baseball, said last week.

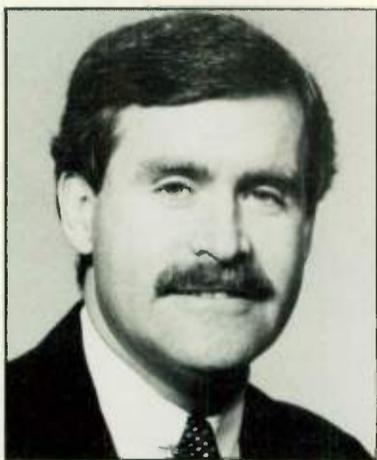
Both ABC and NBC want to televise one night game from Wrigley this season. But Major League Baseball won't do anything special to accommodate them.

"I don't see us doing any great juggling of the installation or the scheduling," Mr. Burns said.

Robert Iger, ABC Sports vice president of programming, said the network was very interested in covering the first night game because of the novelty of the event.

"The bottom line is that in television sports these days, you're always looking for an interesting twist," he said. "Given the amount of interest in Wrigley Field, that fits that category."

But Mr. Iger said there are complications with a possible network broadcast. ABC has only three dates scheduled for its prime-time Monday night baseball broadcasts during the months when the event is likely to take place—July 4, July 25



**DENNIS FITZSIMONS**  
Expects WGN to get night game

and Aug. 1.

The only prime-time dates on NBC's schedule are July 8 and Aug. 9.

But a source at NBC Sports said the network does not expect Major League Baseball to give the game to one broadcast network and risk angering the other. The source also said NBC expects the game will be carried on WGN, adding, "It's the Cubs' call."

The Cubs could play as many as eight night games at Wrigley Field

this season, according to terms set by the Chicago City Council, but Mr. Grenesko said that number depends on when the lights are finally installed.

"We're sort of geared toward the eight," he said, "but if it's not until September, we don't expect we'd do eight games. That wouldn't be in the spirit of things."

Up to 18 night games could be played at Wrigley Field in 1989.

The lights have eliminated one problem for Major League Baseball executives, who now don't have to face the annual exercise of figuring out alternative scheduling and game sites in case the Cubs make the National League playoffs. Playoff and World Series games have been played almost exclusively at night over the past several years to draw larger TV audiences.

Wrigley Field hasn't been the site of a World Series game since 1945, although the Cubs did make the playoffs in 1984.

The Cubs won their last World Series championship in 1908, eight years before the first National League game was played at Wrigley Field.

The push for the lights came from the Cubs, who had threatened to move from Wrigley Field if they couldn't play part of their schedule at night. #

## Tisch takes heat at CBS meeting

(Continued from Page 3)

ness" and told the executive he's flunked as CBS's chief executive officer.

"Your report card reads 'F,'" he told Mr. Tisch. "Your philosophy is to be the cheapest, not the best . . . Your sole commitment is to make money for yourself."

Mr. Tisch, who seemed unfazed by the stockholder criticism, reiterated his company's goal of regaining the top spot in network TV ratings.

He said he and CBS Chairman William Paley, who did not attend the meeting, were "pleased" with the current crop of new series being developed for next fall's season.

The CBS president also repeated earlier assertions that CBS's broadcast properties—including radio and TV stations and networks—are not for sale.

During the meeting, stockholders voted on several proposals, including voting against establishing a limit on the terms of members of the board.

They also voted against hiring an ombudsman to deflect complaints from special-interest groups about news coverage.

The stockholders approved the appointment of the accounting firm of Coopers & Lybrand as CBS auditors.

And they affirmed their confidence in the CBS board by voting no changes in membership.

Among the facts about CBS operations that were revealed by company officials were these:

- CBS paid more than \$17 million for legal services in 1987. The figure included \$12 million budgeted for the operation of CBS's legal department and \$5 million in fees to outside law firms.

