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Don't touch that dial, syndication changes ahead43

SPECIAL REPORT

RANKING SYNDICATION'S TOP 20 22

Vertical integration, flat growth and fewer first-run hits have profoundly changed the face of the syndication market—and the positions of its key players. BY NEAL WEINSTOCK

SYNDICATION

RACING—TO STAY IN THE GAME 27

■ **COVER STORY:** As deficit-financing becomes the norm, smaller companies are forced into survival mergers. And companies large and small are finding that, compared with three years ago, syndication today is a Risky Business. BY KATHY HALEY

COMPANIES

CAVIAR DREAMS FOR COUCH POTATOES 32

He owns the second-largest rep firm in television, and his ability to dream up hit shows is legendary. Or was, anyway. Skeptics are wondering when and if Al Masini will regain his golden programming touch. BY JUDITH NEWMAN

PRODUCTION

SYNDICATION'S MAGIC KINGDOM 39

In the midst of the gloomiest era in syndication history, Buena Vista Television has beaten the odds, launching hit shows and counting its profits from day one. BY KIM MASTERS

IN FOCUS: NATPE '89

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE 43

First-Run '89: Reworking the Hits,

BY STEPHEN DAMIANO...44

Off-Network Hours: Life After Cable?,

BY HARVEY SOLOMON...48

DIRECTORY

New to NATPE 51

This Year in Syndication 54

Movie Packages 60

EDITOR'S NOTE 6

PROGRAMMERS' CALENDAR 10

THE YEAR IN REVIEW 13

PROFILES 18
FIVE RISING STARS

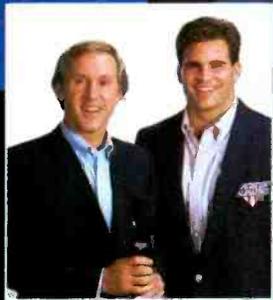
SOUND BITES 62

From an interview with Tribune Broadcasting president Jim Dowdle

RUNNING THE NUMBERS 64

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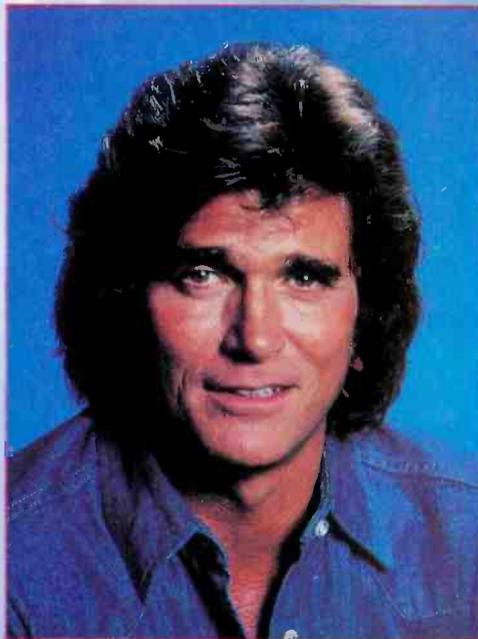
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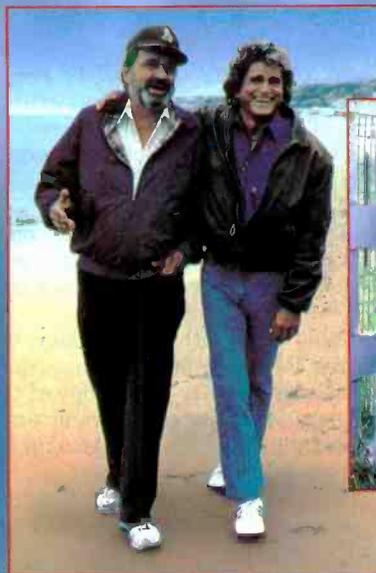
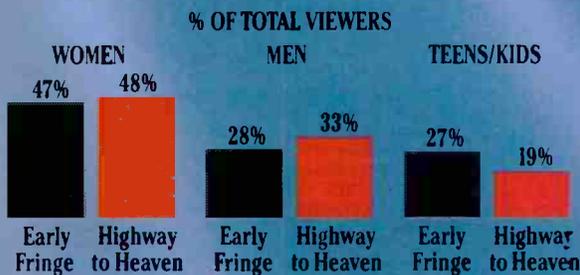
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“Little House on the Prairie” has been the #1 or #2 off-network hour in six of the past seven seasons, delivering incredibly high women (25-54) share levels. **Even in it’s 8th year, “Little House on the Prairie” still ranks #1 in early fringe on network affiliates.***

* Source: NSI, top 100 fringe affiliates

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Unlike the male skewed action/adventure hours that fail in early fringe, "Highway to Heaven" (like "Little House") has all family demos that fit perfectly with early fringe-women & teens.**



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EDITOR'S NOTE

A New Tool for Programmers

It's hard to imagine that there has ever been a more confusing, difficult and challenging time for station programming decision-makers and the producers who are selling them their wares. Competition among both stations and program suppliers has never been more intense. At the same time, the marketplace is crowded and strained. Financial pressures from buyouts and increasingly competitive advertising situations have added another level of complexity to the current business environment.

That's why we've added a 12th issue to our annual lineup with this debut of the *Channels* Programmers' Handbook. Published just after the close of the Association of Independent Television Stations annual meeting, but just before the opening of the National Association of Television Program Executives annual conference and program bazaar in Houston, our new guide is designed to help beleaguered programming professionals sort through it all.

Actually, the Handbook is an expanded version of a similar "In Focus" section we published last February on the eve of NATPE 1988. This year, however, it was clear that the topics involved were pressing enough for programmers to have their own guide. We hope you find it useful and stimulating.

Although you'll find several regular *Channels* departments in the Programmers' Handbook—such as our monthly Sound Bites interview, this month with Tribune's James Dowdle—we've created a series of new formats and features for this special issue. There's a "programmers' calendar," a series of short profiles in the front of the magazine and a set of program, film-package and distributor listings in the back.

Our in-depth features, which we like to think of as the centerpiece of *Channels*, are in this issue as timely and interesting as ever. The Programmers' Handbook includes an incisive story on TeleRep's Al Masini, written by Judith Newman, and an in-depth analysis of the Buena Vista syndication strategy, written by Kim Masters. And we hope syndicators, their customers and others throughout the industry will find Neal Weinstock's unique, unprecedented survey of the syndication industry's Top 20 companies—ranked by sales—of particular interest. Finally, Kathy Haley's provocative cover story on the difficult state of first-run syndication lends insight to what may be this winter's dominant strategic dilemma, the decision on whether to jump into a crowded market.

Much of the credit for the Handbook rests with Kathy Haley, whose work, of course, has been featured in other television business magazines and who served as guest editor of this special edition. Her knowledge of the programming business and the diligent editing and writing of Programmers' Handbook associate editor Stephen Damiano were guiding forces in leading *Channels* into something we think is new and especially timely.

Merrill Brown

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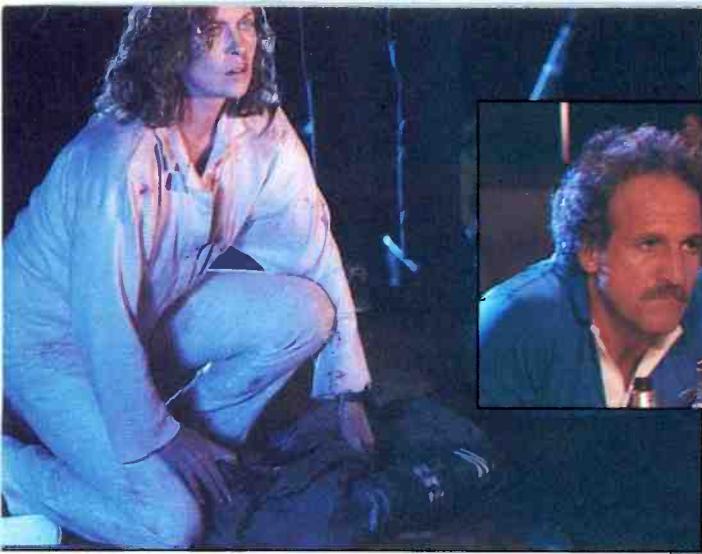


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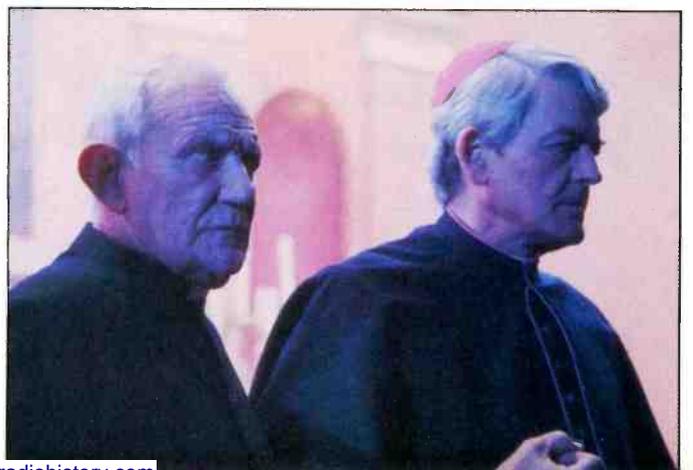
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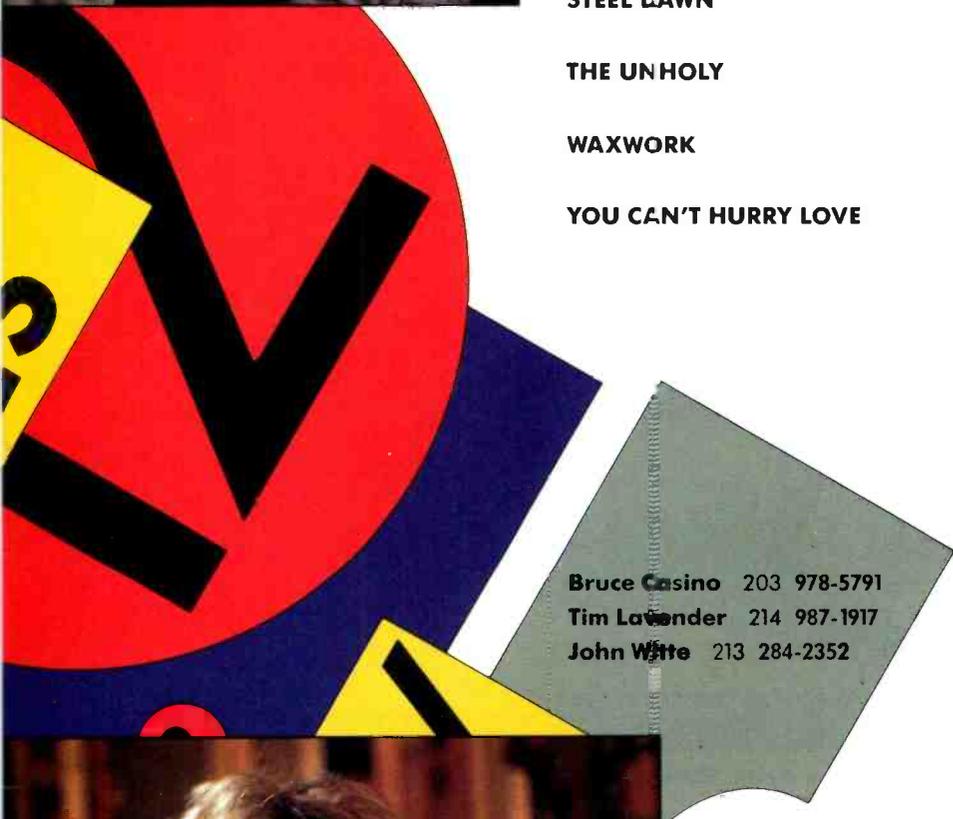




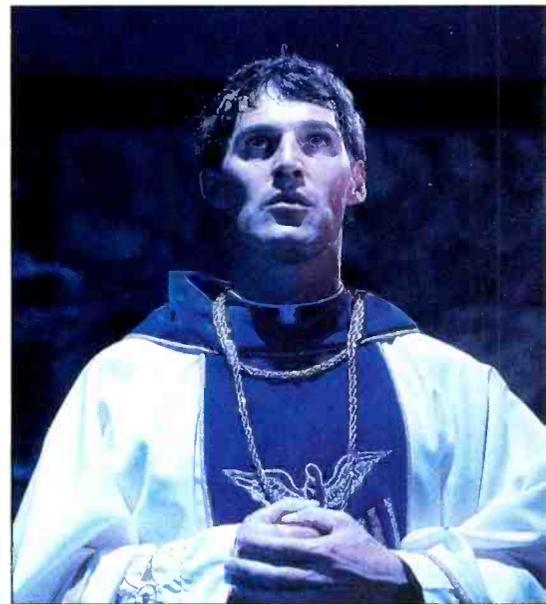
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A Programmers Calendar

A look at the major meetings, conventions and conferences for the coming year. Some dates are subject to change.

F E B R U A R Y

8-18: 29th International Television Festival of Monte Carlo

There will be 155 screening rooms at this year's Monte Carlo event. Organizers are expecting over 500 companies from more than 84 countries to be buying, selling and searching for co-production partners. Contact (in Monte Carlo): (33) 93.30.87.01

A P R I L

21-26: MIP-TV Marche des International Programmes des Television.

The 25th annual international television program market. Held in Cannes, France. Contact: (212) 967-7600

J U N E

4-10: Banff Television Festival

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the combination conference and informal market. Programs from around the world will be featured at the Park Lodge in Banff, Alberta, Canada. Contact: (403) 762-3060.

21-25: Broadcast Promotion & Marketing Executives/Broadcast Designers Association

Detroit's Cobo Hall will host BPME's 33rd annual seminar. This year's event will include promotion and design seminars, exhibits (graphic arts houses, promotional support and music companies, etc.) and an awards program. Contact: (213) 465-3777.

S E P T E M B E R

13-16: Radio-Television News Directors Association

George Will is expected to be one of the featured speakers at this year's Kansas City, Mo. international conference and exhibition. In addition to roundtable discussions, specialized group meetings and workshops, there will be an exhibit of products and services geared toward electronic news gathering. Contact: (202) 659-6510

O C T O B E R

12-16: MIPCOM

An international film and program market for TV, video, cable and satellite held at the Palais des Festivals, Cannes, France. Contact: (212) 750-8899.

21-28: MIFED

Held in Milan, Italy, the international film and documentary market (*Mercato International Film e Documentario*) will also include television product and workshops. Contact (in Milan): (39) 2. 499.7267

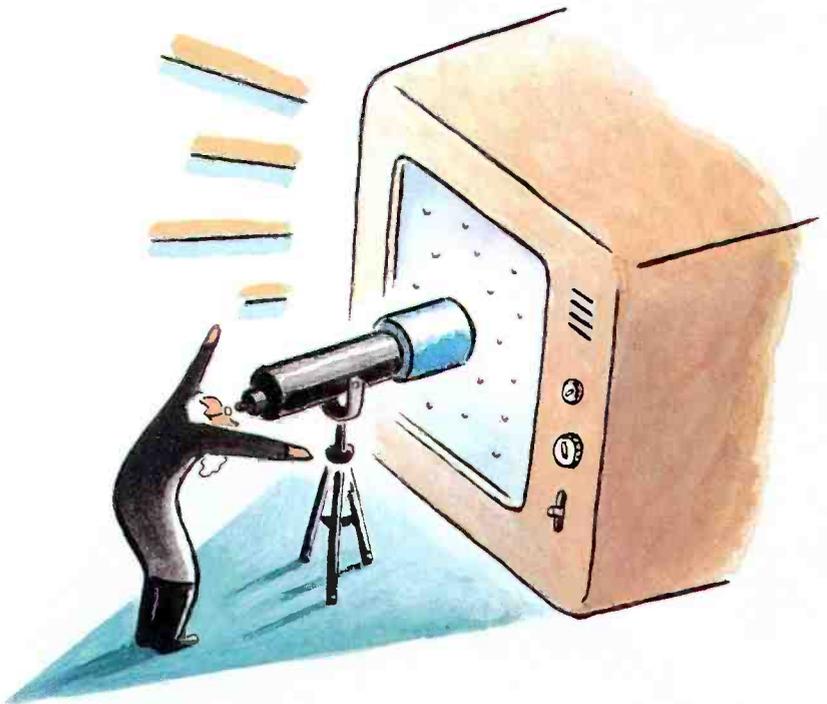
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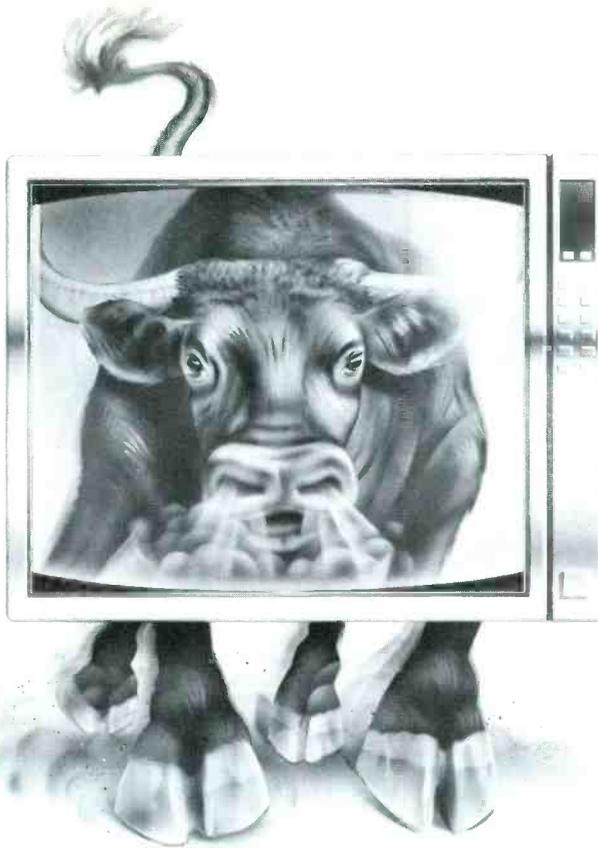
3-6: Association of Independent Television Stations

The Century Plaza in Los Angeles will be the site of the annual convention. Dates were tentative at press time. Contact: (202) 887-1970.

16-19: NATPE International

Station group meetings, seminars and an international market will all move to New Orleans in '90. Contact: (213) 282-8801.





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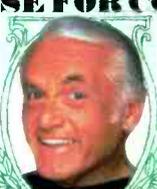
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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Last year witnessed the rise of *Geraldo* and the demise of barter pioneer Syndicast in a rocky time for syndicators. Herewith, a look back at 1988 with an eye on '89.

by Michael Burgi

The Cosby Show

With a \$10 million investment in promoting *The Cosby Show's* premiere in off-net syndication, distributor Viacom put its money where its mouth is. The 180 stations that banked \$600 million had mixed emotions about how the show has fared for them. It did improve ratings in practically every market. But Viacom's promises of a "halo effect" on shows following the *Cosby* lead-in fizzled initially. Early ratings were lower than expected, but by late November had grown to about a 10.



"Confrontainment"

The biggest show-stealers of 1988 were the confrontational and sensationalist talk shows that made big waves not only in syndication but everywhere. *The Morton Downey, Jr. Show* and *Geraldo* have totally changed the world of talk shows. Between competition for the most bizarre guests and topics and the outbursts of violence on-air that sent ratings through the roof, Mort and Geraldo have made Donahue and Oprah look tame.



Transitions

In late November, LBS Communications chairman Henry Siegel and venture capital firm Warburg Pincus agreed to buy out the company in a \$38 million deal. Grey Advertising, which owns a majority stake (100 percent of preferred stock and 70 per-

cent of common stock), will sell all preferred stock, as well as Grey chairman Edward Meyer's 10 percent of common stock to LBS management and Warburg Pincus. The 12-year-old company should make a public offering when the deal goes through.

USA Today

USA Today represents the high-water mark in new product investment for first-run syndication. Unfortunately, the show debuted at a 5 rating, far below the 9 promised to advertisers. Steve Friedman, the man who turned the *Today* Show around, couldn't make this the hit it was touted to be. One month after the show had been on-air, people were asking when, not if, the show would be pulled. Friedman turned day-to-day responsibility for the show over to Jim Bellows only two weeks later.



Even Grant Tinker's programming know-how couldn't help GTG's *USA TODAY* earn respectable ratings or time periods.

Financial Interest and Syndication

The fin-syn rulings that limited the powers of the three networks years ago, might very well change in the next year. The year saw the nets suggest proposals for change, asking for control to syndicate or do whatever they want with half of all but a limited amount of prime-time programming. As for consent decrees—which forbid networks from owning all but a limited amount of prime-time fare—which will disappear in 1990, syndicators are anxious to see if the regulatory pendulum will swing in favor of the networks.

Warner/Lorimar

As early as last March, Warner Communications and Lorimar Telepictures started to discuss merger possibilities. Just as talk turned serious mid-year, however, the deal hit a snag in Warner's joint TV-station ownership with Chris-Craft. As of late November '88, the deal had yet to be inked, which some analysts see as a blessing for Warner, since the holdup helped to bring the price down. With both companies' production and syndication experience, the Warner/Lorimar merger would make for the largest syndicator in the country.



AGB TV Research

A rival people-meter service to Nielsen and Arbitron, British-owned AGB Television Research shut down operations in August, following insufficient commitments from broadcasters, cable operators and advertising agencies, and a merger with Media Mark Research. The shut-down of the service required a \$50 million write-off, in part to pay for removal of 3,500 people-meter units.

Great American/Spelling/Laurel

One response to the tougher syndication market of the past several years found companies merging their operations or forging alliances. In a complex deal, Great American Communications



merged its Worldvision distribution unit with prolific TV-production house Aaron Spelling Productions, creating a company to be known as Spelling Inc. Spelling later acquired Laurel Entertainment, a small production company that puts out *Tales from the Darkside*.



Crossover to Cable

Last year witnessed a major jump of off-network programming to basic cable, with shows like *Murder, She Wrote* and *Miami Vice* airing on USA Network. Lifetime also got a hold of *Cagney & Lacey* and *Spenser: For Hire*. USA has become a haven for off-net product, featuring such shows as *Private Eye*, *My Sister Sam* and *Diamonds*.

"Tabloid TV"

Similar in many ways to the "confrontainment" talk-shows, tabloid TV looks for the controversial for its program content. First in line and most successful is Fox's *A Current Affair*; a locally produced show out of Fox's New York flagship station, WNYW, that went national in January with the distributive power of Twentieth Century Fox.

Clones are rushing to cash in on the hype. Orion aggressively pushed the half-hour strip *Crimewatch Tonight* at the end of 1987 but cleared too few markets, so it will try again this NAT-

PE. King World hastily issued *Inside Edition*, another half-hour strip, earlier this month, having cleared 60 percent of the country by



late November '88. To boot, the potent Geraldo Rivera announced plans to team with Tribune for a weekly hour show called *The Investigators*.

Must-carry

Independents continue to fight the lack of must-carry rules, being the group with the most to lose if no reinstatement of the rules emerges. As for the other factions with a stake in the issue, the NCTA released a report in September showing that cable operators rarely drop stations. The NAB, on the other hand, released a study indicating that close to 20 percent of stations that responded are not being carried on at least one cable system that would have had to carry them under must-carry. The FCC remained middle-of-the-road throughout the year.

MCA/King World & LBS/Casablanca IV

In April, two big-league hitters in TV production, MCA and King World Productions, planned a \$20 million joint venture to produce programming aimed at first-run, network and cable. Product from the new company should appear later this year.

On a smaller note, LBS Communications and Casablanca IV formed an alliance of sorts to co-produce shows

for first-run, network, cable and home video. In the arrangement, Casablanca IV would handle distribution and LBS would cover media-sales.

Paramount Television

Gulf + Western's entertainment concern has brought a new status to the syndication market over the last few years by introducing big-budget quality to its shows. The lavish *Star Trek: the*



Syndicated Exclusivity

The FCC adopted a new set of syndex rulings in May of last year, giving broadcasters the clout to enforce exclusivity of programs against cable systems that bring in the same programming on distant signals. Broadcasters are calling for changes that will make it easier for them to police the ruling. Cable operators are in an uproar over the entire decision. United Video, which carries various superstations, will challenge the ruling in the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Demises

A few smaller companies folded—namely Syndicast and Access Syndication—in 1988. In what was a very tough year due to a soft, overcrowded market, Access had seen many recent ventures fail, including *Don King's Only in America* and the animated *Camp Malibu*. Twenty-year-old barter pioneer Syndicast, best known for the *D.C. Follies* series, died last August when its Australian parent company's creditors called in outstanding loans.

Next Generation established itself as the highest-rated syndicated drama of the year. *War of the Worlds* has fared well too, ranking within the top 10 for season-to-date Nielsen Syndication Service ratings in late November.

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*"She opened the door to a world of evil, not expecting
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JAMAICA INN
Jane Seymour · Patrick McGeehan



*"One woman used her power. One woman used her beauty.
One woman used her cunning and one little girl...was just used."*

LITTLE GLORIA...HAPPY AT LAST
Bette Davis · Angela Lansbury

*"She was determined to make it on her own
in the New World...until he showed her a world she had
never known before."*

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Rising Stars

Five young innovators in the station and syndication business who are carving a niche in sales, acquisitions, promotion and programming.

JOE SWATY

Can a man who arrests his station's advertisers to get them to a sales presentation and programs a "Dialing for Chickens" promotion really be the station manager of the number one indie in his market? Can a man who gives away coffin-shaped water beds and "steals" the winning numbers from another station's promotional game be a success? Yes, if the man behind the mayhem is Joe Swaty, station manager at KLRT in Little Rock, Ark.

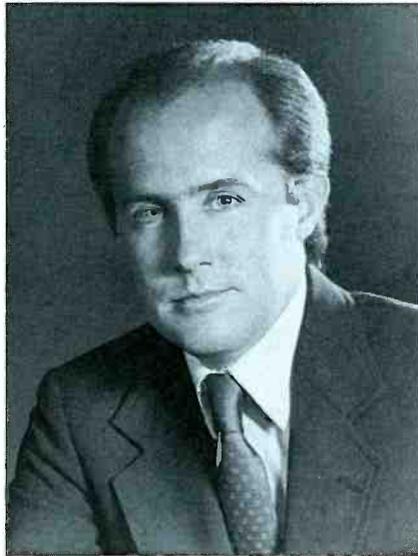
Swaty, one of KLRT's original staffers five years ago, prides himself on being offbeat. While he admits that his station might be a "typical" indie in terms of its programming, he believes ratings can be enhanced by atypical promotion.

MMT associate director of programming Joe Weber agrees. Recalling Swaty's scratch-and-sniff program-comparison card that kicked off the fall '87 season (the competition's programs were stinky; KLRT's smelled like a rose), Weber calls Swaty "one of the most creative people in the business," and adds with a laugh, "We call him Crazy Joe Swaty."

For Swaty, crazy and creative are almost interchangeable. His strong suit, and the part of the job he seems to enjoy the most, is being the idea man behind KLRT's almost year-round promotions. For that reason, he has trouble picturing himself as a stereotypical station executive.

"The further into management you get, the farther you often are from the creative process," he says.

Asked to describe his current programming/promotion philosophy, Swaty concludes: "I like to consider it selling toothpaste. Every show or movie is a program-length commercial for the station sandwiched in between



commercials for clients."

STEVE DAMIANO

TOM CERIO

It's not every day that a college graduate with a degree in forestry goes from running a tree business with his father to selling television programming. But for Tom Cerio, it worked like a dream. "Well, I was always good at selling things," says the 34-year-old senior vice president and national sales manager for Orion Television Syndication.

And, when he's selling Orion product, Cerio says he wants to know exactly what his customer wants, and to accommodate him as much as possible. "You have to know what the group is trying to accomplish," he insists. "If you sell like that, you're always going to do the right thing by your client, and they'll trust you and come back to you for business."

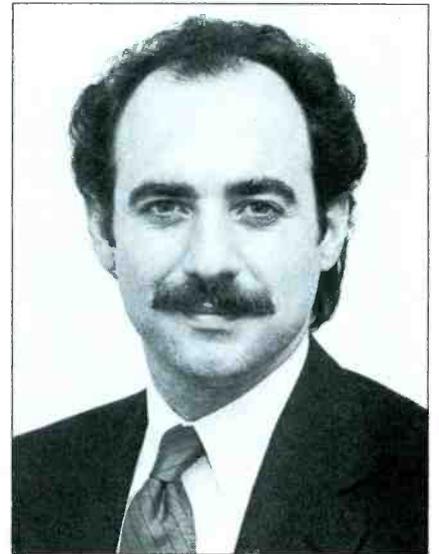
Just before Christmas, Cerio turned

his energies to *Crimewatch Tonight*, Orion's bid in the ever-more-crowded reality-show field. He is optimistic about the fact that many big syndicated ventures have bitten the dust, but tempers that optimism with the realization that a rash of failures could spell trouble for his shows, too. "On the one hand," he muses, "I'm happy that there are plenty of fallouts so I can come in to plug up the holes. On the other hand, I'm scratching my head and thinking this is *not* so great."

In Cerio's eight years with Orion, he has learned a lot from his bosses, namely Jamie Kellner (now with Fox) and Roger Adams (now with the research and consulting firm Adams and Thomas), who first suggested Cerio work for Orion (still called Filmways in 1980). "Roger taught me what is now one of my most important tools," Cerio recalls.

"That's how to research the market or group that I'm about to sit down with."

MICHAEL BURGI



SCOTT STONE

It might be a cliché, but Scott Stone, president of Stone Television, says he feels successful when the programming he produces entertains people. Not exactly words of wisdom from a rising star, but Stone says at 32 he's still too young to pontificate.

And, though his fledgling production company is behind two current trendy syndicated hits, *Fun House* (kids game show) and *Freddy's Nightmares* (horror anthology), Stone isn't out to change the face of syndication. Yet.

Stone Television opened its doors in July '88. Prior to that Stone was senior vice president of first-run programming for Lorimar Telepictures.

"I'm not a company person," says Stone by way of explaining his departure from Lorimar. "I'm more productive on my own. Even though now I've got four times the pressure, I've got half as much stress." Stone hasn't com-



pletely cut his ties to his former employer, however. He currently has an exclusive output deal with Lorimar.

Stone, like others in the syndication business, sees tough times ahead for producers. With fewer time periods available and syndicators willing to bankroll only tested ideas, Stone says producers "have to back into the parameters of what the syndicators want. We're being reactive instead of proactive."

While that may upset Stone somewhat—he'd like to produce a variety show, but realizes the chances at this point are slim—he is, at heart, a pragmatist. "I'm a firm believer in the television business being a business," he admits.

But it's not the only business that Stone is interested in. His aspirations extend beyond television, though he has no plans to desert the medium in the near future. "Eventually I'd like to try producing a Broadway musical," he says, "but I've got a lot of time. I'm not impatient."

STEVE DAMIANO

PATRICE MOHN

When Patrice Mohn, station manager for independent WXIX in Cincinnati, talks about programming, she talks insistently about responsibility. Her recent promotion from program director changed her title, she says, but not her philosophy. "Being station manager means [dealing with] more corporate philosophy and station



policy," she says. "But you are still the conscience of the station in terms of being responsible for what's on the air."

Mohn has been ahead of the market in recent seasons in developing new programming strategies for independents. WXIX was one of the first Fox network affiliates to offer a third night of original prime time series by programming it locally. She cites the station's maturity (it is 20 years old) and the support of the community as the reasons behind WXIX's ability to challenge the typical independent-station format, and succeed in doing so.

Having started her career on the operations side of a network affiliate, Mohn has seen dramatic changes in the field: "I've seen the video marketplace change. Even 'video marketplace' is a new term. Ten years ago, you had your local stations that decided what they would present to the community. It is a different marketplace now. Today I'm competing against other kinds of media for [viewers'] attention."

With this increased competition comes the need to find new ways to capture the audience. Mohn is particularly adept at finding the programs to do just that. Notes Mark Robbins, senior vice-president/Midwest off-net sales manager for Lorimar: "She'll take a very cautious approach and not let you know how bad she really wants a show. She knows how to negotiate and still be very straightforward, and that's what makes her a pro."

SALLIE OGG

MICHAEL GERBER

For Michael Gerber, president of acquisitions and first-run programming for Viacom, newly forged program alliances, a burgeoning film library and worldwide syndication prospects are important, but not nearly as important as the people behind the deals.

"I look for the people, the company and the producers first, not the product or the film," says Gerber. "Establish a good relationship and then you have the basis for making a deal."

Gerber followed this philosophy in his early days with Columbia Pictures and Allied Artist and has continued the practice through his eight years with Viacom. It seems to be working. Through the relations he established with Cannon, for instance, Viacom was able to acquire over 100 films. In addition, Gerber has acquired over 600 other feature films, bringing the Viacom library to about 2,000.

The deal that seems to mean the most to Gerber was the launching of the series of lost episodes from *The Honeymooners*. Gerber became friends with Jackie Gleason and his wife while previewing episodes Gleason hadn't seen in over 30 years. "It was one of



my greatest experiences," Gerber says.

While Gerber acknowledges that competition is fierce for first-run programming, he says the result of that competition will be better programming. Using *Double Dare* as an example, Gerber says syndicators will have to continue devising innovative programming or coming up with new twists on old themes.

"You have to keep changing the bells and whistles," explains Gerber. And that's pretty much Gerber's strategy for moving Viacom into the '90s. "We want to continue our aggressive activity in providing [new programming] and acting as a leading supplier in first-run across the board."

BARBARA ELLIS

FOX HOLLYWOOD T

ALMOST YOU

May '89

A young couple's marriage falls on the rocks when a beautiful nurse arrives on the scene. A modern romantic comedy that explores the light and dark sides of love in the 80's!

Starring Brooke Adams • Griffin Dunne
Karen Young • Marty Warr

Produced by: Mark Lipson/
Directed by: Adam Brooks/
Screenplay by: Mark Horowitz

World Broadcast Television Premiere

JOSHUA THEN AND NOW

July '89

An outrageous family scandal forces a successful media personality to re-evaluate his turbulent life. An intimate, funny and bittersweet look at man who comes face to face with a major mid-life crisis.

Starring James Woods • Gabrielle Lazure
Alan Arkin • Michael Sarrazin
Linda Sorensen

Produced by: Robert Lantos and Stephen J. Roth/
Directed by: Tet Kotcheff/
Screenplay by: Mordecai Richler/
Based upon the novel by: Mordecai Richler

World Broadcast Television Premiere

KENNY & CO.

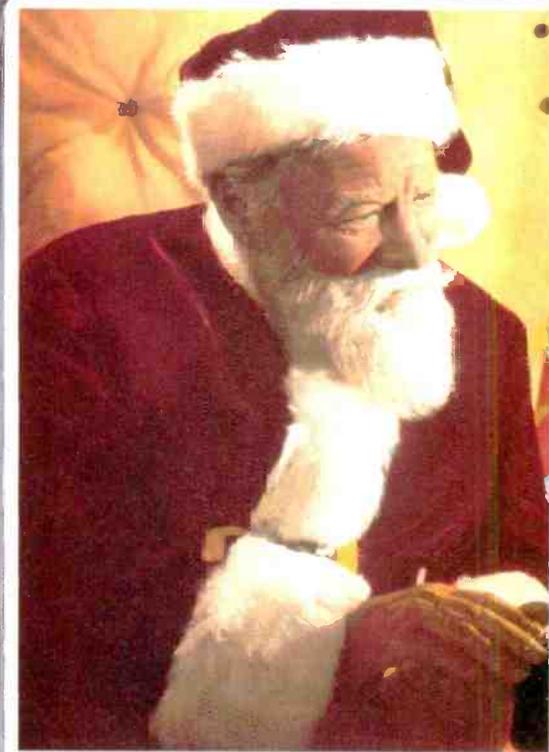
October '89

Meet Kenny, an almost-teenager who enlists his friends in a fight for the right to think, act and play like a child in his adult world. A compassionate and funny look at the vital, sensitive and painful process of growing up.

Starring Dan McCann • Michael Baldwin
Jeff Roth

A Don Coscarelli Film
Written, Produced and Directed by:
Don Coscarelli

World Broadcast Television Premiere



MIRACLE ON

November-December '89

New York City is turned upside down when a departed
This Christmas classic has been lovingly restored
A modern "miracle" that offers

Starring Maureen O'Hara • John Payne • Edmund Gwenn •
Produced by: William Perlberg/
Directed by: George



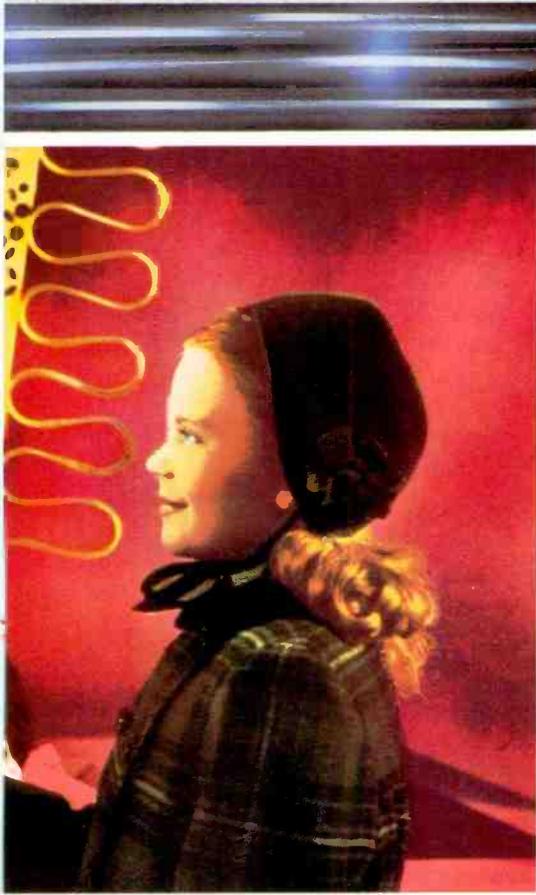
Starring "Miracle on 34th Street," winner of three Academy Awards, now in brilliant, improved color! America's favorite holiday picture, for Nov-Dec '89 and Nov-Dec '90.

Plus six special features perfect for holidays or

any other days. Including five World Broadcast Television Premieres.

Available on an advertiser-supported basis. Specially edited for limited commercial interruptions. Two runs during a 4-week window.

HEATRE 1989/1990



34TH STREET

November-December '90

ment store Santa insists he is the *real* Kris Kringle! and is now featured in brilliant, improved color, tremendous appeal for the entire family.

Gene Lockhart • Natalie Wood • William Frawley • Thelma Ritter
Seaton/Written for the screen by: George Seaton

EATING RAOUL

January '90

A blasé, middle-class American couple inadvertently discover that murder can be profitable. An outrageous black comedy that features three con artists who'll stop at nothing to fulfill the American Dream.

Starring Mary Woronov • Paul Bartel
introducing Robert Beltran as "Raoul"
Also Starring Ed Begley, Jr.
Hamilton Camp • Buck Henry
and Susan Sager as "The Dominatrix"

Produced by: Anne Kimmell/Directed by:
Paul Bartel/Written for the screen by:
Richard Blackburn and Paul Bartel

World Broadcast Television Premiere



THE DAY CHRIST DIED

Easter '90

This Easter family special recounts the plot to discredit and destroy Jesus Christ, and details the far-reaching consequences of His life and teachings. A powerful epic, filmed in the exotic North African land of Tunisia.

Starring Caris Sarandon • Colin Blakely
Keith Mitchell • Jonathan Pryce
and
Hope Lange as "Claudia"

Produced by: Martin Manulis/Directed by:
James Cellan Jones/Teleplay by: James Lee
Barrett and Edward Anhalt



KIDCO

July '90

Dekie Cessna is an 11-year-old entrepreneur who created quite a stir when he deposited \$30,000 of his own hard-earned money in a local bank!

Starring Scott Schwartz • Clifton James

Produced by: Frank Yablans and David
Niven, Jr./Directed by: Ronald F. Maxwell
Screenplay by: Bennett Trierer

World Broadcast Television Premiere



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TELEVISION

RANKING SYNDICATION'S TOP 20

Consolidation, flat growth, vertical integration and a handful of big hits have meant new stars and bit players. By Neal Weinstock

The business has changed. You can't live and die from domestic syndication anymore," says Al Rush, chairman of the MCA Television Group, the syndicator with the highest revenue for the 1987-88 season. "We know that numbers are down in first-run and network reruns. And we know that other syndicators are nipping at our heels. We don't want to see syndication as a finite world. There's international syndication, home video and cable."

Five years of tumultuous change, from the boom years of 1983-85, through the bankruptcies and debt-amassing ownership changes the station community underwent in '86, to the buyer's market and consolidation of '87-88, have left a syndication business very different from the one that entered the 1980s. Fewer companies now play the game and the names of some of the "majors" have changed.

To get a handle on which companies generated the lion's share of revenue during the 1987-88 season, and which are likely to do so in 1988-89, we ranked the top 20 syndicators by total for both of those years (see chart). Findings point to several trends and raise a few questions.

U.S. domestic syndication as a whole has seen its annual growth slow just as it reaches the \$3 billion milestone in revenue. Our research projects renewed 25 percent growth in 1989, however, with most coming from the companies in the

top 20. That's one change made obvious by our list of the 20 big ones; the sharks are eating the guppies. Another is the growing importance of first-run, which just a few years ago was a small category largely ignored by the major studios. Today it contributes heavily to the revenues of most syndicators, including the majors.

Most importantly, the business continues to be highly changeable, as hits and misses cause big fluctuations in most companies' total billings from year to year. LBS, for instance, looks to drop 9 percent this year; it may well climb 30 percent in 1989-90.

A few trends emerge very quickly from our chart: Vertical integration; flat growth except for a few already established hits; and one big question mark: Are future hits or programming trends visible among these numbers?

Perhaps conglomeratization and flat overall growth portend a near future with a lack of huge hits and with few surprises.

No surprise that most of the major powers are diversified progeny of the old Hollywood, now equipped with TV stations and cable networks. But we were surprised at the relative closeness of the top and bottom of the scale: Many industry executives contacted expected the top few syndicators to rate about \$400 to \$600 million each in revenues. Partly, we discovered as we added up probable income from each show and feature package, the lower results are more a coincidence of when hits become available.

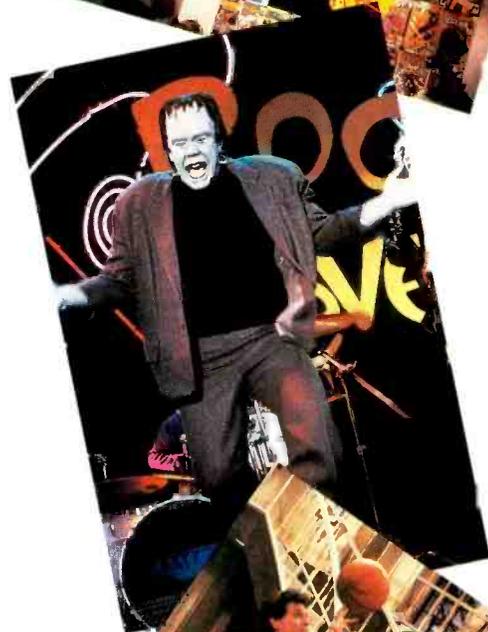
Roger King's three first-run hits, including *Jeopardy!* and *Wheel of Fortune*, put King World among the top billers for 1987-88.

Cosby begins after most of the period observed; *Cheers* piled up most of its dollars just before; and several big feature packages are just now coming on stream. A list compiled two years ago, or two years in the future, would show radical income swings. Hits make a difference. Is their paucity now the beginning of a trend? Our numbers support a variety of opinions.

"If you look at the new season introductions, there are no new hits," says George Back, president of All American Television, a company, like many, just a few tenths of a market-share percent too small to make our number 20. He thinks hits are being squeezed out by audience

fragmentation and by those hits that already dominate syndication's few major time slots. "The risk ratio this year is probably 90 percent, given the dominance of those shows that are already successful in the important time periods. What do you do without hits? Do you fold up shop? Either that or you devise a way to stay in business without hits."

Back believes that, beyond the top companies, there is now room in the syndication business only for niche marketers. "The relevance of your list is lost on the small syndicator. We're in a different business. I can't afford to buy a TV station or a movie studio. Traditional syndication is dead," he says. "I don't think



.....

MCA chairman Al Rush is looking beyond domestic syndication, with shows such as *My Secret Identity*, *The Munsters Today* and *Charles in Charge*, to keep the company at the top of the syndication charts.

.....