- CBS needs all that legal help because, among other things, the company is defending itself in 31 libel suits. At the same time, its internal legal staff has been reduced to 42 lawyers from 75 three years ago.

- CBS made \$4 million in contributions to charity in 1987.

Accuracy in Media again failed in its effort to get Dan Rather fired. Other complaints by shareholders concerned the lack of light refreshments at the meeting; the shabbiness of the museum auditorium; and Loni Anderson's acting ability. #

# Davis clouds Warner deal with Lorimar

(Continued from Page 1)

The company that is to be in place after the deal is carried out will be the nation's largest producer and distributor of television programming.

New York-based Warner, a diversified communications business with a net income of \$328.1 million in fiscal 1987, is already a top producer of motion pictures and network TV shows. The latter include "Night Court," "Growing Pains" and "Head of the Class." Warner also produces ABC's new series "China Beach."

In addition, Warner has substantial holdings in the record and cable industries.

Culver City, Calif.-based Lorimar Telepictures, posting a net loss of \$83 million for the first nine months of fiscal 1987, owns nine shows now running in prime time on the major broadcast networks, including "Dallas," "Falcon Crest," "Valerie's Family" and "ALF."

Lorimar is also a major player in the first-run syndication business with programs such as "People's Court" and "Mama's Family."

Reflecting the business community's generally favorable reaction to the impending deal, Dennis McAlpine, a media analyst at Oppenheimer & Co., said it will infuse Lorimar with cash while strengthening Warner's network production activities and taking it into the new frontier of first-run syndication.

Mr. McAlpine said he expected the Warner deal to go through, de-



Wide World Photos

**MARVIN DAVIS**  
Bid not taken seriously

spite Mr. Davis' re-emergence as a potentially complicating force.

Until the deal is finalized late this summer, Warner and Lorimar will continue to operate at arms length.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA has learned that Warner has already decided to merge the two companies' TV distribution forces, but to leave their respective TV production units intact and separate.

Lorimar's distribution company would cease to exist under its current name and would be folded into Warner's distribution arm, said Geoff Holmes, a senior vice presi-

dent at Warner.

And that's about all Warner executives would offer in the way of details last week, deflecting the many questions raised about further consolidation of forces that is likely to occur when and if the deal is finalized late this summer.

Both parties earlier agreed to fold Lorimar's money-losing home video and motion picture operations into Warner.

Lorimar's chairman, Merv Adelson, is to serve as vice chairman of Warner after the sale is completed. Three key Lorimar executives—Michael Solomon, Dick Robertson and David Salzman—are to report to Robert Daly, chairman of the Warner Bros. movie and TV unit.

Messrs. Solomon, Robertson and Salzman were board members at Lorimar Telepictures, but will no longer have that status at Warner, which has a policy about not letting company executives serve on its board.

Last week's agreement in principle between Warner and Lorimar came one month after both parties had broken off earlier negotiations.

Lorimar walked away from the bargaining table, reportedly dissatisfied with the \$13 to \$14 a share Warner was offering.

After the deal came to a screeching halt April 12, Lorimar accelerated its ongoing cost-slashing efforts, ready to go the distance alone if need be, say key executives there.

"Warner saw that the boat was sailing and that we were set to oper-

## Media mergers ranked by size

1. RCA—General Electric, \$6.3 billion, 1986.
2. ABC—Capital Cities, \$3.52 billion, 1985.
3. Viacom International—National Amusements, \$3.4 billion, 1987.
4. Kohlberg, Kravis, Roberts & Co./Storer Communications—Telecommunications Inc./Comcast Corp., \$2.88 billion, 1988.
5. Storer—KKR, \$2.47 billion, 1985.
6. Metromedia station group—Rupert Murdoch, \$2.05 billion, 1985.
7. United Cable TV—United Artists Communications, \$2 billion, 1988.
8. MGM/UA Entertainment—Turner Broadcasting System, \$1.84 billion, 1985.
9. Taft Broadcasting—FMI Financial, \$1.82 billion, 1987.
10. Group W Cable—Time/TCI/Comcast, \$1.73 billion, 1986.
11. Heritage Communications—Management/TCI, \$1.61 billion, 1987.
12. Tri-Star Pictures—Coca-Cola Entertainment, \$1.5 billion, 1987.