The Top Syndicators: Rankings Explained

Our ranking of the top 20 syndicators isn't perfect. The companies are ranked here by gross revenues from U.S. domestic syndication, from both barter ad sales and cash sales to stations, for the 1987-1988 and 1988-1989 TV seasons. Getting the information to do this isn't easy; it involves some level of guesswork for almost every company on the list. Even beyond the guesswork, there must be some caveats to such a list, because we inevitably compared some apples to oranges to bananas. Herewith, the fruits of our labors explained.

First, the most obvious anomalies. Barter firms Camelot, IAS, and Teletrib are included on the chart, though their sales add revenue to other syndicators who are also on the chart. One might plausibly claim that the barter reps are not true syndicators and also that money that passes through their hands is counted by us more than once. Be that as it may, the bulk of their business competes directly with that of the other companies listed; their power ought to be understood in context. Our estimate of the industry total has been adjusted to count their sales only once.

That total is roughly on par with figures calculated by Tim Duncan, executive director of the trade group ASTA (Advertiser Syndicated Television Association). Some industry analysts come in higher, a few lower.

Most companies on the list are publicly owned or are owned largely by other publicly owned corporations. But there's only so much information that may be gleaned from financial statements. Not all companies report revenue from shows sold on a multi-year basis over the same time span; we adopted the standard method of crediting revenue as shows appear, not when sold.

Also, fiscal years do not all coincide with our target dates, so some interpolation between quarterly and annual results was necessary. Many large corporations give almost no information about their relatively small syndication divisions: The reports of News Corp. (Twentieth Century Fox Television) and Westinghouse Electric (Group W) were notoriously useless. Therefore, our other resources became more critical.

The most important of these was a study of all programs and features marketed by each company, analyzed in terms of probable price per show or minute (based, in a thoroughly scientific manner, on scuttlebutt and off-the-record remarks), and number of clearances (more objectively verifiable). In conversation as in financial statements, it can be surprisingly easy to confuse revenue with inventory. Surely, we made some mistakes here, too, but comparing these figures to corporate statements helped catch problems in both methods.

Finally, the opinions of competitors helped guide us to weed out the most egregious errors. But such opinions can be misleading; our chart rates several companies substantially lower or higher in revenue than competitors guessed or executives claimed. Presume a 10 percent margin of error for past results. For 1989, possible give-backs for under-delivery, bad debt, etc., cloud the crystal ball another couple of points worth. Fox may be our most likely candidate here for an undercount. Those most vulnerable to '89 overcount due to give-backs and tough ad sales in a possible recession may include Viacom, with its huge boost from *Cosby*, MTV Networks, and other first-time off-net income, and the firms that carry large advertising inventories, such as IAS, Teletrib, Camelot and LBS. **N.W.**

The Top 20 Syndicators

Rank '87-'88	'88-89	Company	'87-88 billings (millions)	'87-88 Market Share	'88-89 billings (millions)	Industry Segment
1	2	MCA	\$340	11.3%	\$370	Studio, B'caster, Cable net., Barter, Cash
▲ 2	3	King World	\$287	9.5%	\$368	Barter, Cash
▲ 3	1	**Warner Bros.	\$278 (w/Lorimar total is \$365 for #1 position)	9.2% (12.1% w/Lorimar)	\$286 (\$385 w/Lorimar)	Studio, B'caster Barter, Cash
4	4	Paramount	\$275	9.1%	\$300	Studio, Cable net., Barter, Cash
5	6	Columbia	\$243	8.0%	\$279	Studio, Barter, Cash
6	7	Fox	\$195	6.5%	\$225	Studio, B'caster, Barter, Cash
▼ 7	11	LBS	\$164	5.4%	\$150	Barter, Cash
8	9	Turner	\$159	5.3%	\$195	B'caster, Barter, Cash
▼ 9	12	*Teletrib	\$152	5.0%	\$127	Barter rep.
▲ 10	8	*Camelot	\$150	5.0%	\$199	Barter rep.
▲ 11	4	Viacom	\$128	4.2%	\$300	B'caster, Cable net., Barter, Cash
▲ 12	10	*IAS	\$122	4.0%	\$165	Barter rep.
▼ 13	18	Multimedia	\$110	3.6%	\$ 66	Barter, Cash
14	—	**Lorimar Telepictures	\$ 87	2.9%	\$ 99	Studio, B'caster, Barter, Cash
14	14	Reeves	\$ 87	2.9%	\$ 93	Studio
16	14	Orion	\$ 85	2.9%	\$ 93	Studio
▲ 17	13	Buena Vista	\$ 79	2.7%	\$123	Studio, Cable net.
18	16	Tribune	\$ 70	2.7%	\$ 78	B'caster, Barter, Cash
19	19	Worldvision	\$ 52	1.8%	\$ 60	Animation studio, B'caster, Barter, Cash
▲ 20	17	Group W	\$ 50	1.7%	\$ 82	B'caster, Barter, Cash
	20	***MGM	\$ 41	1.4%	\$ 45	Studio
		***Orbis	\$ 40	1.4%	\$ 44	Barter rep.
		Others	\$241			

Industry Total: \$3,021 million, 1987-88.

All figures are estimates based on public financial records, analysis of shows for sale and probable prices, estimates of other financial analysts, and, in some cases, corroboration by company executives.

▲ Fortunes expected to rise sharply

▼ Fortunes unfortunate; decline expected

* Barter rep companies' revenues include monies paid in turn by them to producers (like all syndicators who represent other producers' products) or other syndicators. The latter case is of more significance here; a few of these companies are also listed. Camelot's total, for instance, includes about \$50 million that also must be

counted for Disney (Buena Vista), with most of the rest of the company's billings also counted in parent-company King World's total. IAS sells \$30 million to \$40 million each for its three parents, Paramount, Columbia and Orbis. Teletrib, a joint venture of TeleRep and Tribune, sells over \$30 million of Tribune's product with the remainder split among time on many syndicators' shows.

**Lorimar-Telepictures and Warner Bros. counted as separate companies for '87-88, though both are now parts of Warner Communications.

***MGM is a strong possibility for #20 in 1988-89, while several other companies are very close in size, Orbis Communications probably being a next-best bet.

this is a hit-driven industry anymore.”

But finding others who agree—at least on the record—isn't easy. “The program is still the name of the game,” says Michael J. Lambert, president of domestic syndication for Twentieth Century Fox. “You're not going to get me to say that marketing muscle is much more important now than ever. Look at all the buys of *USA Today* based on the muscle of a company. Put it all together and it results in failure.” By the same token, Lambert doesn't buy the theory that the market is too tight for more hits because of the continued success of recent hits. “Access is hot,” he says. “It wouldn't be if things were really tight. But a lot of stations have *USA Today* and *Family Feud*, and they just aren't working.”

Indeed, Lambert thinks the numbers show that his *A Current Affair* will be stepping into many a new access slot. Surprisingly enough, Roger King, chairman of the board of King World, may well agree; he's readying *Inside Edition* for the same market. “Last year was tight; not now,” he says. “Last year we took our time and didn't bring a show out. We just listened to the market. We saw that with a show like *A Current Affair*, we could do better.”

King would agree with Lambert that the market is driven by the quality of the program. But quality programs have been known to languish in nonquality slots—like *Wheel of Fortune* before King World made it a Cinderella.

“We zero in on time periods and markets, looking for the under-performers,” says King. “There are a lot of under-performers right now. This is not a tight market.”

Yet the numbers show that syndicators without their feet in other markets seem to be falling away. Against the forces of today's very competitive syndication market, mostly the vertically integrated survive. Even the greatest exception to this rule, King World, recently bought a broadcast station and expects to buy more. Observe the extent to which even the mid-level players on the chart combine strengths in broadcasting and other forms of program distribution. Six of the second ten, 13 of 20 are part and parcel of broadcasters, networks or theatrical distribution.

In the two years under scrutiny, strong growth is eluding all but a few companies in syndication. King World, Viacom and Buena Vista are growing on the strength of a handful of hits; most of the other growth in U.S. syndication may be attributable to strong feature packages echoing a theatrical business that seems far stronger than syndication is these days. Hits may well still drive the business, but those hits tend to be generated out of other divisions of con-

glomerated syndicators.

In recognition of that, says King, last summer his company began its “R&D Network,” a consortium of 21 stations including its own recent Buffalo purchase and others from the Group W, Post-Newsweek, Gillett, Midwest Communications and Scripps-Howard groups. The stations generate new show concepts and test them out regionally; King World gets distribution rights in return for discounted programming.

Diversification would seem to be far easier for King than for other independent competitors. “We do not have infinite opportunities for growth,” says Henry Siegel, chairman and president of LBS Communications. “We have rather finite opportunities as an industry. You can only fill so many time slots. I think as most people would like to do, we are moving into cable and our company has an opportunity to build in international distribution.”

For companies a few notches lower on the list, corporate combinations may be attractive but must be nurtured carefully... and luck is an admitted component in at least one showing: Worldvision saw “the need to vertically integrate with a live-action studio” two years ago, says Randy Hanson, senior vice president of domestic sales. The company combined forces with Aaron Spelling in '88, then watched “the market in general getting worse, just as our Hanna-Barbera product has become a stronger asset. That's given us breathing room until our first Aaron Spelling product enters syndication two or three years down the road.”

“Look, this business is just not as easy as it was ten years ago,” says Bob Turner, president of Orbis Communications. “Then, you just couldn't get out of the way of a dollar. If you had a TV license you could be a gorilla and make money. Ratings across the board are very disappointing this year. You'll see it in flat financial figures and you'll see it in less quality on the screen.”

Finally, a spectre is haunting the long-term future of the syndication business. If revenue trends make the lower guys on the totem pole nervous, even some of the big boys voice fear that equally flat growth on the major network side will persuade regulators to loosen financial-interest rules in the near future. Five years later, that could put three new competitors at the top of the list.

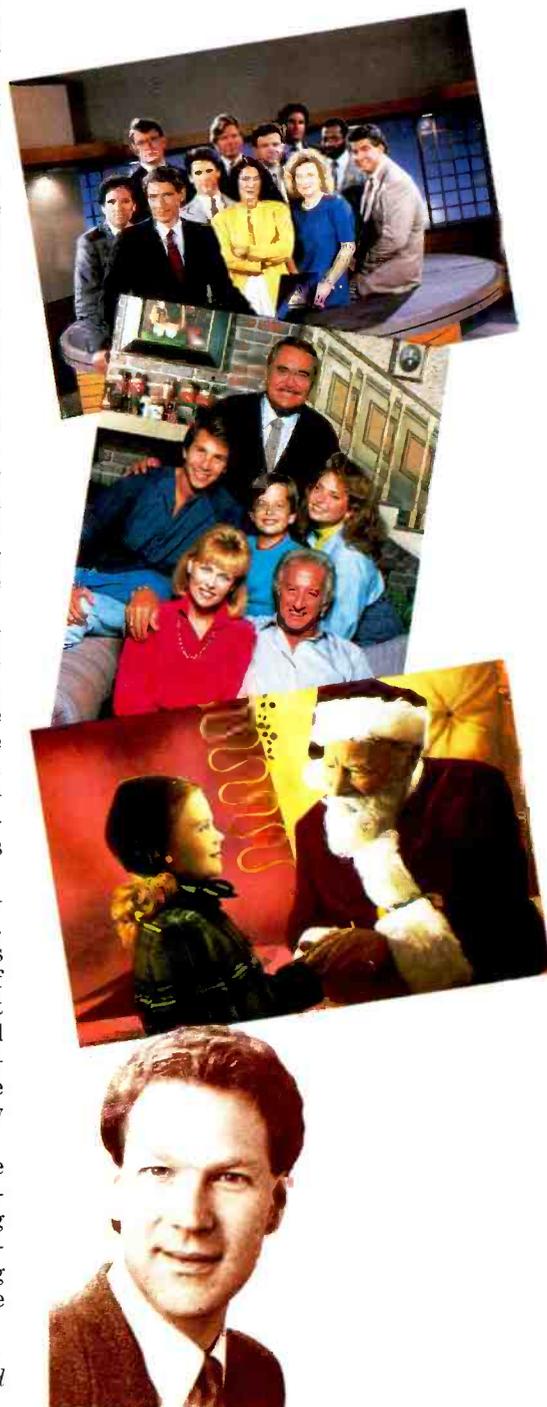
That prospect doesn't frighten Joe Zaleski. The president for domestic syndication at Viacom says, “That's a long way off. The future of syndication is terrific. There are more and more viewing opportunities, so there'll always be somebody who needs programming.”

.....
Neal Weinstock is a New York-based free-lance writer.

.....
Fox domestic syndication VP

Michael Lambert sees room in access for a hit like *Current Affair*.

Mr. Belvedere and a new film package are part of this year's line up.
.....



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CHANNELS
THE BUSINESS OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Business Magazine for Television Professionals



Racing-To Stay In the Game

Shrinking profits have some
syndicators questioning first-run's future.

.....
by Kathy Haley

In our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else if you ran very fast for a long time."
"A slow sort of country," said the Queen. "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place."—from Alice in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll.

Jim Ellis, marketing v.p. at Tribune Broadcasting, likes to cite that passage from Lewis Carroll's classic to describe what it's like working in syndication today. His colleagues at other syndication companies tend to laugh wryly at the aptness of his analogy.

Just as network shows have seen their audiences whittled down by competition from independents, cable and VCRs, so syndicated shows, in greater abundance today than ever before, are fighting harder for smaller ratings.

At the same time, a buyer's market for syndicated programming—now two and a half years old and showing no signs of waning—has driven down the fees stations pay for most new first-run and off-network shows, and dried up demand for marginal product.

On top of that, an unprecedented number of successful shows have locked up key time periods, forcing many syndicators to accept inferior slots for their new launches. Furthermore, a string of

mega-hits, including King World's *Wheel of Fortune* and Viacom's *The Cosby Show* have captured huge license fees and emptied many stations' programming war chests for years to come.

The impact of all this? Aside from forcing some companies out of syndication and others into survival mergers, the new television economics have changed the fundamentals of the syndication business, particularly as they pertain to first-run programming.

Deficit financing is now a must for launching most new first-run shows, which typically don't turn a profit until their second or third year on the air.

What's more, the cost of marketing and promoting a first-run program has quadrupled in the past three years, as keeping a show on the air has become almost as challenging as getting it there in the first place. Then there are production costs. As competition from new channels has crowded each time period, syndicators have put more glitz on screen in an effort to stand out. They've also ventured into such pricey venues as sitcoms and action/adventure.

In short, syndication has become a much riskier business than it was only three years ago, when most first-run shows that didn't bomb in the ratings earned a profit their first year. It can take much more time, much more marketing clout and much more capital to

score even a moderate hit.

Once an entrepreneur's dream, syndication is no longer a business that can be entered with relatively little capital. The cost of producing a pilot and marketing it to stations can easily top \$1 million, and that's just the beginning of startup costs.

Despite all these challenges, syndication remains a business in which many companies—even though it takes all the running they can do just to keep up—want very much to stay.

The new economics have had their most obvious impact in the return on investment for first-run shows.

Stations, short on cash and long on alternatives for each time period, are—for all but a handful of super hits—paying lower license fees now than they did three years ago.

Larry Gerbrandt, senior analyst at Paul Kagan Associates, notes that it's difficult to accurately compare prices for syndicated shows then and now because, "every show is unique." He estimates, however, that license fees for new shows have dropped between 10 and 20 percent from three years ago. Sources in the syndication community, including Wayne Lepoff, president of Genesis Entertainment, which distributes *The Judge*, also estimate the drop in that range.

Oversupply of product isn't the only thing depressing the return on first-run

shows. A greater reliance on the barter market, which has its ups and downs along with any other advertising market, is also taking its toll.

Stations, pressed for cash, are demanding more barter programming, leaving syndicators with more of the risk on new ventures. This is particularly true with weekly programs, according to Phil Oldham, executive vice president of domestic sales for Genesis. "You used to be able to sell a weekend show on a cash-plus-barter basis," Oldham says, "but today, many stations, in an attempt to shore up cash flow, have eliminated their budgets for weekend shows, leaving straight barter as the only means of acquiring programming."

That leaves the syndicator holding the whole bag on a show that's probably earning a lower rating than a comparable show earned three or four years ago, simply because of the number of weekend shows now competing against one another.

With first-run strips, the amount of barter time included in most programs—usually a minute—has remained fairly steady over the past three years. But with license fees down to the point that they no longer cover a show's costs, syndicators must rely on barter revenues to make up the difference, and here, according to Bob Turner, Orbis Communications president, lies a big Catch 22.

"It used to be that you triggered production once your cash license fees covered your production nut," explains Turner. "That meant your barter revenue and any additional cash sales went primarily into profits."

Today, because barter revenues are contingent on the rating a show delivers, most new first-run shows go into production with only estimates of how their costs will be covered. "You don't know until a show goes on the air and ratings have begun to come in whether you'll cover your costs," Turner says.

Another problem lies in the sheer number of barter shows. Barter revenues are growing at a rate of 26 percent annually, according to the Advertiser Syndicated Television Association (ASTA), but the number of shows dividing the spoils was up from 45 in fall 1983 to 104 in fall 1987, and 113 in fall 1988.

As the number of shows competing in each time period has multiplied, the average rating for each show has slipped. There were, for example, three first-run animated series airing in early fringe in 1983, says ASTA executive director Tim Duncan. Today, there are 33. Average ratings for those shows have slipped from a 7 to a 3. Lower ratings, of course, mean lower barter revenues.

By far the biggest problem facing first-run distributors, however, is the lack of viable time periods available to launch new shows. All but two of the 13 new

first-run strips that premiered last fall did so with a large percentage of their clearances in "the graveyard," between 1 A.M. and 6 A.M., according to a report by advertising-rep firm Seltel.

They did so because they were virtually shut out of early fringe and access by returning first-run shows. In 1986, Seltel explains, first run enjoyed an unusually high success rate, with six out of 12 new entries returning for a new season and five continuing to air today. *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *The Judge*, *Superior Court*, *Hollywood Squares*, *The Dating Game* and, until October, Fox Broadcasting's *The Late Show* have eaten, "four hours of programming time a day for two years," Seltel's report says, "leaving four fewer hours into which to plug new shows and, of course, four more successful hours to program against." Syndicators felt the impact of 1986's success rate last year when they

Deficit financing is a must for most first-run shows, which may not turn a profit until the third year.

tried to clear their 1988 shows.

"With everybody looking for early fringe and access, we see 22.5 hours devoted to those two dayparts, but the distribution among the 13 new entries is an inequitable one," Seltel continues. "Two shows, *Family Feud* and *USA Today* had 64 percent of their clearances there. The other 11 entries were only able to get fringe or access clearances in a paltry 8 percent of the total time periods that went to first-run programming."

Only three strips that launched last fall, *Family Feud*, *USA Today* and *Live With Regis and Kathie Lee*, scored national ratings higher than a 2 in October, according to Nielsen Syndication Service. Seltel pins much of the blame on syndicators' decision, "to accept whatever clearances they could get in order to get shows launched."

It is easily the worst fall season that syndication has ever experienced, and it almost certainly set a new record for first-year red ink.

Chuck Larsen, president of domestic TV distribution at Republic Pictures, says he'd be, "surprised if any of the new 1988 strips weren't deficit financed."

Larsen and many other small and medium-sized syndicators claim launching a new first-run show is now a three-

year proposition. "You definitely won't make money the first year," says Genesis' Lepoff. "Hopefully, you'll break even in year two, and in year three, begin to see profit."

Just putting together a solid station lineup can take two seasons, especially for small and medium-sized syndicators without the leverage to secure good time periods at the outset. Larsen faces such a challenge with *On Trial*, one of the better-performing first-run rookies of fall '88.

"If *On Trial* is a hit, we won't know it for at least a year," Larsen says. "Only one third of our stations are airing us in the time period I want us to be in."

Three or four years ago, a company with an apparent hit—*On Trial* has beaten *Donahue* in several markets and even the Olympics in four out of the ten days it aired against them early in the season—would have raced to put together another half-hour strip to offer along with renewals of its hit for the next season. Larsen and most other syndicators see things differently now.

"We'll put most of our energies this year," Larsen says, "into upgrading time periods and renewals for next fall."

Further complicating the task of launching a new first-run show is the tiered deal, which permits a station to buy a show and decide later when to air it. If the show lands in or later is moved to a late-night or early-morning time period, the license fee paid is much lower than it would have been for an early-fringe or access clearance. So is the barter revenue.

Tiered deals are now the norm in syndication sales, Larsen says, and they turn the process of projecting a show's revenues into a game of Russian roulette. "I was working with three different numbers when we finally pushed the button [to begin production] on *On Trial*," Larsen says. "We had a worst-case figure in case we landed in all the worst possible time periods, another for all the best time periods and a third based on where we honestly felt we'd end up."

A good syndicator can narrow the odds on a pack of tiered deals, Larsen says, by knowing his client stations well enough to anticipate where a show will actually end up. But there is always a level of uncertainty in a lineup of close to 100 stations.

Major syndicators, with their greater selling clout, claim they don't have to accept as many tiered deals as do smaller players. They also maintain that, unlike the smaller companies, they still aim to break even or turn a profit on year one of a first-run show. Still, the business has changed, even for the largest companies.

"Profit in syndication is a multi-year proposition," says Bob Jacquemin, president of Disney's Buena Vista Television. "At best, you break even your first year."

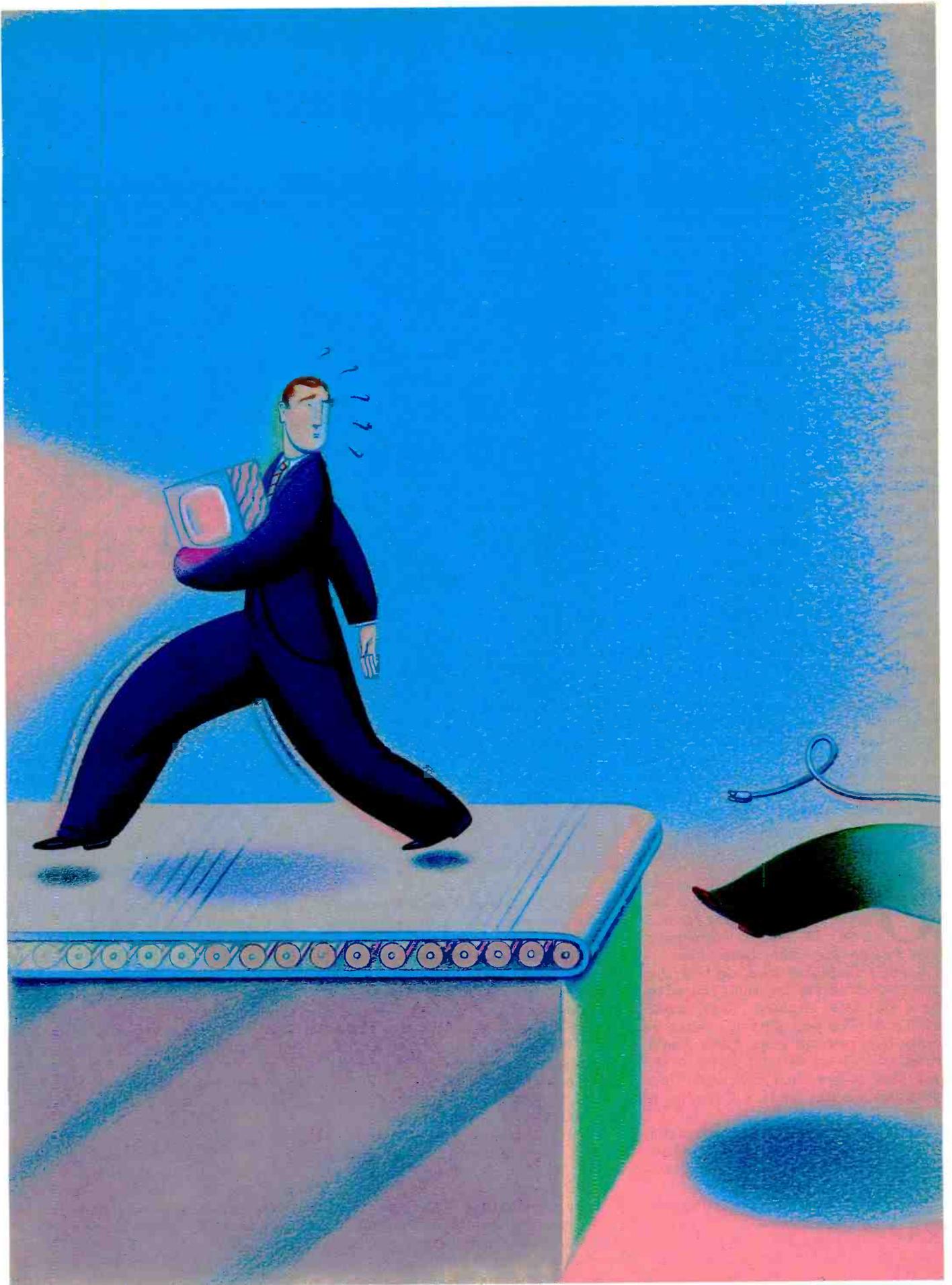


ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE CALVER

We won't go forward without that potential. And built into your business plan are the higher license fees stations should be willing to pay to renew a successful show."

Dick Robertson, a member of the office of the president at Lorimar Telepictures, maintains Lorimar still profits with most shows in year one but admits that doing so "has become moderately more difficult" than it was three or four years ago. Estimates of foreign sales are now often "critical" for the decision of whether to go forward with a new project, he says, and the difference between break-even and red ink can come from something as simple as selling a show's barter time in-house instead of farming it out to another company. Lorimar is one of few major syndicators that sells its own barter time.

Both executives agree that the clout and resources of a major company can make the difference between red and black ink that launch season. "This is a business of leverage and good programming," Robertson says. "Stations are realizing the fringe players are delivering lesser shows."

Leverage can mean more than the marketing clout to clear shows in good time periods. For companies with deep pockets, it increasingly means selling a new first-run show at extremely low license fees in year one and making up for shortfalls during the next two or three seasons.

Fox Television's *A Current Affair* is one example. A source close to the company, who demanded anonymity, reports that *A Current Affair* sold its first year at "giveaway" prices in order to secure a good percentage of access time periods. Once ratings proved it a strong contender, Fox began renewing the show at license fees "1,000 and 2,000 percent higher," according to the source.

Other examples abound, but executives at the companies reportedly involved deny reports from the station community that they are low-balling license fees.

Kagan's Gerbrandt sums up best the new environment in first-run: "It used to be a nice little business. You'd break even or profit in year one and, because license fees rose but costs didn't, you'd clean up in years two and three. Now, you hope to come out even your first year, but you run the risk of running a deficit."

What's more, launching a first-run show in syndication is only half the battle. The cost of keeping it there has skyrocketed in the past three years.

The primary culprit is the need to promote in a multichannel environment. "It's like screaming in a hurricane," says Tribune's Ellis. "In the old days, you could use your own air to get the word

Starting Up Without Shorting Out

Has syndication, historically an entrepreneur's dream because of the low capital investment needed to enter, become a closed shop? No way. But to get in and stay in, you have to know a good deal more about the business now than you did only a few years ago.

Dick Block, long-time broadcaster and programming consultant, says it's still possible to "catch the whim of the broadcasters and get them to fly with a good idea." What's different now is that the business plan behind the idea must be airtight.

"The first thing you have to realize is that we're in the sexual revolution of syndication," Block says. "We're smack in the middle of 1965 as far as commitment from broadcasters is concerned. And as more and more markets get overnight ratings, it will only get worse."

To avoid the quick hook, new shows should seek time periods where they can develop quietly, where broadcasters don't have big financial expectations—like midday on an independent or late night. Or they should develop initially as local or cable shows and be syndicated later, after wrinkles have been ironed out.

Improv Tonight, a late-fringe comedy strip from Peregrine Entertainment, aired in a slightly different ver-

sion on cable for more than a year before it moved into syndication, Block says, and it is now quietly outperforming many of its time-period predecessors in late night on independent stations. "Look for that calm harbor," Block says, "where shows can develop out of the limelight."

Block also maintains a syndicator must not enter a first-run venture today with the wrong expectations about the show's potential performance. "Don't look for a wonderful first year," he says, "and be sure your investment is prudent—in other words, be sure you can make it on a very low rating."

Critical to the success of a new idea is packaging, Block says. "Don't go out and give your idea to a writer. Give it first to a researcher who can put together a presentation about how it will benefit stations."

"And don't forget the whim factor. Dressing is very important. Go get Sigourney Weaver to host your pilot if you need to."

Block maintains there is still "loads of opportunity" in syndication for newcomers, and that those who are dropping out or complaining about how tough the business has become suffer from "vocational fatigue."

The difference now, he says, is that "we're in a much more professional, expert environment." K.H.



out. Today, you have to use more outside media and you have to be much more creative with your advertising."

Jim Moloshok, senior vice president of creative services at Lorimar Telepictures, concurs. "It used to be satisfactory to send a couple of clip promos a couple of times a year," he says. "Now, most distributors are producing full-blown commercials like you see for any other product on TV."

And those sophisticated commercials cost more than the old clip promos.

"You might have spent \$5,000 on a promo three or four years ago," Ellis says. "Now, you spend \$30,000 to \$40,000 on one spot."

Some syndicators, especially those with weekend barter shows on the air, now buy promotional time from their client stations to make sure their spots get play. "For once-a-week shows, you bear

the cost yourself, or you don't promote," says George Back, president, All American Television.

If you're a major studio with several strips on the air, the investment is far greater. Buena Vista's creative-services department now employs 23 people, Jacquemin says, and many of them, "do nothing but negotiate, every day, with station people for support."

Also up dramatically, in addition to the cost of marketing a first-run show, is the cost of producing one. Here, there are two culprits.

First, there's the need to simply compete—with other broadcast shows, cable and VCRs. Syndicators have answered by putting more production values on screen, Gerbrandt says, even for game shows. "Win, Lose or Draw is probably not more expensive to produce than *Wheel* or *Jeopardy*, but you see



Republic's Larsen: He'd be surprised if new first-run strips weren't all deficit financed.

fewer and fewer shows like that," says Kagan's Gerbrandt. "More have bigger prize budgets, more elaborate sets and music."

Gerbrandt estimates game-show costs have risen 20 to 30 percent in the past few years, just because of syndicators' efforts "to make them brighter." Then there's the 7 to 10 percent annual increase in basic production costs such as talent and technical personnel.

A much bigger impact on production costs came, however, when syndicators started offering original sitcoms and highly produced dramas. "First-run sitcoms, which cost over \$300,000 per episode to produce, replaced game shows that cost \$20,000 to \$25,000 per episode," Gerbrandt says. "*War of the Worlds*, *Friday the 13th* and *Freddy's Nightmares* cost more to produce than *Tales From the Darkside*."

Here again, the deficit financing required to produce a sitcom or hour-long drama is more readily available to major studios than small syndicators. Foreign sales estimates helped give *Freddy's Nightmares* the go ahead, according to Lorimar's Robertson and, according to Gerbrandt, offering the back end of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* with sales or renewals of the original *Star Trek* assured Paramount it wouldn't be left holding the bag after a season or two.

With syndication's profitability down, its return on investment delayed and its start-up and maintenance costs multiplying, why do so many companies—at least 194 will attend NATPE International's Program Conference exhibit in January—stay in the game?

Republic's Larsen sums it up: "It still offers the lure of the jackpot, the chance to hit it really big without incremental costs going up that much once you do. Not too many other businesses offer that."

Nonetheless, many in the business now agree that the two-tiered pricing

structure that has characterized program pricing in recent years isn't the only thing two-tiered about the business. Lorimar's Robertson puts it bluntly: "The major studios dominate the motion-picture business because they produce 15 or 20 films a year. You have to make that many to pay for the losers. Syndication is the same way. The big companies have their failures, but we keep coming back and coming back again with more shows. We'll have our share because we'll always be there."

And the big are getting bigger. Last year saw two of syndication's giants, Warner Bros. Television and Lorimar Telepictures, agree to merge in a combination that will make Warner the biggest in the business with annual revenues estimated at \$385 million this year.

That isn't to say syndication can't be a good business for smaller players. Many work-horse shows that never hit it big average profits in the 20 to 25 percent range, according to Genesis' Lepoff and many other syndicators.

Still, most syndication executives foresee continued shakeout in their ranks during the coming year, which, by the way, they predict will be tougher still than the two that have gone before. They also agree their business has changed from one populated by many small enterprises to one in which a few big players dominate and small, "niche players" or "boutiques" eke out a living on the sidelines.

Has that transformation begun to af-



The Judge and other first-run hits introduced in 1986 have put a lock on viable time periods.

fect stations, which depend on syndication for a significant percentage of their programming? Vicky Gregorian, program manager at Miami indie WSVN, sees the biggest change in a lack of creativity in the shows being offered.

"The best thing I've seen for 1989 is *American Gladiators* from Harmony Gold, a small syndicator," Gregorian says. "Most of what I've seen from the bigger companies is boring."

Gregorian says she'll try to find a place for *Gladiators* on her schedule, but most station executives admit there's little they can do to help smaller syndicators stay afloat in a contracting marketplace. "I used to be able to give a time period to a syndicator if I liked him or wanted

to give his show a chance," says Paul Prange, program manager at Detroit's WKBD. "It's awfully hard to do that today, when every time period has to pay out."

Jack Fentress, programming vice president at rep firm Petry Television, doesn't believe stations, or smaller syndicators for that matter, need fear further consolidation among syndication companies. "MCA's never gotten a hit in first-run, Paramount can't produce any-



Orbis' Turner: Production often begins on syndicated programs before costs are covered.

thing for under \$1 million and Fox can't get arrested once its shows come off network," he says. "There will always be room for small and medium-sized companies with innovative ideas."

But will a smaller cadre of much-bigger companies wield greater leverage over stations, once the buyer's market ends and sellers gain the advantage once again? "There used to be fewer companies," Fentress says, again unconcerned, "and stations got along fine then."

Jacquemin calls the new syndication business, "better, more professional" than before. Robertson admits syndication has, "always been tough, but it's probably tougher today for little companies to get started. He also believes, "you have to have luck if you don't have clout, to hit it big in first-run."

Syndication is a vastly different business today than it was only five years ago, when Paramount was the only major studio with significant involvement in first-run and scores of little distributors could earn a handsome living from a single classic series or a package of obscure old movies. Ave Butensky, executive vice president of domestic syndication at Fries Distribution Co., probably best captured the mood of the industry this past fall while assembling a panel of speakers to address the future of the business at this month's NATPE.

The working title of his panel: "First-run's Future: Is There One?"

Caviar Dreams For Couch Potatoes

Al Masini's hits give outsiders a peak at the insider's world. But has success left him out of touch with his public?

by Judith Newman

OK, so he runs TeleRep, Teletrib, Operation Prime Time and several of the most successful syndicated shows of the '80s. What's Al Masini's real definition of success? Roll the tape:

"... Al is truly television's ultimate gentleman. . . . As our Lifestyles leader, he certainly understands what a rich and famous wedding should be like. . . . What better setting than St. Patrick's Cathedral? . . . And then on to the magnificent historic Rainbow Room. . . ."

The voice, of course, is Robin Leach, and . . . you know the show.

"... It's no surprise that the man who created Solid Gold and Star Search would turn his talents to music. . . ."

[Cut to Al and bride dancing, with Lou Rawls singing the original Al Masini-penned wedding theme song, "No Other Girl in the World." Orchestra swells.]

No other girl in the world ever touched me the way you do. No other girl in the world can make my heart so complete, so worthwhile.

Yes, with his May 30, 1988 wedding to his 28-year-old vice president of program development Noreen Donovan, the

59-year-old Masini finally made it onto Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous. Not too tough when you own the show; but for a man who has always seen himself as an outsider, it seems like quite a coup.

Sitting bolt upright at his coral reef of a desk piled high with papers, pink message slips and Maalox, Masini still waxes rapturous over the wedding. "You can't imagine what I went through to get that song made and to have Lou record it," says Masini. "Actually, we alternated every other line—I sang and then Lou sang." The basset-hound eyes sparkle, the laugh is shy and hesitating. "Noreen always used to get angry at me for forgetting to send her cards on the holidays, so I figured giving her her own song was a way of making it up to her." He pauses, brows furrowed. "I kind of fought this wedding for a long time, but once I decide to do something, I like to do it right."

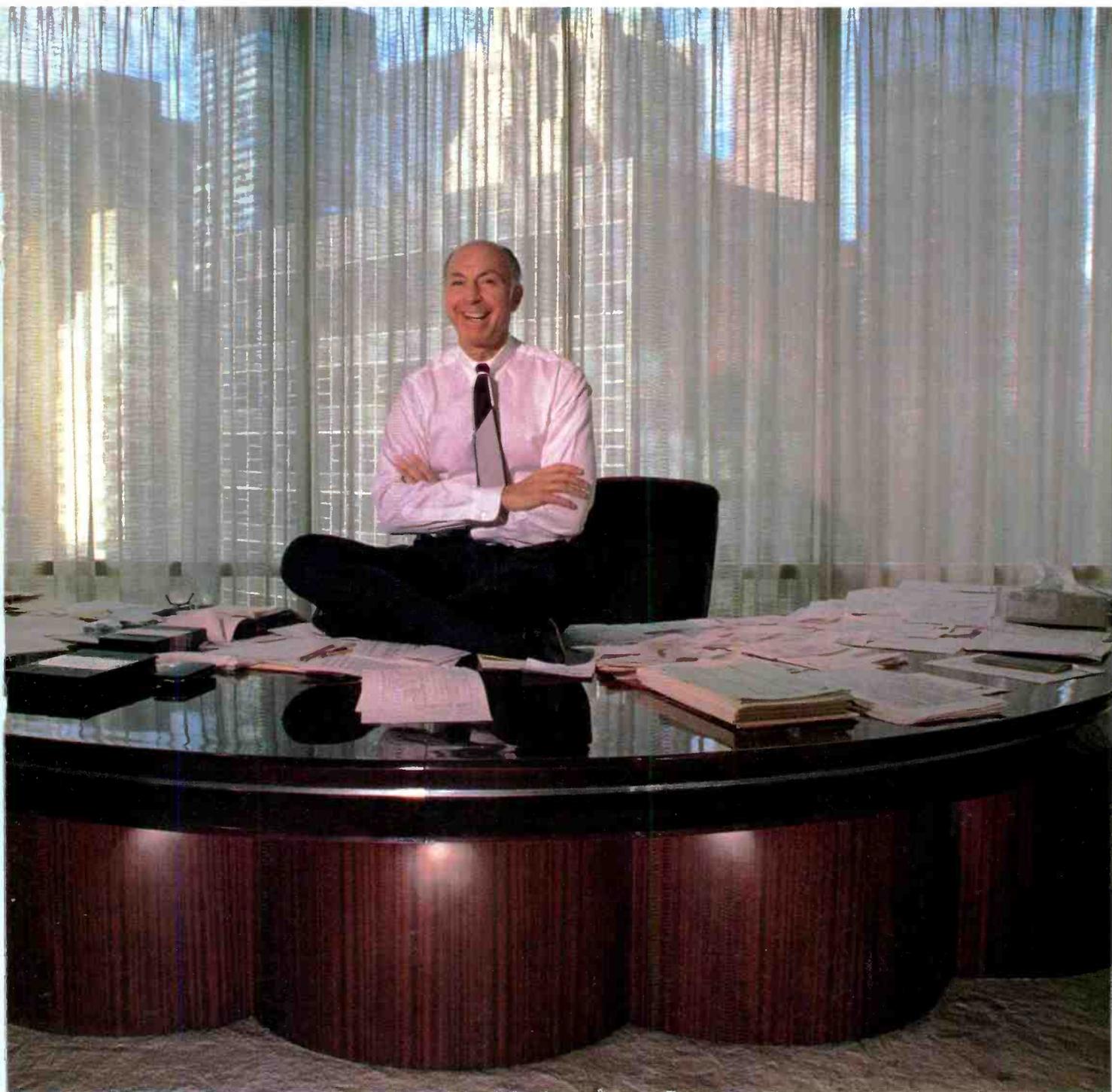
You could say he's done a couple of things right. Alfred Masini is founder and president of TeleRep, the TV rep firm that, with \$875 million in annual billings, now runs neck and neck with Katz Television as the leader of the pack. He runs Teletrib, a co-venture with Tribune Entertainment, which racked up some \$180 million in advertising sales last year. He pioneered Operation Prime Time, the first nonprofit production com-

pany to supply independent stations with quality television dramas that allowed them to compete in ratings with the networks. And although critics have fondly called them "serious video heroin" and "a celebration of tastelessness and banality," three of Masini's syndicated programs—*Entertainment Tonight* (co-produced with Paramount), *Star Search* and the much-loved and -loathed *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*—are still pulling in the ratings after seven, five and four years in syndication, respectively.

Masini was the first to recognize that being a salesman and being a program-



PHOTOGRAPH BY SHONNA VALESKA



mer were not mutually exclusive—that, in fact, knowing the market as a rep could be pivotal in creating programming that worked. But now (speaking of weddings), industry insiders are beginning to wonder if Al Masini can have his cake and eat it, too.

While TeleRep has emerged stronger from the rockiest years the rep industry has known, and Teletrib, with Tribune properties such as *Geraldo*, has maintained firm footing in the quicksand business of syndicated programming, Masini's much-ballyhooed ability to "fill the niche" in programming seems to be failing him. His 1985 pilot, *The Start of*

Something Big, wasn't. Remember 1987's *You Write the Songs*? Precisely the problem. Masini's 1988 entries are *Dick Clark's Golden Greats*, mostly film clips of original '50s and '60s artists strutting their stuff, and *Triple Threat*, a hokey music-guessing game show.

This, after all, is the age of tabloid TV, where people confess to incest as easily as they used to admit to having the hiccups. Yet Masini still thinks people crave an escape from life's harsh realities—when it seems everyone really wants to wallow in them. He's feeding his guests rice pudding when they've worked up an appetite for four-alarm chili.

Audiences haven't been kind lately, but the rep and barter businesses have made Masini number one.

"People used to say Al Masini was the future of television, but I don't think it's true," says Jon Mandel, vice president/director of national broadcast for Grey Advertising. "The guy is lucky and awful smart, and I'm sure he can do it again. But he's a victim of what's happening to lots of people in syndication—too many shows, too little choice air time, too much money for production."

"He's not as hot as he used to be," says Larry Blasius, vice president/associate director of network programming and a

syndication specialist at BBDO. "A few years ago everything Masini did turned to gold, but not any more."

Is losing his programming touch the price Masini is paying for the success of his other businesses? Initially, when TeleRep was his only focus, he was the numbers man who knew everything happening in the local station market. In a sense, he still does. Yet as he's focused on the creative end of the business, has he begun to suffer from can't-see-the-forest-for-the-trees syndrome?

Al Masini has always tried hard. Maybe, for the first time, he's trying just a little too hard.

"... We're in Alfred Masini's \$3 million penthouse overlooking Manhattan's glamorous Upper East Side. This is a man who knows how to live—just look at that diamond-studded tie clip, worth over \$10,000, and that 22-carat gold Rolex, exquisitely hand-crafted, a \$30,000 beauty! How much did success cost Al Masini? Why, over \$20 million to launch one show alone! Staggering, but true!..."

Actually that's not the way Leach describes Masini. "Al has one of the most extraordinary track records in television," says the bat-eared star and executive producer of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* and its spinoffs, *Runaway With the Rich and Famous*; *Fame, Fortune and Romance*; and *Rich and Famous World's Best*.

You have to understand that he's two men," continues Leach. "He's running a very successful advertising company and a great programming business."

While a few buzzards circle over Masini the programmer even before the body is cold, most still marvel at his ability to keep TeleRep at the top of the game during the most difficult years the rep industry has seen.

In 1986, Reagan's deregulation wreaked havoc with the industry. Masini calls 1987 and 1988 "the most difficult years I've seen in my 33 years in the business."

"In 1987, 20 independent stations went belly-up," Masini says. "And a number of stations, primarily in the major markets, changed hands. When owners change, they have other allegiances, and they tend to move to another rep."

This movement precipitated the upheaval among rep firms that made an already unpredictable business a bull out of the pen. MMT was sold to Meredith and lost ten stations and \$51 million in billings. Seltel was sold by Selkirk to Bob Sillerman and gained ten stations and \$82.5 million in billings. George Gillett bought Storer television stations and eliminated the in-house rep, dividing the stations between HRP and TeleRep. Blair, always number one or two rep in

It took his wedding to program development vice president Noreen Donovan (below) to land Masini on *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. Robin Leach narrated and Lou Rawls sang a love song to the bride.



billings, was also acquired, first by Reliance, then sold piecemeal to Jim Rosenfeld for \$115 million.