Source: Paul Kagan Associates

ate independently if necessary. At the eleventh hour they came back," said Lorimar's Dick Robertson.

What Warner came back with was an offer to acquire Lorimar's outstanding shares of stock, valued at about \$630 million, plus assume \$570 million of Lorimar debt.

The companies will swap 0.415 common shares of Warner stock for one common share of Lorimar.

At current market value, those shares would be valued at roughly \$13.70 each, about the same figure Warner originally offered and Lorimar rejected.

Lorimar can back out if the average price of Warner stock during a

specified period before the closing does not result in a price per share of at least \$15 for Lorimar shareholders.

Warner stock, which is currently trading at about \$32 to \$33 per share, would have to rise to \$36.12 for that to happen.

"We expect the deal will go through. We will not get into a bidding contest if someone comes and offers them more," said Warner's Mr. Holmes.

If Lorimar walks away from the deal this time, Warner gets \$10 million for its troubles, plus an option to purchase 18.5 percent of Lorimar common stock at \$15 a share. #

# FCC to vote Wednesday on phasing in exclusivity

(Continued from Page 1)

distant signals if local broadcasters have acquired exclusive local rights to the shows.

Without the necessary equipment, it has been argued that cable systems would be more likely to drop distant signals altogether rather than hassle with cutting out particular programs.

"All of the commissioners are convinced that a transition is necessary, and we are sensitive to transition needs," said one agency source, who asked not to be identified. "One of the questions still in play is how much time is enough time."

An agency source also said it was expected that the commissioners would leave in place a rule that enables broadcasters to claim exclusivity of their programming up to 35 miles, but not beyond that.

In the name of "freedom of contract," the FCC had been considering eliminating the so-called 35-mile rule altogether.

The rule was originally put into place to keep wealthier stations in larger markets from being able to keep nearby smaller stations from getting access to the best syndicated programming.

However, one issue apparently unresolved at press time, according to agency sources, was how close a cable system would have to be to a TV station to be affected by the syndicated exclusivity rules.

Broadcasters have told the agency that they would be willing to live with a rule specifying that the cable systems would also have to be within 35 miles of the broadcast station.

The cable industry and superstation representatives, including Ted Turner's WTBS-TV in Atlanta and Tribune Broadcasting's WGN-TV in

Chicago, are fighting the FCC's proposal, which they believe will harm their business interests. But as of last week, it appeared that their efforts to delay the FCC's vote on Wednesday would not succeed.

United Video, a Tulsa, Okla.-based satellite company that distributes the signals of several cable superstations, including WGN and WPIX-TV in New York, is still trying to drum up opposition in Congress.

Sources said that Rep. Mike Synar, D-Okla., on United Video's behalf, had even been trying to persuade colleagues on the House telecommunications subcommittee to sign a letter protesting the agency's handling of its proposal. But, sources said, he dropped the effort when his colleagues wouldn't climb on board.

The National Association of Broadcasters and the Association of Independent Television Stations had caught wind of the letter and asked subcommittee members not to sign it.

"Mike was not thrilled about sending the letter to begin with," said an aide to Rep. Synar.

At this point, there doesn't seem to be much interest in the issue on the Senate side either, "because the bottom line is it's a money fight between the broadcasters and cable," said one key Senate aide.

Yet at least one of the FCC's opponents on the issue, Shaun Sheehan, a vice president for Tribune—which also owns the Chicago Cubs baseball team—predicts that unless the agency handles its new rule so superstations aren't dropped, the issue will become a political one.