But in this game of rep musical chairs, Masini has always gotten a seat. In 1987, TeleRep resigned 21 stations but pitched 25 and won all of them, for a net gain of four stations and \$80 million. As of November '88, TeleRep had picked up nine stations, mostly from Storer Broadcasting, and lost two for a net gain of seven stations and \$60 million in revenue. At press time, negotiations were underway for additional stations.

How has Masini stayed ahead of the game? Says Peter Goulazian, president of Katz Television, "At the time when new relationships had to be developed very, very quickly, Al was there. He also managed to continue moving away from independent stations towards top-rated affiliated stations at a time when the health of independent stations is questionable."

Masini himself credits his success with his ability to go with the flow. "We have always pioneered ways of doing things differently in the rep business," he says, citing the amount of time and money TeleRep poured into the "mechanical inventory control," which allowed the rep firm to advise stations on programming as well as advertising. (The first sight to hit the visitor to TeleRep's offices is a bank of computers that looks like the bridge on the *Starship Enterprise*.)

"Of course," he continues, "there are certain things we wouldn't do, even if they were lucrative. For example, the cable networks like ESPN, CNN and MTV are very profitable—they're making more than two out of the three major networks. But we won't rep cable networks because our reps would be going after the same advertising dollars."

That means TeleRep won't rep cable—but with the commission squeeze on (which Masini insists hasn't affected him), who's to say Al wouldn't start another, separate company? Here, he hedges: "Well, we won't be repping cable with our TeleRep people."

Amid all this tumult, where does Masini see the rep business heading? "It's in promotional dollars," he explains. "Television has only about 19 percent of ad budgets, only \$22 billion out of total advertising revenues of \$107 billion. We've got to figure out how to get into areas like electronic couponing and so forth. We need new and clever ways to lure advertisers into television."

As a rep man, Masini is sticking with, and ahead of, the times. But as a programmer?

To understand why he creates the shows he does, and why he continues to create them despite flashing red signs telling him the road he's taking is a dead end, you have to understand pre-pre-*ET*, pre-*Lifestyles*, pre-TeleRep Al. Al, the chronic worrier, the master controller,

still the Hollywood outsider, whose fame, fortune and romance came not with champagne and caviar but with a heart attack and angina.

Al Masini, who talks about the need for escapist television, was born into a world he wanted to escape from. He grew up poor in northern New Jersey. His father died when he was ten, and to support the family, Masini's mother moved her children from house to house, fixing them up, selling for a profit and moving on. "I think that's why I've always been looking for my place in life," he laughs.

At 14, he got a scholarship to a Jesuit high school and enrolled in the ROTC program. He went because he thought it would be good for him.

"God, I worked so hard," Masini recalls. "I did everything I was supposed to do because I thought if I did, everything would fall into place."

Today, "workaholic" is the word most often used to describe Masini. "If he asks you to stay late, you can bet he's staying twice as late," says Howard Levy, who worked as a salesman for TeleRep for five years before becoming vice president/director of advertising sales at Blair Communications. "There was no bullshit with Al. His ideas became reality simply because he drove himself like a son of a bitch."

After majoring in English and philosophy at Fordham, Masini joined the Air Force. There, he worked in the public relations department—"better than getting shot"—running the base newspaper and radio, and poring over books on television at the local library.

"I knew everything but how to get a job once I was out," he says ruefully. When his two-year stint was up, he sent out 800 letters to TV stations and went on 250 interviews. Finally, he got his first job at CBS news through a friend's sister, Grace Diekhous, now a producer at CBS' *60 Minutes*.

"I think people like Al who had lots of trouble getting going never quite recover," says Diekhous, who is still one of Masini's friends. "That's why Al sometimes can't believe his own success."

A modestly furnished Sutton Place apartment and a house in Southampton are his luxuries. But there are no yachts or Lear jets for Al: "It doesn't take much to make me happy."

What does make him happy is his notoriously flashy wardrobe (earning him the title of Worst Dresser in the Business among friends) and his at-home gym. Characteristically, work and play are one: Mornings are spent watching audition tapes for *Star Search* while pumping iron. He has a television and VCR in every room in the house—except the kitchen, "because Noreen thinks we should be talking to each other when we eat." (Actually, the bathroom is equipped only with a radio, because during Masini's

morning shaving ritual he listens to WPLJ, a New York "Hot 100" format FM station, to hear what kids are listening to.)

As a news-film cataloger with CBS, Masini made \$58 a week. Although he wanted to go into programming, he realized it was an uncertain path up the corporate ladder.

"Having been poor all my life," relates Masini, "my temperament wasn't right for living from project to project. I wanted something that would be there regularly." He studied the organizational structure of CBS. After figuring out who wore the snazziest suits, he decided to become a network salesman.

Selling never came naturally. "I'm highly analytical and very intense. But I think I was able to develop a style that didn't change my personality. I don't turn the desk over, but I figured out how to keep coming back till I got the order."

Pit-bull tenacity is Masini's sales mode. "Hell, the man doesn't quit," says Steven Hirsch, a former Masini employee who is now president of Camelot Entertainment Sales, which sells ad time

for such blockbusters as *Wheel of Fortune* and *Jeopardy!* "He'll get on a plane to do business at the drop of a hat. Al's joy is in the chase."

In 1968, after several years as a rep at Petry, Chris Craft president Herb Siegal gave Masini \$750,000 to start a subsidiary of Chris-Craft. He had contracts from three Chris-Craft stations, in Los Angeles, Portland and Minneapolis—\$9 million in billings—and one month to bring in another station. Masini shudders as he remembers his desperation for that first account, KTNT in Seattle, and his first TvB convention in Chicago. "I had to operate out of the hotel lobby," reports Masini, "because we [Masini and Bob Schneider, former vice president and director of sales development] couldn't afford a suite."

"He rode us so hard back then," recalls Rich Frank. Frank, now president of Disney Studios, was one of several execs who helped launch TeleRep. "It took Al years to loosen the reins, years till he felt confident of TeleRep's success."

"TeleRep has always been a queen-bee operation," says Dennis Gillespie, senior vice president of marketing at Viacom. "It grew up around one person—Al. He worked at it every waking moment."

TeleRep

	Billings* (millions)	Stations**
1988	\$875	59
1987	\$800	51
1986	\$725	47

* These are estimated figures based on the amount of business TeleRep expected its stations to generate in a given year.

** These are the number of stations being handled by the rep firm at the end of the calendar year.

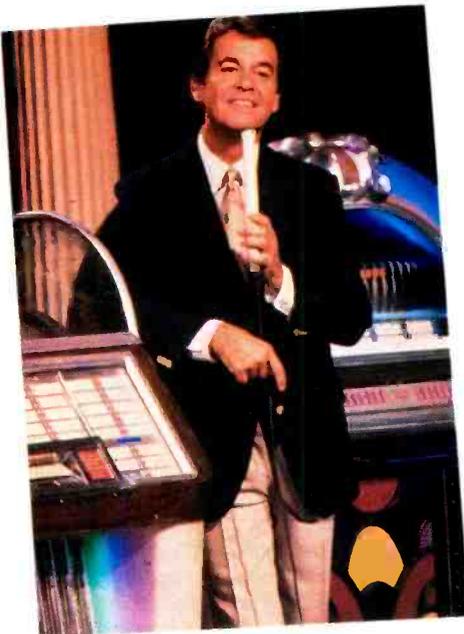
anding KTVU, the leading station in San Francisco, put TeleRep on the map. The station was owned by Cox Enterprises, the company that bought TeleRep in 1972. Several years of growth later, it's 1977. Masini delivers a speech at NATPE urging executives to invest in quality independent programming. He soon realized that the only way to get it would be to create it himself. Thus was Operation Prime Time born.

"Everybody in syndication owes him a debt because of OPT," says Camelot's Hirsch. "He proved that independent programmers would spend twice as much for first-run television dramas and get the payback in ratings."

With the backing of MCA and industry cronies like Frank, Evan Thompson (now of United Television) and Sheldon Cooper (Tribune Entertainment), Masini produced a string of award winners like *Sadat*, *Smiley's People* and *Testimony of Two Men*. He discovered if he sold shows only to independents, which at that time covered 56 percent of the U.S., he couldn't make OPT work—so he made the programs available to networks. They bought them, and OPT, which has logged over 120 hours at an average cost of \$1 million an hour, launched Masini's career in programming.

Soon after, *Solid Gold* became solid gold, and Masini followed up with *Entertainment Tonight*, *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* and *Star Search*.

He calls them "happy shows, a little bit of an escape from the cruel world."



Telebrit took Dick Clark's *Golden Greats* to NATPE in '88. This year, it expected to bring a game show.

But in these days of reality programming like *America's Most Wanted*, *A Current Affair*, and all the gabfests, does America want happy?

"Well, these days, TV is going to such extremes to get attention," he says plaintively. "I mean, today it's whose having relations with a nun, and . . . not that I don't watch those shows," he adds hurriedly. "I mean, I may watch Morton Downey, Jr., but I don't think I could create a show like that."

What he has been able to create recently suggests an inability to bring the same flexibility to his programming ventures as he does to his rep business. The man who measures the ingredients that go into his show as carefully as Betty Crocker, and who has spoken endlessly about the importance of "seeing what's

pletely absurd," says Grey Advertising's Mandel. "Everybody took one look at it and said, 'Get outta here, Al.'"

Masini defends the shows' failures by citing the huge competition for air clearance and concomitant fractionalizing of the audience. "All ratings have gone down—cable's siphoned off viewers—so it's been harder to keep shows on the air," he says.

Industry executives see the oddly out-of-touch Masini mind at work in his latest offering, *Triple Threat*, a game show that pits three generations of family in three rounds of competition, trying to guess trivia questions about music from—are you getting the idea here?—three generations of music. It doesn't seem any sillier than other game shows,

WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG, SHE SCANDALIZED THE SOUTH PACIFIC. AS A GROWN WOMAN . . . SHE MANIPULATED THREE CONTINENTS! (Let's see, we'll put North America over here and Europe over here . . . and, oh, Asia would go very nicely over there. . .) This, from the people who brought us *Woman of Substance*?

At the moment, incidentally, OPT languishes. "The writer's strike really did us in," says Masini. After *Emma*, there will be no new offerings this year.

At a crossroads, Masini may be reevaluating what makes his hit shows work. Yes, as he points out, they "filled a niche on television"; and yes, they were "a little bit of escape from the cruel world." Slick production values and the sense that video editors are snipping away at 3 A.M. while sucking Enerjets also contribute to their fun.

But more important, the successful Masini programs allow viewers to imagine they are precisely what they are not: insiders. Specifically, Hollywood insiders, the first on the block to know who Rob Lowe is sleeping with or what lurks inside George Hamilton's closet. (Recently *Entertainment Tonight* has enjoyed a renewed ratings surge and has been reformatted to focus more on "inside" Hollywood dirt.)

And his successful programs have not only celebrated stardom—they actually try to create it. Witness *Star Search*, the showcase for cocktail-lounge acts of the future.

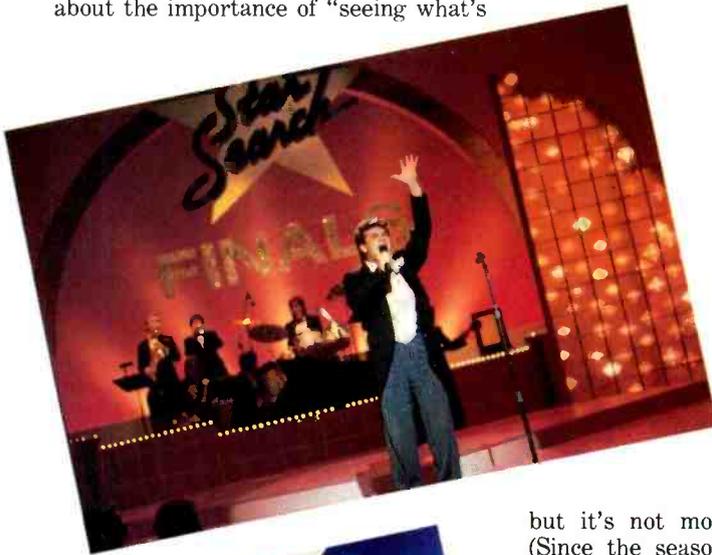
"A viewer likes to feel he was there at the beginning of a star's career," explains *Star Search* host Ed McMahon. "It's the same feeling some people get from watching Carson, but Al's created a whole show around this concept."

Interesting, too, that the hosts of Masini's popular shows—McMahon, Mary Hart and particularly Robin Leach—are mundane figures who have, against all odds, become stars. It's as if Masini the outsider, Masini the brooding, sweet and decidedly unglamorous man, were saying, "Hey, if a guy who looks like Yoda could hobnob with the rich and famous, you and I could, too!"

The industry seems to feel Masini the programmer could easily hit it big again, and they're waiting. As for Masini himself, he is reveling in the strength of TeleRep and Teletrib, and appears undaunted by programming setbacks. "Problems are there to be solved," he explains. "It's a thrill just to come in here each day."

The man who still sports polyester suits and drives a Mercury just wants to keep bringing America champagne wishes and caviar dreams.

.....
Judith Newman is a New York-based free-lance writer.



Star Search, particularly back in the days of contestant Sam Harris (right), proved to be a syndication success for Masini. Triple Threat, however, poses little threat to current King World hits like Jeopardy!



but it's not more interesting, either. (Since the season started so late, the word is still out on the show.)

"Triple Threat's sure not a threat," scoffs Roger King. King, with his brother Michael, reigns over King World, the current leader in first run programming with the one-two-three punch of *Wheel*, *Jeopardy* and *Oprah*. But with advertising executives confirming his boast that no game show—and certainly not *Triple Threat*—will disturb the supremacy of *Wheel* and *Jeopardy*, King can afford to be magnanimous: "Al's a very tough, creative, competitive man. He was truly an innovator in our business, and he paved the way for small companies like ours."

And Masini still seems fixated on game shows, although at press time he was still not sure what he'd be bringing to this month's NATPE conference.

Some have even been delicate enough to suggest that making his wife, an ex-cosmetics buyer, the vice president of programming development may not have been a sterling career move. It was Noreen Donovan who came up with *The Start of Something Big*. And it was Donovan who loved the idea for Masini's most recent OPT project, *Emma*, *Queen of the South Seas*.

The PR material for *Emma* screams:

not on the air and creating a program to fill that niche," seems to have lost his sense of what people are watching.

Trouble began in 1985 with *The Start of Something Big*. The show dealt with the origins of everything, from chewing gum to Liz Taylor. Huh? Well, yes—it showed how things were made, and how celebrities were made. Liz Taylor, gum . . . sometimes, watching the show, there didn't seem to be too much difference. Although Masini maintains the program turned a profit, it didn't create enough excitement to last more than one season.

In 1986, *I Write the Songs*, hosted by Ben Vereen, pitted unknown songwriters against each other in a battle to come up with a winning tune. "It was com-

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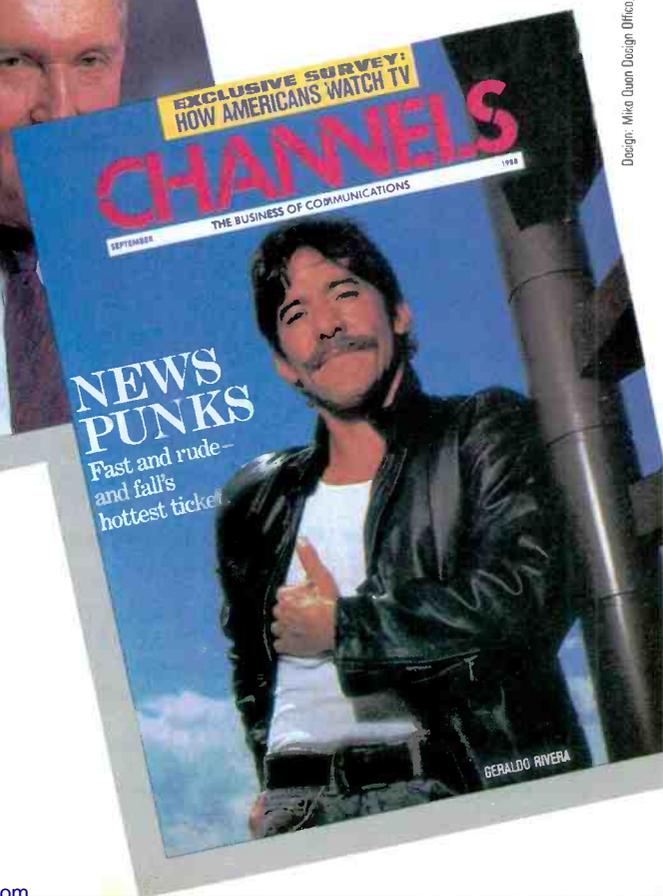
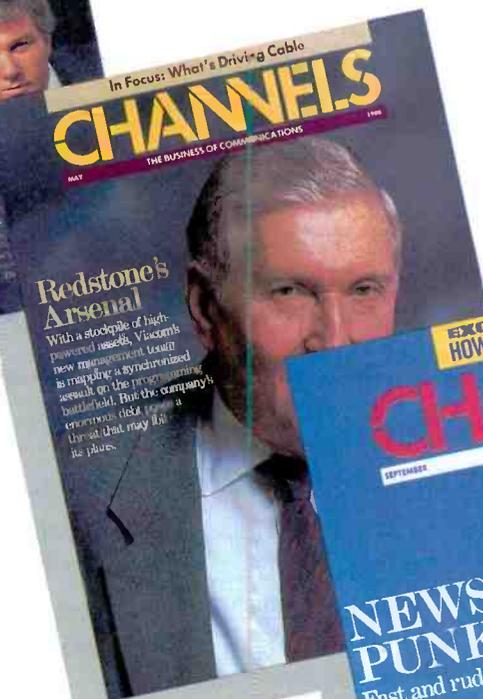
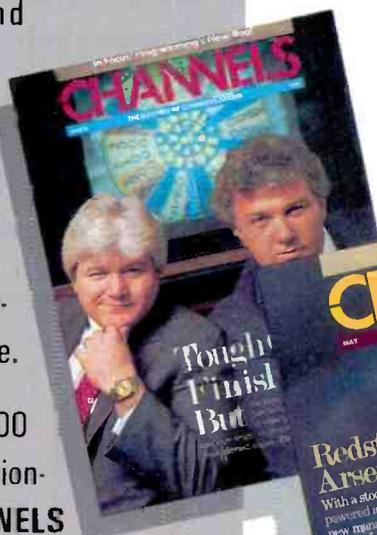
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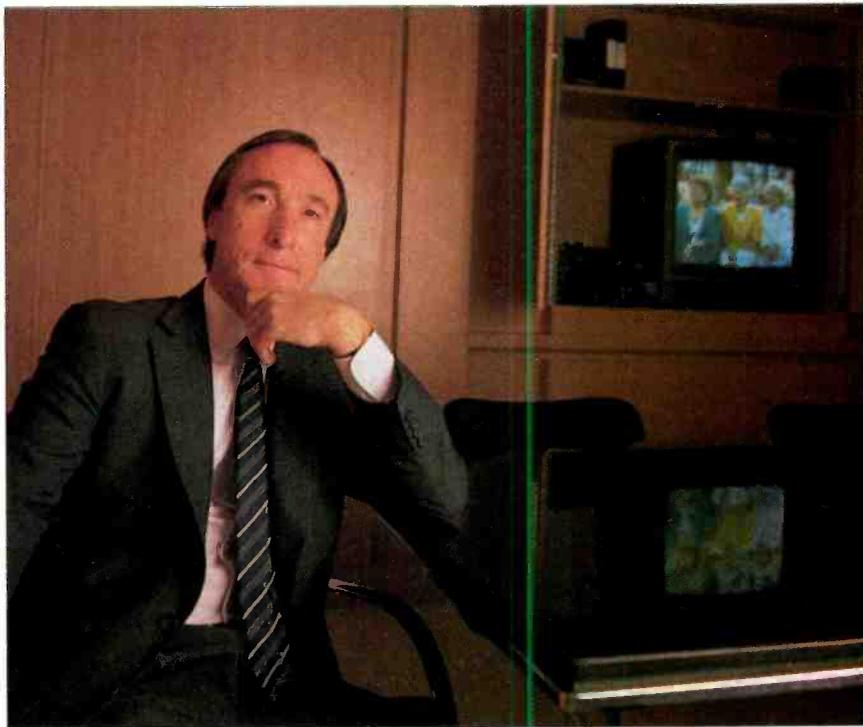
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Syndication's Magic Kingdom



Bob Jacquemin & Co. prove Buena Vista's no Mickey Mouse outfit with four years of hits and rising profits.

Like other top executives at Buena Vista Television, Jamie Bennett is a graduate of Disney University. The senior vice president in charge of programming attended three days of seminars about the Magic Kingdom, and then finished his training with a foray into Disneyland, dressed as Friar Tuck.

"It was terrific," he says enthusiastically. "There is no other business where you can become the product and have the consumer come up to you and want to hug you. It is the most unbelievable experience of becoming the thing that your company is all about."

Apparently, the exercise had an equally inspirational effect on division president Robert Jacquemin, who sweltered through a July appearance as Brer Bear from *Song of the South*, and also on vice president and general sales manager for domestic television Rich Goldman, who was a penguin from

by Kim Masters

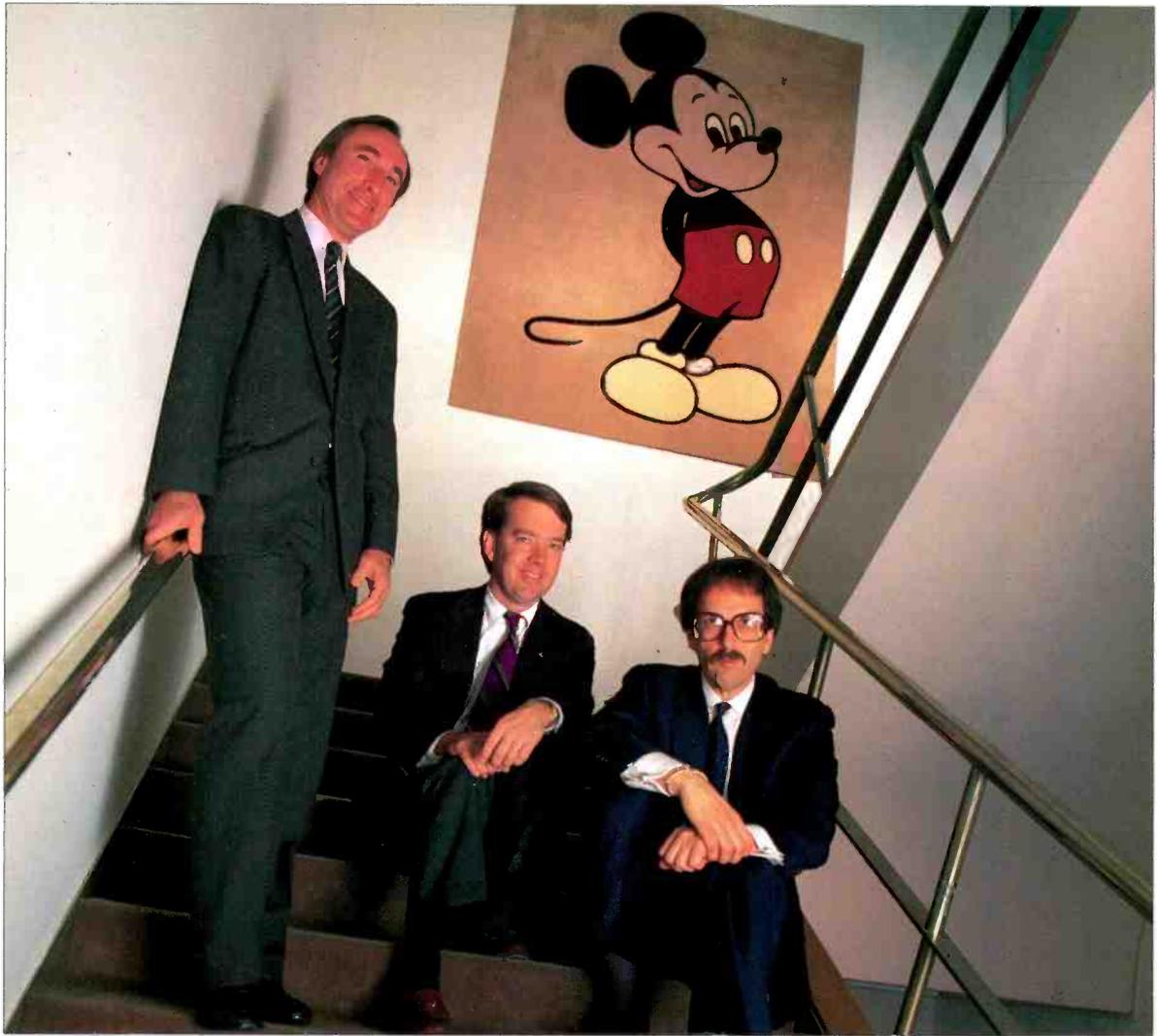
Mary Poppins. The three have since melded themselves into "Team Disney," a group of company men who have been able to create a top syndicated-television division in four of the gloomiest years in industry history.

"They're doing everything right—methodically entering the business in a classy way, and using the franchise effectively," marvels Dennis Miller, whose fledgling Access Entertainment Group succumbed in the tough marketplace last year. "Everything they touch seems to turn to gold."

Remarkably enough, according to Jacquemin, Buena Vista has turned a profit from year one, and has seen "steady growth" since then. Next year, he predicts "extraordinary" income, thanks to the company's distribution of the off-network series, *The Golden Girls*.

Buena Vista's success is typical of the regime that has revitalized Disney since 1984. The division exploits the Disney her-

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DARRYL ESTRINE/ONYX



Team Disney: president Bob Jacquemin, senior programming v.p. Jamie Bennett and general sales manager Rich Goldman.

itage but carefully avoids any product that might tarnish the Disney image. (The company's sensitivity about its name is so great that the television division—originally called Walt Disney Domestic Television—was renamed Buena Vista. Executives felt that a unit bearing the Disney name would have to restrict itself to family programming. Even with the name change, Bennett avoids game shows that seem too greedy or reality-based shows that are too tawdry.)

The unit is also pure Disney in its aggressiveness, from its relentless pursuit of the right deal to its vigorous support of shows on the air. Jacquemin was head of a singularly tenacious syndication division at Paramount, and quickly created a unit so much in the same image that "Team Disney" became known in the industry as "Paramouse."

Buena Vista does nothing in half measures. Its research is among the best and it is brought to bear in every aspect of business. Sales presentations are thoroughly documented; the company came up with 600 pages of research to persuade stations that *The Golden Girls* is indeed a golden opportunity.

The division can be equally fierce in discouraging stations from buying a product that it doesn't sell: When Buena Vista decided not to offer first-run comedies, it showed up at the National Association of Television Program Executives (NATPE) with a glossy graph-packed brochure warning that the checkerboard strip was a dangerous fad carrying "huge financial risks for stations." Goldman acknowledges that some in the industry disliked the tactic.

"There may have been some ruffled feathers, and it's true, you don't ever tell somebody they made a bad buy," says Goldman. "That's insulting. But it is our job to sell our product and to talk about the conditions of the marketplace, and if we can create doubt, we're going to do it."

Buena Vista's aggressive sales approach has paid off with a remarkable batting average. "Every product that we have had since our inception has been launched," says Goldman proudly. "I don't know that there's a company around that can make that statement."

Goldman, of course, also acknowledges that the division owes a certain measure of its success to Buena Vista's deep pockets. "We are fortunate as a company to be well capitalized," he says. "In today's competitive marketplace that is vital. If one of our shows failed it may be an embarrassment, it may be a frustration, but we'll come out with more product. There are smaller companies that put all their proverbial eggs in one basket and if they can't get a show launched they may well have to close up shop."

So far, only one Buena Vista show—*Today's Business*—is no longer on the air. The program died in February 1988 after a year-long run. Buena Vista executives stress that the show delivered the modest ratings that were guaranteed but that it didn't draw the necessary advertising support. Jacquemin estimates that the division lost about \$2.5 million on the show.

Another project, based on *People* magazine, was moved to the back burner after Time Inc. decided that a daily program might detract from the magazine's content and circulation. Jacquemin says the show, which would have been a \$25 million

to \$30 million venture, may be introduced later. But for the time being, Time Inc. has agreed to do occasional prime time specials for CBS.

Other Buena Vista offerings have made it off the drawing board and on the air. The company started out by tapping the Disney library in 1985, selling the old *Wonderful World of Disney* hours and Magic I, a package of 25 Disney films. Within six months, Jacquemin was ready to try his first venture into programming. The show, *Siskel & Ebert*, was launched after Jacquemin lured critics Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert away from the Tribune Co.

When it came to inventing its own product, Buena Vista turned to the Disney mystique and created an upscale, animated children's strip based on established Disney characters. The resulting *DuckTales* became the top-rated children's syndicated strip within a week. *DuckTales* currently airs on 175 stations with 96 percent coverage and is the number one children's animated program.

In 1987, Buena Vista launched the game show *Win, Lose or Draw*—on network television and in syndication simultaneously. It quickly became a hit and is now the third-ranking syndicated game show and the fourth-ranking strip, airing on 175 stations with 92 percent coverage.

Buena Vista is having a tougher time with its latest offering, *Live with Regis and Kathie Lee*. Seen on 125 stations with 80 percent coverage, *Live* has not pulled the 2.5 rating promised to national advertisers. Buena Vista contends that the show is a slow build that will reward patient programmers. "One article said the buzzards are hovering," Jacquemin complains. "I think that's bullshit. The show was not presented as an overnight sensation."

Stations' increasing tendency to bury programs that don't show immediate ratings promise is, in fact, one of Jacquemin's pet peeves. "More and more buyers are skittish and unwilling to ride out contracts," he says.

"It can be very disheartening for a syndicator to invest millions in a new show only to have it declared dead after two weeks," continues Jacquemin. "Live by the sword and you'll die by it. If stations won't commit to helping new shows develop, we're just going to give them more game shows."

Meanwhile, the division is gradually selling Disney's only current off-network show, the Witt/Thomas/Harris-produced *The Golden Girls*, and commanding top prices: Jacquemin estimates that Buena Vista will collect from \$2 million to \$2.5 million per episode. "We're the first ones to ever do this kind of extensive primary research on an off-network series," says Jacquemin. Research vice president Michael Mellon says the study showed that the show was favored by older audiences, enabling Buena Vista to sell it as a stronger lead-in to evening news than some stations might have anticipated.

Jacquemin also says Buena Vista broke ground by establishing a flexible marketing plan that allows stations to determine when they want the program to start airing. "It could be 1990 or 1991, and stations don't have to make that decision until June 1990. That's a major benefit in today's marketplace," he says. The approach allows stations to fit *Golden Girls* into overcrowded schedules when it is most convenient.

DuckTales also illustrates the Disney sales strategy. When the show was conceived, it fit into a then-popular genre (soft animation), but it wasn't a clone. "We don't reinvent the wheel or create something totally new, but we may have a quarter twist that is enough to differentiate us in the marketplace," Jacquemin explains.

"Our assessment at the time was that animation was one-dimensional, heavy action, toy driven," he says. "The shows were wildly successful, but we felt it was a short-term cycle; that the kids, in a short time, would be powered out."

So Buena Vista played to its strong suit: *DuckTales* was based on the classic Disney characters, but it offered stronger

story lines and a higher-than-average quality of animation—even though Disney, for the first time, followed Saturday-morning industry practice in farming some of the production to overseas studios. Jacquemin says the division invested \$20 million to create 65 half-hours.

With *DuckTales* a success in syndication, Buena Vista offered *Chip 'n' Dale's Rescue Rangers*, another half-hour strip that can be paired with *DuckTales* starting in fall 1989, for an hour afternoon block. Again, Buena Vista isn't skimping: Jacquemin says the show cost \$28 million to produce 65 half-hours. Disney also plans to exploit *DuckTales* by creating a feature film based on the show.

It's the type of synergy makes Jacquemin's pulse race. "It says 'Disney' in every sense of the word," he says proudly.

Buena Vista's tough selling tactics with *DuckTales* also say "Disney." When the program came up for renewal, the Fox station group—which had helped to launch the show—found itself playing very serious hardball despite an agreement in principle between the two companies giving Fox the first shot at renewing the show if it succeeded. Eventually, Disney sold the shows to the Tribune Co. instead. Bob Kreek, president of Fox Television Stations Inc., says the companies couldn't come to agreement on several issues, including money. He takes the loss philosophically, but not without bitterness.

"I believe that we should have received some benefit for helping to launch the show," says Kreek, "and they went where the money was greatest. I'm not disinclined to do business with Buena Vista over it, I'll just be a little more certain what I'm getting into next time."

Buena Vista executives contend that the only deal-breaking issue in the negotiation with Fox was Disney's insistence on keeping the animated strips for its newly acquired television station in Los Angeles, KHJ. "I grant you, we were very, very aggressive," says Jacquemin, "but we came to agreeable terms and conditions except for this one issue."

He defends the decision, as he defends the tough approach to sales in general. "Do you think Michael King or Roger King have a love affair with everyone?" he asks. "Oh, please. They have launched *Inside Edition* on the heels of *Wheel of Fortune*, *Jeopardy*, and *Oprah Winfrey*. People have accepted their suc-



Buena Vista invested \$20 million for 65 episodes of *DuckTales* and \$28 million to introduce *Chip'n'Dale*.

cesses and have also had to accept some of their failures. But . . . it's a business. If we weren't so aggressive, how do you think we would cover \$28 million costs on *Chip'n'Dale*? Out of the goodness of our hearts? Oh, please."

Jacquemin also points out that Buena Vista's energy in protecting its interests sometimes benefits its customers, since the division supports its programs as vigorously as it sells them. Joanne Jackson, program director of KOVR in Sacramento, confirms that Buena Vista gave her all the help she could want for *Live with Regis and Kathie Lee* when the show was barely registering in the ratings.

"They do put their money where their mouth is," she says. "*Regis* was coming in at .8, and they did everything in their power possible to make that show get better. They were willing to spend money on radio for us. And, every day, they'd have some reference to Sacramento in the show. You can call the promotion department every day. The sales guy will call me every day asking, 'What can we do?'" Now, she says, the show's rating is improving, regularly exceeding 2.5.

Ironically, Buena Vista's efforts to support *Live* didn't bring the numbers to a satisfactory level on its own station. "We just can't get arrested here," laments Mellon. Jacquemin thinks the show would have gotten off to a better start on a network affiliate, observing that KHJ wasn't yet owned by Disney when it bought the program.

The company's desire to nurture KHJ—now ranking seventh out of seven VHF stations in the Los Angeles market—will present some challenges for Buena Vista's marketing team. "It restricts us from making group deals with companies that own groups of television stations including a Los Angeles outlet," Mellon says.

"We had a terrible problem with Fox," acknowledges Mellon, "and that's going to be a problem from here on out. I would think every show we would have, we would believe in and want on KHJ."

Goldman disagrees. "I think this company will have enough common sense to allow any syndicated product to be marketed in a fashion that best suits this company," he says. "If that means enhancing, shoring up KHJ, then so be it. But it would be wrong for anybody out there to assume that any product that we have will automatically go to KHJ."

Mellon expects the problem to solve itself, eventually, as Disney builds up its own station group. Until that happens, the company will have to sort through its priorities.

Jacquemin also acknowledges that the KHJ deal may have a downside, at least over the short term. "To some extent, we're going to have to work around the restriction on any program that would be used by KHJ," he says. "On the positive side, it



A flexible marketing plan gives stations the option of launching *Golden Girls* in 1990 or 1991.

gives us a laboratory for program development."

At the moment, Buena Vista is working on a reality-based show and two game shows, though none will be ready for NATPE this year. The company had announced it would be taking *Twenty Questions*, a game show, to NATPE, but pulled it in early December, citing a lack of available time periods.

"The current perception of success of *A Current Affair* is driving a lot of stations to be interested in this form of programming," explains Bennett, "and our show is not like that. This period has to run its cycle before stations are ready to try a new form."

Besides, the current tastes are too extreme for the Disney image. "I don't think I want to jump in and compete in a marketplace where people are rushing towards tabloid programming," explains Bennett.

For Jacquemin, the future holds more than just finding the right programming and keeping it on the air. He waxes passionate when he talks about forming "strategic alliances" with other companies, similar to the Touchstone film division's partnerships with McDonald's and Coke in marketing last summer's hit *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. (McDonald's committed about \$15 million to promoting the film.)

"They are looking for promotions and we are introducing new products," explains Jacquemin. "When the two can go hand in glove, these alliances go beyond anything that is in a television budget."

He declines to outline specifics, but the look in his eyes leaves little doubt that these comments are more than casual. "It's my love," he says sincerely. "I rise to the challenge, because I really like it." ●

.....
Kim Masters is a senior writer for *Premiere* magazine.

BUENA VISTA SYNDICATED PRODUCT

PROGRAM TITLE	YEARS AVAILABLE	COVERAGE
Wonderful World of Disney	3	88%
Win, Lose Or Draw	2	93%
DuckTales	2	96%
Chip 'n' Dale's Rescue Rangers	debut fall '89	90%
Live With Regis And Kathie Lee	1	80%
Siskel & Ebert	3 (w/BV)	97%
The Golden Girls	debut 1990	n.a.
Magic I movie package	3	93%
Magic II movie package	1	85%

Compiled by Barbara Ellis

The More Things Change...

A tough fall season has syndicators wary of risky new projects, but increasing barter revenues and sales of off-network product to cable show new promise.

Programmers headed for the 1989 NATPE International Program Conference have suspected for months that they'd find fewer new first-run shows to choose from at this year's market than they did a year ago. "Syndicators are spooked by the failures of this past fall," comments Wes Harris, programming v.p. at NBC Stations.

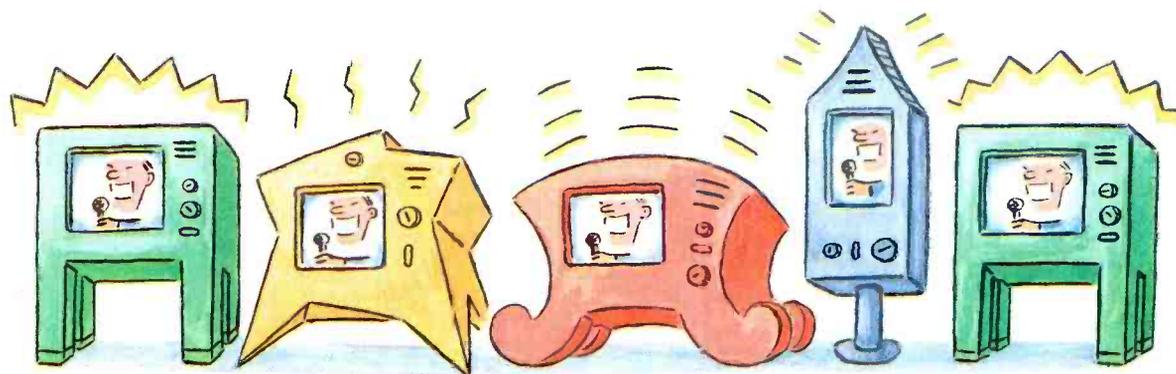
Distributors have a right to be spooked. Of 13 new first-run strips that premiered last fall, nearly all averaged lower ratings than the shows they replaced, according to a report by advertising rep firm Seltel. On top of that, a record number of successful 1986 and 1987 shows continue to perform satisfactorily, leaving precious few ailing time periods for new shows to fill.

The trauma of fall 1988 left syndicators in a con-

servative mood when it came to development for the 1989-90 season. As Steve Damiano's lead story in our In Focus section, "First-Run '89: Reworking the Hits," points out, distributors are copying established winners by offering a pack of reality-based shows, a long list of new game shows and some revivals of former classics.

On the positive side for syndicators is cable's burgeoning appetite for off-network programming. As Harvey Solomon's story, "Off-Network Hours: Life After Cable?" illustrates, action hours spurned by stations a year ago are generating handsome audience and ad-revenue increases on several basic-cable networks.

These articles, plus an update on buying consortia, "Groups Add Clout to Program Development," should set the stage for the drama about to take place between buyer and seller next week. ●



First-Run '89: Reworking the Hits

Syndicators are offering a heavy dose of reality this year, along with light-hearted talk and games. What's missing is innovation.

BY STEPHEN DAMIANO

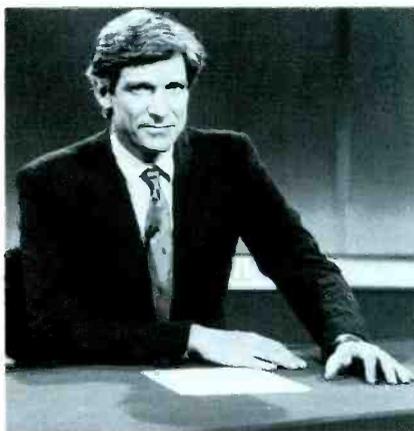
As happens every year at this time, syndicators are unveiling their best and brightest product—what they hope will be the new hits of next season. The question arises, however, how new is new?

The answer, according to many programmers (and not a few syndicators), is not new enough. With purse strings tight and good time periods precious, syndicators are relying on proven formats—reality-based series, talk and game shows—instead of trying to break new ground. (To be fair, it should be noted that many of the formats being imitated this year were considered ground-breaking last year. Viacom's introduction of *Double Dare* and Fox's development of *A Current Affair* are just two examples.) And, while programmers complain about the sameness of many of the series scheduled for fall debut, most also admit they are not any more willing than distributors to gamble on an unproven formula.

"Are we being too conservative?" wonders KING-TV Seattle program director Craig Smith. "Probably. But these days you have to be more conservative on the business end."

"The problem," adds John Moczulski, director of program services for KGO in San Francisco, "is that to achieve the best ratings, programming has to become so homogenized that it works for everyone."

Be that as it may, some of the new reality-based series are almost too alike for their own good. Take, for instance, the search-and-find genre. First, there's Group W's *Missing/Reward*. The weekly program will utilize reenactments of real-life events leading up to the disappearance of people and objects. The twist here is that viewers will be provided with informa-



Reality will be the *Current Affair* at NATPE.

tion about rewards being offered for the return of the missing people and objects.

The same monetary twist, however, is also being used on MCA's *\$Reward\$*. "Large" monetary rewards will be offered to viewers for information leading to the capture of criminals or the recovery of missing persons, stolen property or treasured items.

Then, there's Qintex's *National Lost and Found*. See if this description sounds vaguely familiar: Each week lost money, people and property will be found for those who have lost them. In this case, however, there are no rewards offered for solving the problem.

Despite the similarity of such shows and the possibility that only one, perhaps two, will actually be on the air come next September, most programmers and syndicators agree with Orion president Scott Towle's assertion that "reality-based programs will be the story of the NATPE convention." That assumption is based on the pre-NATPE clearances for King World's

Inside Edition, which premiered earlier this month, and the promise of such programs as *Crimewatch Tonight* (Orion), *Tabloid* (Paramount), *Crime Diary* (Qintex) and *Cop Talk: Behind the Shield* (Television Program Enterprises); not to mention the continued success of *A Current Affair*.

Long before NATPE, based on descriptions alone, programmers were talking about overkill. "There's always room for one more tabloid show," says MMT associate director of programming and NATPE chairman Joe Weber. "My main concern is that if four or five get launched, we kill off another genre by flooding the market."

That possibility also worries KCNC program director Lon Lee in Denver, who asks, "When has a copy ever worked as well as the original?"

Rarely, says Petry vice president and director of programming Jack Fentress. "*A Current Affair* is unique," he explains. "It has caught the eye and the heart of the public. The clones have to be different to succeed, but at the same time they can't stray too far from the feel of the original. There may not be room for any more if they are too highly produced or pretentious."

King World president and CEO Michael King disagrees. He thinks that a tabloid show with high production values is just what viewers are looking for. While he calls *A Current Affair* "a low-budget tabloid," he says *Inside Edition* "is on the order of 20/20. It will be produced on a higher level and will not deal in anything untrue."

King also predicts that with *Inside Edition* and *A Current Affair* already in syndication, "we won't be seeing any of the others coming out."

Programmers view such a promise with mixed emotions. Steve Scollard, vice president and general manager of KLRT in Little Rock, says he'd actually "like to see more newsmagazines; something that adds some drama to the schedule."