Mr. Sheehan says observers should consider all the fuss a "handful" of backyard earth station

owners raised in Congress when the cable industry started scrambling its programming signals.

"There are millions of Cubs fans out there," says Mr. Sheehan. "Imagine what several million baseball fans are going to do."

Also, a lawsuit against the rules appears inevitable.

Mr. Turner, for one, has already threatened to take legal action if rules are approved.

Meanwhile, United Video says more than 600 cable systems, representing 6 million subscribers, are already running United Video ads aimed at churning up opposition to the proposed rules.

So far, United Video's campaign has generated more than 100,000 pieces of mail to Congress on the issue, according to Bill Sullivan, a public relations consultant to the satellite company.

"There's a lot more congressmen aware now than before," Mr. Sullivan said. #

# FCC to fire 'payola' warning shot

By DOUG HALONEN  
Staff reporter

WASHINGTON—The Federal Communications Commission intends to fire a warning shot at a meeting this Wednesday to remind broadcasters that "payola" is off limits for licensees.

Recently, law enforcement officials took action against some independent record promoters in schemes in which radio station personnel were allegedly paid to play their records. Federal law and FCC policy prohibit payola practices.

Yet Bill Johnson, deputy chief of

## AT PRESS TIME CONTINUED

tion. SBS President Raul Alarcon Jr. was unavailable for comment.

● LOS ANGELES—You TV, the fledgling cable network in search of an investor, has gone off its satellite and lost its studio space, according to sources at the facility.

● CHICAGO—Group W Cable, Chicago Cable TV/TCI and the Illinois Cable Association have filed a lawsuit against the city of Chicago over the recent imposition of a 4 percent "TV watching tax" on city cable subscribers, which they say violates the First Amendment.

● LOS ANGELES—Fall season prime-time series renewals began to trickle out last week. NBC has renewed "Highway to Heaven" and "Night Court," while sources said "Miami Vice" is expected to get renewed. Among renewed ABC shows are "thirtysomething," "Hooperman," "The Wonder Years," "Dynasty," "Growing Pains," "Head of the Class," "Who's the Boss?" and "Perfect Strangers." "Moonlighting" is expected to get renewed, while the fate of "Dolly" and "The 'Slap' Maxwell Story" was unresolved. CBS has renewed "Frank's Place."

● LOS ANGELES—King World Productions last week issued a statement from Oprah Winfrey in response to reports that some stations considering a renewal of her talk show are concerned that she will leave the program after her contract expires in 1991. Her statement said: "I will continue to do my talk show as long as it is interesting and stimulating to my audience and myself."

● PHILADELPHIA—A bankruptcy court judge on Thursday approved a minimum \$4 million settlement between Grant Broadcasting System and Orbis Communications that paves the way for FCC approval of Grant's Chapter 11 reorganization. Orbis then withdrew its challenge to the license renewal of Grant Broadcasting stations in Miami and Chicago. #

the FCC Mass Media Bureau, said the agency wants to remind broadcasters that they have certain obligations to police the conduct of their employees in this area.

"If they see smoke, they should investigate," said Mr. Johnson.

Technically, the FCC's payola rule only requires a licensee to identify, on air, the fact that a station is being paid to air particular programming.

But under federal law, payola violators can be fined up to \$10,000 and imprisoned for a year, according to Ralph Blumberg, an FCC investigator.

Mr. Blumberg said Rep. Jack Fields, R-Texas, recently wrote to FCC Chairman Dennis Patrick to express concern that the illicit practice might be growing.

He also noted that a federal grand jury in Los Angeles handed down four payola indictments in February.

Mr. Blumberg says the message the FCC hopes to get across on the payola prohibition is that "it's still around, and the FCC is still very interested in it, and so is Congress."