KING-TV's Smith says there's obviously an appetite for tabloid television: "The circulation of the *National Enquirer* proves there's a market for these programs." Smith won't be acquiring one, however, since *Entertainment Tonight* and *Evening Magazine* currently fill his access slots.

Carol Myers Martz, program manager for KCOP in Los Angeles, won't be picking up a tabloid show either, although for different reasons. Noting

with a laugh "that there will probably be 500 reality-based shows by the time NATPE comes around," Myers Martz says she's taking a different tack: "I'll try to zig when they [other stations] zag. If they've got reality, I'll take a sitcom."

WGNO station manager Robert Gremillion in New Orleans agrees. "We're always looking for a sitcom with legs," he says. And, while Gremillion might consider a reality-based show for weekends, his weekdays are full. "We are looking for a sitcom to start in 1990, and also for lighter comedies for Sunday morning."

Unfortunately for Gremillion and other programmers in his position, first-run sitcoms are scarce this year. Unlike last year, when *The Munsters Today*, *Starting from Scratch* and *My Secret Identity* were causing if not excitement, at least interest among programmers, as of November there were no major sitcom announcements. One of the few weekly series announced isn't even an original premise; it's an updating of the old *Lassie* series. The plots will most likely resemble the original series, though '80s issues will come into play.

Of the other announced programs, few were creating interest among programmers. *American Gladiators* (Samuel Goldwyn), a program where contestants' athletic prowess is put to the test, was seen as a possible weekend success. *Roller Games* (Qintex), a combination of 1950s roller-derby action with 1980s technology, piqued the interest of more than a few programmers, as did the possibility of a new



Orion's Towle: Station help needed to pick hits.



MMT's Weber: Too many clones kill the genre.

Joan Rivers talk show. None of the proposed game shows looked particularly promising to programmers.

There are two areas, though, where syndicators' plans and programmers' wishes are in harmony: Late-night programming and live-event specials.

"Live-event shows are extremely good performers," reports LaRhe Vestal, program manager for WTXF in Philadelphia. "The concept is good television. It's tricky, but I think it's going to get better and better as the format is developed."

Already in the works is a series of four live, two-hour tabloid specials titled *American Expose*, from Saban Productions with Jack Anderson as host. Geraldo Rivera will also be back. A number of other syndicators are promising live-event specials, though most are keeping the topics quiet.

As for late-night programming, station executives seem pleased with the prospect of Paramount's *Arsenio Hall Show*, scheduled to begin this month. And many are asking for additional late-night product.

Viacom president of domestic syndication Joseph Zaleski, for one, wishes he could offer a promising late-night program. "If I could come up with a show that would work in late night," he says, "I'd do it right now. It's really one of the great areas open to syndicators."

At least two syndicators are planning to take advantage of that opening. Worldvision has announced *After Hours*, a magazine strip blending music, comedy and on-location interviews, for a fall start. *Off-Shore TV*, from

Saban Productions, may be available next month. The half-hour comedy about a video pirate will star Mark Hudson and feature spoofs of classic TV shows and cameo appearances by film and television personalities.

If there was one area where programmer and syndicator opinions differed greatly, it was in children's game shows. While syndicators still have high hopes for the genre, many programmers feel the kids' games are a passing fad.

"I think it may be a one-year phenomenon," says Vestal. "Animation, on the other hand, has the ability to be an evergreen."

The reason, according to Vestal and other programmers, is that kids tend to turn the channel if they've already seen a game show. If, on the other hand, they realize after the first cartoon (which they also might have seen) there could follow two they haven't seen, chances are the kids will stay tuned. Viacom, cognizant of this fact, plans to up the number of original episodes of *Double Dare* this year. Zaleski reports there might be anywhere from 32 to 37 weeks of original programming in '89.

Scollard points out what he sees as another flaw with kids' live-action at the moment. The shows, he says, are "more involved with action than personalities. I think anything that doesn't focus on people won't last long."

Patrice Mohn, station manager at WXIX in Cincinnati, is a bit more optimistic. She believes there is still a place for kids' game shows, but thinks the market can only support a limited number of them.

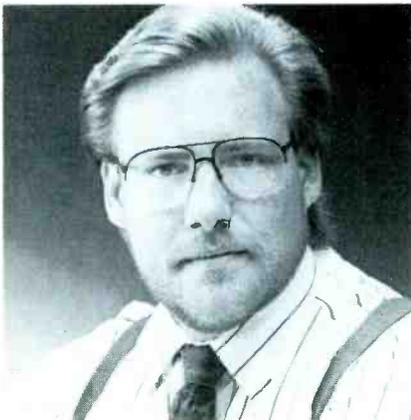
"I think having three kids' games in a market is too much," says Mohn. "I compare it to a kid who eats too much birthday cake. If he only has one piece he's fine, but if he eats too much, he's going to get sick. And, once he gets sick, he may never go back again."

Such predictions could make a number of syndicators uncomfortable, since they are continuing to offer kids' games for the coming season. D.L. Taffner is readying *5-4-3-2-Run* for this fall. The half-hour strip promises to test both physical and mental skills as contestants race for prizes. *Pictionary*, from MCA, may be ready this summer. On this show youngsters will be asked to copy computer-generated illustrations. There will also be studio-audience participation.

Programmers' continued affection for animation should be good news to Claster Television, which is introducing an off-network and first-run animated series this year. The first, *Jim Henson's Muppet Babies*, an off-CBS series, will premiere in syndication this fall. *The New Archies*, bringing the comic-strip characters into the '80s, has been announced for a January start.

Worldvision will also have new episodes of *Huckleberry Hound* and LBS will be distributing *Police Academy: the Animated Series*.

Just because programmers expressed a preference for animation over kids' game shows doesn't mean they've given up on live action. WXIX's Mohn, for instance, is looking forward to more such shows. "I'd like to see the next step in kids live action," she says, "perhaps a kids news magazine." Mohn says in order to "compete with the Nickelodeons of the world," syndicators and stations will have to devise more innovative children's pro-



KLRT's Scollard: Kids' games have a short life.

gramming.

That's also the thinking of Scott Carlin, president of first-run syndication for Lorimar Telepictures, who says it's premature to be predicting the demise of a format still in the early stages of development.

Citing the success of *Fun House* (last summer's number two ranked kids show), Carlin says, "First-run kids live-action shows have to be more evolutionary. You have to change with the marketplace because kids get bored very easily." That is why *Fun House* is produced with a three-week lead time, and kids come into the studio every Thursday to test new stunts. Lorimar is also investing in higher production



KCOP's Martz: Sitcoms will battle reality.

values and in on-going focus groups to see what kids expect of the program.

Finally, Carlin insists, "live action is a viable complement to animation, and there is still room for more of both on television."

You might say that's the philosophy behind Viacom's new entry in the kids market, *The Super Mario Brothers "Super" Show*. Hoping to lure both animation and live-action fans, the program will blend the two formats in a half-hour strip. The characters are based on Nintendo video-game creations, including the Super Mario Brothers and the Legend of Zelda.

"You have to change the basic components of kids shows," says Zaleski in describing *Super Mario* and also *Double Dare*. "You can keep the same format with a program like *Wheel of Fortune*, because the audience base is so wide. You don't have the same luxury with kids' shows. You always have to try to be bigger and better."

This is one of the few areas where syndicators and station executives readily agree. Both want to see bigger and better programming, and not just in the kids' arena. Ask programmers for specific suggestions, of course, and they become tongue-tied. Most would probably agree, however, with Lee's only half-joking response: "I'm looking for a real successful, cheap program."

The problem, say distributors, is that some stations give the same answers without even grinning. So, except for the few station consortiums trying to come up with cheaper programming, syndicators are left to develop shows without any station input. And, while that may be their job, syndicators say they are always interested in station suggestions.

Orion's Towle believes one of the reasons syndicators don't often hear programming suggestions from stations is that the stations can't predict the trends—or hits—any better than syndicators. Still, Towle reports, "I'm going to listen to stations and if I hear they want specials and don't want games, then I probably won't be introducing any new games that season."

Such concrete suggestions are few and far between, however. At WTTE in Columbus, Ohio, for instance, general manager John Quigley says he's looking for a variety of programming, though he focuses on specific dayparts. "Our first focus is the 6 to 8 P.M. time periods," he says. "That's where we can gather an audience. No matter what the networks think, not everyone loves news. Anytime we're looking at new programming, our focus is here."

Of course, the burden to fill those time periods, more often than not, rests firmly with syndicators. Though station executives don't always admit to liking the slew of clone shows, when it comes time to buy syndicated programming they invariably ask for the same type of programming that has given another station a hit. And, with fewer choice time periods available,



WGNO's Gremillion: Looking for weekend comedy.

syndicators are less likely to produce untried concepts. Hence this year's reality-, game- and talk-show glut.

In the end, however, both syndicators and programmers vow to keep looking for something new. Concludes Scollard:

"We're not satisfied with those tried-and-trues doing a 2 or 3. We want something better." ●

Groups Add Clout to Program Development

Broadcasters may not know what kind of new first-run programming they want from the syndication community in 1989, but there is little doubt they will co-own more of it than in any previous season. One reason is that major-market independent groups Fox and Tribune now routinely demand a stake in original programs they clear on their outlets. Another is a rise in consortium buying among stations.

"[It's] because groups are trying to exhibit clout and control," says Phil Oldham, senior vice president of domestic sales at Genesis Entertainment. Adds Bob Jacobs, president of GTG Marketing: "It's very difficult to make a deal in New York, Chicago or L.A. on a first-run project without involving the whole group and giving it a piece of the show somehow. A consortium-buying unit, even if you're not looking for it, is the only way to make a deal."

The largest group buyer, other than Fox Stations and Tribune Broadcasting, which own outlets in the top three markets and have the clout to launch new shows on their own, is the The Program Consortium. Created in 1987 by Group W Stations, Gaylord Broadcasting and Chris-Craft/United Television, it concentrates on development of original prime time specials. Chris-Craft's KCOP in Los Angeles, independently owned WPWR in Chicago and MCA's WWOR in New York give the group the top market clearances that are critical to the financing of most new first-run shows.

Charlie Edwards, Gaylord programming vice president, says the group formed because its members had specific ideas about what they wanted on the air and saw the 35 percent clearance their consortium could provide as an effective inducement for producers. The consortium doesn't



Viacom's *Double Dare* is one of a number of shows co-owned by broadcast groups or consortia.

co-produce programs, but does participate in back-end profits for the shows its members decide to air.

TPC has already aired ten specials, all reality-based programs. A typical offering is *A Matter of Life and Death*, about a Florida death-row inmate. Blending live segments and footage, a la *America's Most Wanted*, the two-hour special presents evidence to support a retrial. The group is also presenting two, two-hour Arnold Shapiro-produced specials, *Crimes of Violence* and *Crimes of Passion*, to be aired in 1989.

TPC executives discuss programming decisions in conference calls. Periodically, when enough product is available for consideration, the members meet in person. Edwards believes TPC's success comes from its specific focus on specials. "If you have a specific purpose and are not applying a shotgun approach, you're more successful. You can almost launch a program with a couple of phone calls."

The second major consortium is the R&D Network. Announced during the 1988 NATPE convention and assembled by King World, it includes stations owned by Gillett, Scripps-Howard, Group W, Post-Newsweek, King Broadcasting and Midwest Communications. Together, the stations reach 30 percent of U.S. homes and give King World a testing ground for new shows that could eventually air in national syndication.

Looking for just those shows, fol-

lowing NATPE last year King World executives scoured the marketplace and came up with 150 program ideas. At an August meeting in Chicago, a final eight went before the group, which zeroed in on two, one for late night and one for daytime. Both are in development and will ultimately air on the member stations as a test. There's no guarantee that even a show tested on 15 or 20 stations will make it nationally, but Jim Dauphinee, president of the R&D Network, maintains, "the chances for success are much better after having gone through the process.

"In this business, you have one rating book to prove yourself," Dauphinee says. "This is the best way of finding a hit."

Is consortium buying likely to grow even more in the 1990s? Tribune Broadcasting president Jim Dowdle believes independents will band together more frequently to buy product, once they've paid off the big debts from past program and station acquisitions.

Marc Shacher, programming director for Tribune Broadcasting stations, believes the mounting costs of launching first-run programming will force broadcasters to form more buying consortia before long. "In order to make first-run programming economically feasible on a long-term basis," explains Shacher, "there will have to be alliances among various groups in the broadcast industry."

STEVE WEINSTEIN

Off-Net Hours: Life After Cable?

Syndicators hope for post-cable sales to broadcasters, who say the market will ultimately decide the value of the shows.

BY HARVEY SOLOMON

It's eleven o'clock at night: Do you know where your off-net hours are?

Three of the biggest are battling it out head-to-head on basic cable: *Miami Vice* (USA Network), *Spenser: For Hire* (Lifetime) and *Remington Steele* (CBN Family Channel). Delivering some of cable's best ratings ever, off-network hours are anchoring prime time as well as bolstering other day-parts.

Off-net hours seem to have found a welcome home on basic cable when only a few years ago cable was considered a dumping ground for short-run, unstrippable product. Since demand for hours remains very soft in syndication, why are they generating such excitement on cable? And what effect will their cable success have on future distribution? One answer may lie in the cable numbers game, where expectations are far different from broadcast television. Other answers may be found in cable's continued ability to pay hefty prices for off-network product and demand for hours in syndication.

The introduction of MCA's *Miami Vice* and *Murder, She Wrote* pushed USA's average prime time rating to a 2.1 in Nielsen (1.15 million households) during the first two weeks of October. Combined, the two programs' 2.5 rating represented a 56 percent increase over the previous years' 7 P.M. and 8 P.M. ratings. David Bender, USA's research vice president, expected another full point's growth by year's end as new viewers continued to find the program.

Miami Vice has also had an impact on late night, where it has its second run each day. It averaged a 1.4 rating for the first two weeks of October, the highest the USA Network has garnered in that time period.

Lifetime registered the largest audience increase of any basic cable service in the last year, with prime time viewing up 50 percent from .8 (third quarter '87) to 1.2 (third quarter '88). (Rising cable penetration pushed household numbers to a record 502,000, an 84 percent increase in the same period.) Pat Fili, Lifetime's senior vice president of programming, attributes the growth largely to Orion's *Cagney & Lacey*, calling the show "a phenomenal performer that has exceeded expectations." *Spenser: For Hire* recently took over *Cagney's* 11 P.M. time slot.

In its second season on CBN Family Channel, MTM's *Remington Steele* helped maintain CBN's number two position in both prime time (7 to 8 P.M.; 1.3) and late night (11 P.M. to midnight; .9) for the month of September, according to the Nielsen NHI Multi TRAK Report. Lorimar's *Our House* recorded a 2.1 October premiere rating, averag-

ing 1.4 (597,000 households) in its first week.

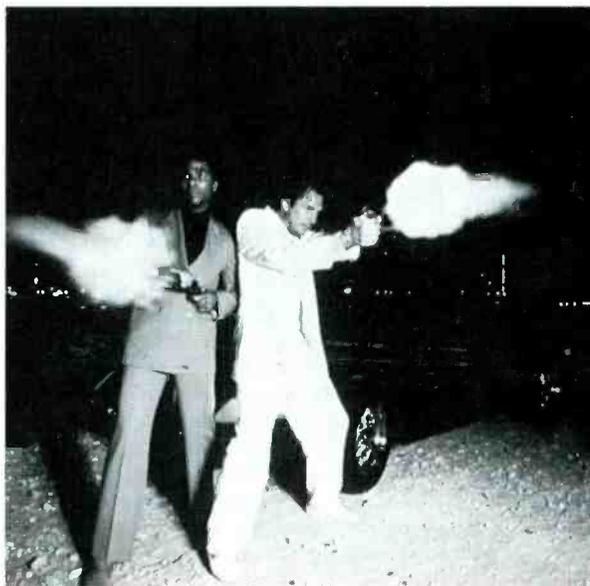
The hours' success on cable hasn't assured it a lucrative future in syndication any time soon, however.

"The cable networks should be thrilled by their ratings," says Janeen Bjork, vice president and director of programming of the rep firm Seltel, "but that still doesn't give us the support we need to believe that an off-net hour is acceptable for [broadcast] as a syndicated show, given the return we want."

Still smarting from the record prices paid in the bull market of several years ago, broadcasters have found little room in their overstuffed inventories for off-net hours during the past two years. Yet most stations' dissatisfaction with such off-net hours as *Magnum, P.I.* and *Fall Guy* stems less from their ratings than from the back-breaking prices that have produced poor returns on investment. That doesn't mean off-net hours aren't performing in fringe spots in syndication.

"As an independent, 6 to 8 P.M. or even 4 to 8 P.M. is your calling card," says Vicky Gregorian, program director at WSVN, which moved from NBC to Fox affiliation on January 1 after Miami's station shake-up. "But in daytime rotation, or non-key periods, I might run a *Hart to Hart* or *Police Woman*. If they deliver good adult demos, why not? I'm not adverse to buying off-net hours—I just won't hang my hat on them."

Numerous programmers and reps, including John von Soosten, Katz Television Group's vice president and director of programming, cite the performance in syndication of TeleVentures' *Hunter* as evidence of the strength of one format, the male/action hour. "This business tends to be cyclical, and just because something is out of vogue now doesn't mean it won't be back in a couple of years," says von Soosten. "At this point in time, the hour



Last October, *Miami Vice's* average 1.4 rating gave USA its best 11 P.M. numbers ever.

form is not dead, but it's in a very precarious position."

This current lack of demand by broadcast stations, which spurred the off-net hours' migration to cable, prompts a "chicken-and-egg" analogy from many programmers. "The value of the off-net hours in the syndication marketplace was not that great, or they wouldn't have gone to cable in the first place," notes Carol Myers Martz, program director at KCOP in Los Angeles.

Concurrently, programmers attribute USA's acquisition of MCA product (*Airwolf*, *Miami Vice*, *Murder, She Wrote*) to MCA's 50 percent ownership stake in the cable network, belittling these deals as any harbinger of wholesale future cable sales. Several speculate that Paramount, USA's other half owner, will steer *MacGyver* (slated for syndication in 1990) the same route. "Are the off-net hours devalued having gone to cable, or were they devalued to begin with?" asks Bjork. "They were devalued to begin with, and even more so after going to cable."

Cable runs have a twofold negative effect on potential future syndication sales. First, they make a show that much more shopworn, and double-running *Cagney & Lacey* and *Miami Vice* only exacerbates the problem. "Do I want to be the off-cable station?" asks Gregorian. "That's a really tough call."

Secondly, a cable run delays the syndication sale, taking a show that much further from the date of original production, a particular problem with *Miami Vice*, which strives so keenly to reflect an early '80s popular culture.

Syndicators argue the other side of the equation: "Cable exposure really doesn't affect very much the kind of numbers a station will get, and hence the advertising revenues they can achieve," says Scott Towle, president of Orion television syndication. "We're very proud of what *Cagney & Lacey* is doing on Lifetime, and we're not at all sensitive about getting out and telling that story to the television station operators."

Dalton Danon, Lorimar Syndication's senior vice president of pay/cable and feature film sales, whose cable sales include *Our House* (CBN), *Falcon Crest* (Lifetime), *Dallas* and *Knots Landing* (both TNT), agrees: "Strong cable per-



Murder solved syndication woes by going to cable.

formance of key off-network programming provides a sales tool for us, much as strong network performance does. Surely it makes the exposure greater, so somebody might theorize that it diminishes later syndication values, but I think it demonstrates the ongoing strength of the programming. When you consider the cable universe constitutes approximately 50 percent of the television universe, there's plenty of audience left."

But that audience for off-net hours on cable—is it cannibalizing other cable network's shares, or siphoning off viewers from independents and affiliates? Few stations have access to local ratings for individual cable networks, so they cannot accurately gauge the performance of cable off-net hours in their markets. Yet few dispute that Nielsen's aggregate cable viewing number is rising inexorably. Most programmers argue that horizontal cable networks such as USA, which continue to resemble classic independent stations, can cause considerable damage.

"One of the things people just don't want to talk about is that a good part of what cable runs is us—our indies, our network affiliates," says Jack Fentress, vice president and director of programming for the rep firm Petry National Television. "And the minute they start running our kinds of shows, they're in competition with us." Not all broadcasters share these sentiments. In the heavily cabled Boston market, Bruce Marson, WNEV's vice president of programming, has scheduled *Cagney*

& *Lacey* in early fringe. He attributes its disappointing start more to broadcast competition—*Donahue* and *Oprah*—than to the prior and concurrent exposure on Lifetime. "At this point," says Marson, "the effect of a cable window on a program in syndication is negligible."

While such differences of opinion are rampant among programmers, all parties agree that the buyers market in syndication will further complicate studios' efforts to return off-net hours to key station time periods. "In this market, with respect to off-net product, prices have been in almost a free-fall for the last year," explains Bob Affe, program director for WTOG in Tampa. The change goes beyond pricing to what Affe calls, "syndicators' newly found flexibility in terms and conditions."

Cable services, paying higher prices than ever, have become an important sales call for syndicators. A one-stop cable sale for major off-net hours—eliminating the huge expense of multiple sales calls, trade advertising, direct-mail campaigns—seems particularly attractive.

At least one broadcast observer (who asked not to be identified) sees a danger in this strategy, however: "In the long run, by strengthening the cable networks," he says, "syndicators are weakening the over-the-air stations. Therefore, the dollars will be shrinking and further erode the syndicators' position. While cable networks may be willing to pay more money now [than broadcast stations], once they achieve a position of strength, they'll have much more leverage against the syndicators."

Regardless of whether the buyer resides in the cable or broadcast market, the syndicator's Catch-22 still applies: A long-running series on a network usually accrues greater deficits than a limited-run series. Many syndicators report that production costs for hours range from \$900,000 to \$1.3 million per episode, of which immediate foreign sales recoup but a small percentage. And with independents and affiliates no longer willing to pay the hefty prices once commanded by strippable off-net hours, cable has become, though perhaps only temporarily, the heir apparent.

"Due to the mechanics of cable syndication, cablers can make money on programs at prices that would gag individ-

ual stations," says WTOG's Affe. "I don't begrudge syndicators selling to other media, but prices will have to reflect that prior secondary exposure. Still, cable's use of off-net product is really a short-term solution at best. Cable will have to create new programs to be viable."

Cable programmers don't disagree, but point out that off-net hours attract audiences, which can in turn stimulate viewer interest in original programming.