Added the FCC's Mr. Johnson: "We're trying to play some part in cleaning up the problem." #

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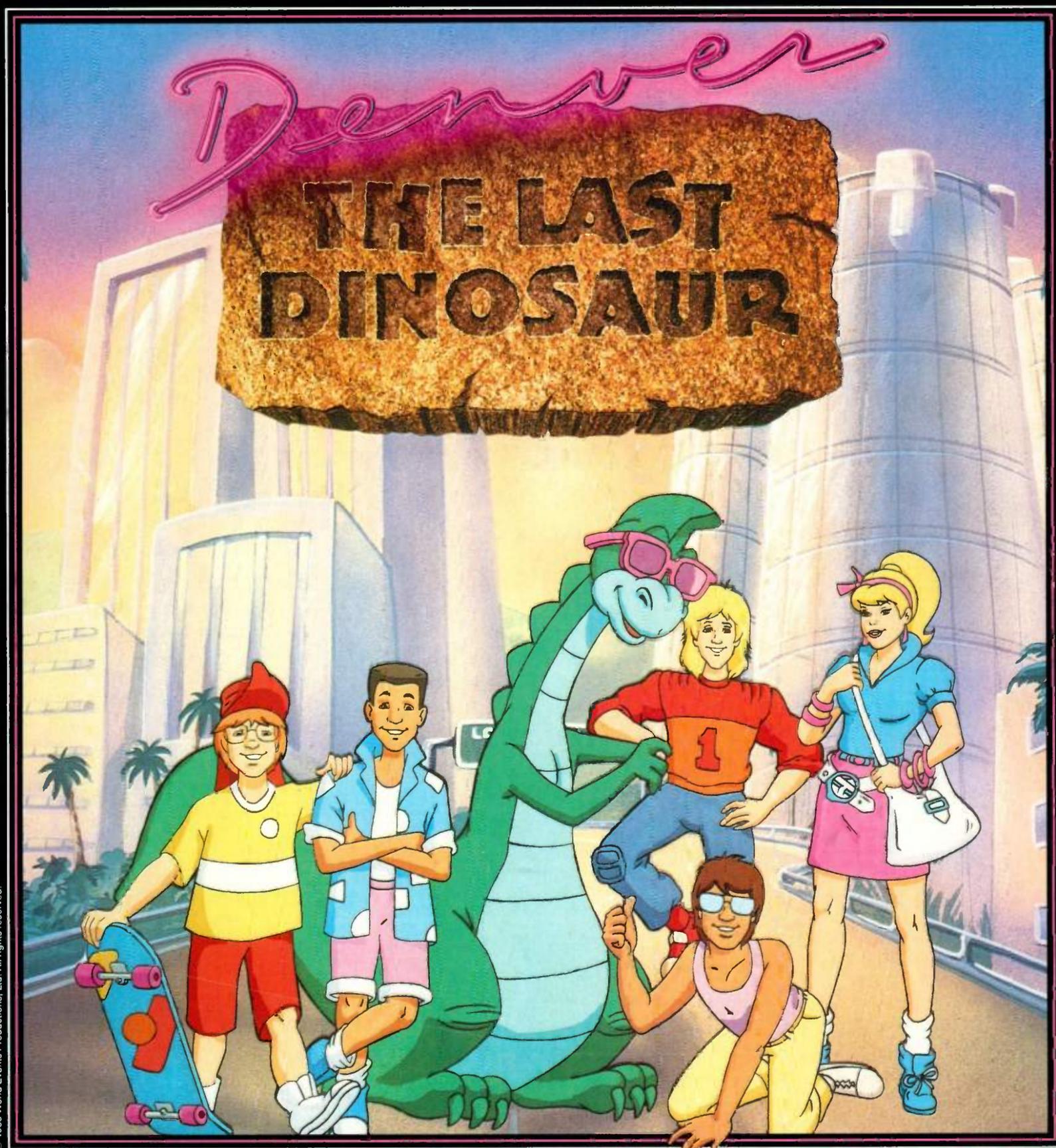


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