Bringing in viewers with pre-sold product allows us to schedule original programming adjacent to that acquired product," says Lifetime's Fili. While indies and affiliates consider competition only within a specific market, cable services take a more global view. "The key is to try and let people know you're on the air," says David Kenin, USA's senior vice president for programming. "In a 50-channel environment, people don't just tune to programs, nor do they survey every number on their dial. They select the stations they are most used to choosing."

Off-network hours also provide cable services with both an identity and the opportunity to pitch viewers via aggressive on-air promotion. "We run at least two [promo] minutes every hour, and it works," says Douglas McCormick, Lifetime's vice president of sales. "That's one of the reasons the overall network has had such strong lift."

While original programming commands cable's highest CPMs, basic services charge in the \$3 to \$4 range for off-net hours, which is considerably lower than local television prices. "Off-net hours provide instant recognition for a scatter buy for an agency or advertiser," says Dick Hammer, CBN's managing director of advertising sales. "They're really looking for original programming in a cable network, but they feel more comfortable with a Linus blanket of shows like *Remington Steele* and *Our House*."

"*Miami Vice* delivers a young male-skewing audience, and we've seen the automotives gobble it up," says John Silvestri, USA's senior vice president of advertising sales.

Some broadcast-industry executives, however, see a darker rationale behind cable's growing ad revenues. "Supporting cable can serve as leverage to modify the networks' demands," rea-



Double-running *Cagney* now may hurt future sales.

sions one. "If cable is not a major factor, the networks can screw the advertiser and hike the rates. Advertisers are paying rates not justified by the delivery of the audiences. If they applied the same yardstick as for spot, cable wouldn't be bought."

The emergence of a new buyer in the syndication market, basic cable, means that playing-one-against-the-other tactics can now apply to product, too. Syndicators and their broadcast clients agree that over-the-air stations will remain the syndicator's first stop for the foreseeable future, but cable becomes a useful bargaining chip.

"At this point in time, a viable property can generate more dollars from syndication than from basic cable, simply because the income cable networks can generate from their advertisers and cable systems is not quite as great as the income from 125 television stations," says Danon. "Our long-term relationships are critically important to us. This isn't a business where we're selling a single used car. With our number of shows, we have to go back every week in the year."

And station programmers and reps agree. "Syndicators would still prefer to have mass distribution over regular free TV," says KCOP's Martz.

So basic cable purchases of off-net hours will supplement, not supplant, traditional syndication buys. "Everybody will get over the emotional impact of a show going to basic," says Orion's Towle, "because that's the way of the new world."

Cable's expansion in the last decade,

first in distribution and now in programming, has forced a cable/broadcast alliance that can politely be described as tempestuous. Now, with cable's incursion into the syndication marketplace for off-net hours, not everyone appears willing to accept this change so gracefully.

"Syndicators are trying to have a foot in both camps," says Petry's Fentress. "I suppose it's terrific for them, but we sure don't have to help them, although we are. But we shouldn't."

Though warily eyeing its cable competitors, broadcasters don't yet feel the need to counterprogram off-net cable hours. "It's impossible to counterprogram everybody, because there are too many program exhibitors," says WTOG's Affe. "You have to execute your own game plan."

Perhaps the only dark cloud on cable's off-net acquisition horizon is Jones Intercable's much publicized dropping of USA last fall. Though the cable operator partially blamed the reliance on duplicated, violent, off-net programming, most observers cited USA's rate increases and Jones' stake in its replacement network, TNT, as the ultimate factors. Few expect this decision to be duplicated within the industry or to curb cable's appetite for off-net hours.

"When anybody, whether it's a cable system, an advertiser, or a viewer, comments about what we are doing, we listen," says USA's Kenin. "We have a regular service that monitors what the viewers are saying, and the advertising community reports back what Madison Avenue is saying, and the affiliate-relations department reports what cable operators are saying. Not much has changed in the way we operate, and we'll continue to listen to all three with any major acquisition we make."

Basic cable's appetite for off-net hours, aided by sluggish sales in the traditional syndication market, appears insatiable and the stake should continue to grow. "I think we're competitors for any kind of programming," says Paul Krimsier, CBN's vice president of programming and promotion. "Cable penetration is increasing, advertiser acceptance of basic cable is increasing dramatically, and the dollars are there for us to be a competitor for any type of program."

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Harvey Solomon is a Boston-based free-lance writer.

New To NATPE

Below, in alphabetical order, are some of the new shows syndicators are promising to unveil at NATPE this month. Included in each listing, where possible, is the program title, distributor, producer, premiere date, suggested daypart, deal and number of episodes available.

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 Compiled by Barbara Ellis and Stephen Damiano.

AMERICAN GLADIATORS	
	This hour-long weekly special event/action program is billed as "the quintessential fusion of Roman games." The stakes are money, fame and celebrity status as contestants battle the whip jump, pulley of war and velcro toss.
EPISODES: 26	PRODUCER: Four Point Entertainment
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Samuel Goldwyn
DAYPART: Weekend, late night, fringe	DEAL: Barter

BETCHA	
	Based on the weekly European hit <i>Bet You</i> , this half-hour game-show strip features everyday people performing extraordinary feats. Contestants will bet against the odds on whether or not people can accomplish their tasks. Marjoe Gortner and Miss California, Marlise Ricardos, will host.
EPISODES: 175	PRODUCER: Murray Schwartz Entertainment
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Viacom
DAYPART: Prime access	DEAL: Cash + barter

CELEBRITY SECRETS	
	Celebrities bare their souls as they reveal intimate facts about their personal lives in a reality-based half-hour talk/game strip.
EPISODES: 34	PRODUCER: Bud Granoff Company and Mac III
PREMIERE: September '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Casablanca IV
DAYPART: Early fringe and access	DEAL: Cash + barter

COUCH POTATOES	
	A TV trivia game show strip featuring two teams of contestants sitting on larger-than-life couches and eating potato chips and popcorn between questions. Distributor considers it a "heavily stylized cartoon version of a game show," with surprise cameo appearances by TV stars.
EPISODES: TBA	PRODUCER: Group W Productions with Saban Productions
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Group W
DAYPART: All	DEAL: TBA

CRIME DIARIES	
	This half-hour, reality-based strip will feature a special team of detectives solving cases based on reenactments of real-life crimes.
EPISODES: 260	PRODUCER: Mary Ellis Bunim and Jon Murray
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Qintex
DAYPART: Early fringe	DEAL: Barter

EVENING	
EVENING	A nationally produced half-hour supplement to the localized <i>PM/Evening Magazine</i> . The strip will blend entertainment and information, with an emphasis on timeliness.
EPISODES: TBA	PRODUCER: Group W Television and Group W Productions
PREMIERE: January '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Group W Productions
DAYPART: Access	DEAL: Cash

EYE Q	
	This half-hour comedy game show strip pits two couples against one another in a contest for the chance to win a special jackpot worth up to \$100,000 daily.
EPISODES: 260	PRODUCER: Bob Stuart Productions
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Palladium Entertainment
DAYPART: Access or fringe	DEAL: Cash + barter

5-4-3-2-RUN	
	A half-hour children's game show strip that tests brain power and physical skills as contestants goop and glop their way to glorious prizes.
EPISODES: 17	PRODUCER: Comedia Productions; conceived by Mark Maxwell-Smith
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: D.L. Taffner/Ltd.
DAYPART: Daytime, early fringe	DEAL: Barter

DIRECTORY

INSIDE EDITION



This half-hour news magazine strip will focus on news stories "of courage, hope, humor and tragedy" and will combine human-interest profiles with fast-breaking news vignettes.

EPISODES: 260
PRODUCER: King World Productions
PREMIERE: Available now
DISTRIBUTOR: King World
DAYPART: Access
DEAL: Barter

JACKPOT!



The young-skewing, people-oriented game show with a comedy/riddle format is coming back to television with the same host, Jeff Edward, who made the show a hit back in the '70s.

EPISODES: TBA
PRODUCER: Bob Stuart Productions
PREMIERE: Fall '89
DISTRIBUTOR: Palladium Entertainment
DAYPART: Access or fringe
DEAL: Cash + barter

THE JOAN RIVERS SHOW



Joan Rivers returns to the talk show format with this strip featuring celebrity guests, behind-the-scene gossip and Rivers' special brand of humor.

EPISODES: TBA
PRODUCER: TBA
PREMIERE: September '89
DISTRIBUTOR: Tribune Entertainment Company
DAYPART: Access
DEAL: Cash + barter

THE KENNY ROGERS SHOW



This daily one-hour talk show, hosted by the country-western superstar, will feature celebrity interviews, music and other special features.

EPISODES: 220
PRODUCER: Scott Sterberg, Jeff Wald, Kenny Kragen
PREMIERE: Fall '89
DISTRIBUTOR: Barris Program Sales
DAYPART: Early fringe
DEAL: Cash + Barter

LASSIE



This new series will feature the same type of family-oriented tales as the original series, only updated for today's audiences. The canine star of the half-hour weekly series will be a direct descendant of the original Lassie.

EPISODES: 24
PRODUCER: Palladium Entertainment
PREMIERE: Fall '89
DISTRIBUTOR: MCA TV
DAYPART: Access
DEAL: Barter

MAKE YOUR MOVE



Based on that old family party favorite, charades, this half-hour comedy game-show strip will feature celebrity players acting out familiar words and phrases.

EPISODES: 195
PRODUCER: David Fein Productions
PREMIERE: Fall '89
DISTRIBUTOR: Worldvision Enterprises Inc.
DAYPART: Access
DEAL: Cash + barter

MISSING/REWARD



A weekly dramatization of the events leading up to the disappearance of people and objects. Information will also be provided about the rewards offered for their return.

EPISODES: TBA
PRODUCER: Brian Gadinsky
PREMIERE: TBA
DISTRIBUTOR: Group W Productions
DAYPART: TBA
DEAL: TBA

THE NEW ARCHIES



An animated half-hour weekly series starring the loveable comic-strip characters in all-new adventures set in the '80s.

EPISODES: 13
PRODUCER: DIC
PREMIERE: January '89
DISTRIBUTOR: Claster Television
DAYPART: Weekends
DEAL: Barter

PICTIONARY



Youngsters will compete for prizes as they try to accurately copy computer-generated illustrations. The half-hour strip will also feature "high-tech fun and audience participation."

EPISODES: TBA
PRODUCER: Quantum Media Inc.
PREMIERE: Summer '89
DISTRIBUTOR: MCA
DAYPART: TBA
DEAL: Barter

DIRECTORY

\$REWARDS\$

\$REWARDS\$	Large monetary rewards will be offered to viewers for information leading to the capture of criminals or the recovery of missing persons, stolen property or treasure items. The half-hour strip will blend reenactments, available news footage and originally produced material.
EPISODES: TBA	PRODUCER: Malcolm Barbour and John Langley in association with Saban Productions
PREMIERE: January '89	DISTRIBUTOR: MCA TV
DAYPART: Access	DEAL: Cash + barter

ROLLER GAMES

	This one-hour weekly program will attempt to combine the action and excitement of a 1950's roller derby with the technology of the late 1980s. The distributor calls it "MTV on wheels."
EPISODES: 56	PRODUCER: A Sams-Miller Production in association with Motown Productions
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Qintex
DAYPART: Early fringe/late night	DEAL: Barter

STAR*PLAY

STAR*PLAY	A half-hour game-show strip where two teams of three celebrities and two contestants compete for "big cash" by identifying a person, place or thing pantomimed by a star. Audience members will also participate to earn fast money.
EPISODES: TBA	PRODUCER: Kalola Productions
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: MCA TV
DAYPART: Access	DEAL: Cash + barter

STRAIGHT TO THE HEART

	This half-hour game-show strip will attempt to combine match-making and comedy. Single contestants—three men and three women—are asked questions to determine which couple is most compatible.
EPISODES: TBA	PRODUCER: Jim Rich Productions
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: MGM/UA
DAYPART: Early fringe, access, late night	DEAL: TBA

THE SUPER MARIO BROTHERS "SUPER" SHOW

	A half-hour kids show strip that will combine live action and animation. In addition to the Super Mario Brothers, other Nintendo stars, such as the Legend of Zelda, will make appearances throughout the series.
EPISODES: TBA	PRODUCER: DIC Enterprises
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Viacom
DAYPART: Early fringe	DEAL: Barter

TALKABOUT

	A weekly half-hour game show which asks contestants to "talk about" people, places and things in order to win prizes.
EPISODES: 130	PRODUCER: Comedia Productions; conceived by Mark Maxwell-Smith
PREMIERE: Available now	DISTRIBUTOR: D.L. Taffner/Ltd.
DAYPART: Weekend/early fringe	DEAL: Cash (January) or barter (fall)

TRIAL BY JURY

	Hosted by Raymond Burr, and inspired by real-life cases, the half-hour strip will dramatize courtroom proceedings and flashbacks concerning the crime. Viewers are guided through the trial, highlighting key testimony and evidence. A jury of non-actors will deliver the verdict.
EPISODES: 260	PRODUCER: Dick Clark, Executive Producer
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Viacom
DAYPART: TBA	DEAL: Cash + barter

AFTER HOURS

	The distributor promises a daily half-hour of fast-paced, on-location music, comedy and interviews in a magazine format.
EPISODES: TBA	PRODUCER: Triple Crown Productions and Alta Loma Productions
PREMIERE: Fall '89	DISTRIBUTOR: Worldvision Enterprises Inc.
DAYPART: Late night	DEAL: Barter

THE VIDEO STORE

	A weekly half-hour that lets viewers browse through a "video store" while in the comfort of your their own homes. The program will focus on a wide range of video products, including foreign movies, kid-vids, how-to's, and hot new movie releases. Co-hosts are Paula McClure and Bill Evans.
EPISODES: 46	PRODUCER: Bluebonnet Productions
PREMIERE: September '89	DISTRIBUTOR: All American Television
DAYPART: Weekend	DEAL: Barter

This Year In Syndication

A sampling of some syndicators (and product from their inventories) expected at this month's NATPE convention. Product info. lists program title, length, episodes and terms. Barter splits are expressed with national time first, local second. Shows coming to NATPE for the first time this year are listed in bold type. This is not a comprehensive listing of companies or their product.

ABR ENTERTAINMENT CO.

32123 W. Lindero Canyon Rd., Suite 206,
Westlake Village, Calif. 91361; (818)
706-7727
Animated Classics (60 min., first run); 28
episodes; barter 5/7 split • *Lingo* (30 min.);
195 episodes; barter 2-1/2/4 split • *Crosswits*
(30 min.); 195 episodes; cash • *Yes Virginia,*
There Is A Santa Claus (30 min.); 1 episode;
barter 3/3-1/2 split.

ACAMA FILMS

14724 Ventura Blvd., Suite 610, Sherman
Oaks, Calif. 91403; (818) 981-4344
Body Buddies (30 min.); 65 episodes; cash •
Bill Burrud's "Wonderful World Of Trav-
el" (60 min.); 26 episodes; cash • *Bill*
Burrud's "World Of Adventure" (30 min.);
26 episodes; cash • *King Of Kensington* (30
min.); 111 episodes; cash.

ACTION MEDIA

290 Providence Towers, 5001 Spring Valley
Rd., P.O. Box 14, Dallas, Texas 75244; (214)
702-8814
The Wrestling Network (60 min.); weekly;
barter • *The Wrestling Network Plus* (60
min.); weekly; barter.

ALL AMERICAN TV

304 E. 45th St., New York, N.Y.
10017; (212) 818-1200
The Video Store (30 min., first run); 46 epi-
sodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split • *The Latin Con-*
nection (60 min., first run); 36 episodes; bar-
ter 5/8 split • *America's Top 10* (30 min.); 46

episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split • *Liddy* (60
min., first run); 230 episodes; cash + 1 min.
barter • *Beyond 2000* (60 min., first run); 13
episodes; cash • *Smart Money Specials* (30
min.); 12 episodes; cash • *Portrait Of A Leg-*
end (30 min.); 39 episodes; cash • *The Uncle*
Floyd Show (30 min. and 60 min.); 64 half-
hours, 19 hours; cash • *Fridays* (30 min.);
strip; cash.

AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE CO.

7023 15th N.W., Seattle, Wash. 98117; (206)
789-1011
Teens Talk (30 min., first run); 52 episodes;
barter 3/3 split • *Ed Hume On Gardening*
(30 min., first run); 52 episodes; barter 3/3
split.

ARP FILMS INC.

347 Madison Ave., Suite 714, New York,
N.Y. 10173; (212) 867-1700
Spider Man (30 min.); 52 episodes; cash •
Rocket Robinhood (30 min.); 52 episodes;
cash • *Strange Paradise* (30 min.); 195 epi-
sodes; cash • *New Fantastic Four* (30 min.);
13 episodes; cash • *New Spider Man* (30
min.); 26 episodes; cash • *Spider Woman* (30
min.); 16 episodes; cash • *The Incredible*
Hulk (30 min.); 13 episodes; cash • *Captain*
America (30 min.); 13 episodes; cash • *Iron*
Man (30 min.); 13 episodes; cash • *Sub-*
Mariner (30 min.); 13 episodes; cash • *The*
Mighty Thor (30 min.); 13 episodes; cash •
Max The 2,000 Year Old Mouse (5 min.); 104
vignettes; cash • *The Circus Show* (30 min.
and 60 min.); 2 half-hours, 5 hours; cash.

AVERY PRODUCTIONS

4843 Voltaire St., Suite A, San Diego, Calif.
92107; (619) 483-2030
Nostalgia Network I (30 min.); 65 episodes;
cash • *The Adventures Of Annie Oakley* (30
min.); 50 episodes; cash • *The Casebook Of*
Sherlock Holmes (30 min.); 36 episodes; cash
• *The Golden Years Of Television* (60 min.);
100 episodes; cash.

BARRIS PROGRAM SALES

1990 S. Bundy Dr., Penthouse Suite, Los
Angeles, Calif. 90025; (213) 820-2100
The Kenny Rogers Show (60 min., first
run); 220 episodes; cash + 2 min. barter •
The Gong Show (30 min., first run); 175 epi-
sodes; cash + barter • *The All New Dating*
Game (30 min.); 175 episodes; barter 1/5-1/2
split.

BARUCH TELEVISION GROUP

7918 Jones Branch Dr., Suite 400, McLean,
Va. 22102; (202) 457-8116
Stephen King's World Of Horror (60 min.); 1
episode; barter 5-1/2/7 split • *Everything*
You Wanted To Know About Taxes But
Were Afraid To Ask (30 min.); 1 episode;
barter 1/5 split • *Dog Days At The White*
House (60 min.); 1 episode; barter 5-1/2/7
split.

BIZNET/U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1615 H St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20062;
(202) 463-5834
It's Your Business (30 min.); 52 episodes;
barter 2-1/2/3-1/2 split • *Ask Washington* (60
min.); strip; barter 6/6 split.

BLAIR ENTERTAINMENT

1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York,
N.Y. 10104; (212) 603-5990
Divorce Court (30 min.); strip; cash + 1 min.
barter • *The Cisco Kid* (30 min.); 156 epi-
sodes; cash • *Major League Baseball Come-*
dy Special (60 min.); 3 episodes; barter •
College Football Scrap Book; 400 inserts;
cash • *Legends of College Basketball*; 90 in-
serts; cash.

BUENA VISTA TELEVISION

500 S. Buena Vista St., Burbank, Calif.
91521; (818) 840-1000
Twenty Questions (30 min., first run); strip;
available fall '89; barter split TBA • *The*
Golden Girls (30 min.); 130 episodes; availa-

DIRECTORY

ble fall '90; cash • *Live With Regis And Kathie Lee* (60 min., first run); 240 episodes; cash + 2 min. barter • *Chip 'n' Dale's Rescue Rangers* (30 min., first run); 65 episodes; available fall '89; barter split 3/3 first-third quarters, 2/4 split fourth quarter • *Siskel And Ebert* (30 min.); 46 episodes; barter 2-1/2/3-1/2 split • *DuckTales* (30 min.); 65 episodes; barter 2-1/2/3-1/2 split first-third quarters, 2/4 split fourth quarter • *Win, Lose Or Draw* (30 min.); 185 episodes; cash + 1 min. barter.

CASABLANCA IV

202 N. Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90210; (213) 275-0404

Celebrity Secrets (30 min., first run); 34 episodes; cash + barter • *Crimes Of The Century* (30 min., first run); 28 episodes; barter • *The Cool Ones* (60 min.); strip; cash.

C.B. DISTRIBUTION CO.

141 El Camino Dr., #110, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212; (213) 275-6114

Carol Burnett And Friends (30 min.); 175 episodes; cash.

CLASTER TELEVISION PROD.

9630 Deereco Rd., Timonium, Md. 21093; (301) 561-5500

The New Archies (30 min., first run); 13 episodes; barter 2/4 split • *Jim Henson's Muppet Babies* (30 min.); 65 episodes; available Sept. '89; barter 2-1/2/3-1/2 split first-third quarters, 2/4 split fourth quarter • *C.O.P.S.* (30 min., first run); 65 episodes; barter 2/4 split • *Transformers* (30 min., first run); 20 episodes; barter 2/4 split • *JEM* (30 min.); 75 episodes; barter 2/4 split • *G.I. Joe, A Real American Hero* (30 min.); 100 episodes; barter 2/4 split.

COLUMBIA PICTURES TELEVISION

3300 Riverside Dr., Columbia Plaza North, Burbank, Calif. 91505; (818) 954-6000

Diff'rent Strokes (30 min.); 189 episodes; cash • *The Jeffersons* (30 min.); 253 episodes; cash • *Maude* (30 min.); 141 episodes; cash • *Soap* (30 min.); 93 episodes; cash • *Who's The Boss?* (30 min.); 120 episodes; cash • *Charlie's Angels* (60 min.); 115 episodes; cash • *Hart To Hart* (60 min.); 112 episodes; cash • *Fantasy Island* (60 min. and 30 min.); 152 hours, 200 half-hours; cash • *Police Story* (30 min.); 105 episodes; cash • *Police Woman* (60 min.); 91 episodes; cash • *S.W.A.T.* (60 min.); 37 episodes; cash • *Star-*



Columbia Pictures' *Who's The Boss?*

sky And Hutch (60 min.); 92 episodes; cash • *T.J. Hooker* (60 min.); 90 episodes; cash • *Archie Bunker's Place* (30 min.); 97 episodes; cash • *Barney Miller* (30 min.); 170 episodes; cash • *Benson* (30 min.); 158 episodes; cash • *Carson's Comedy Classics* (30 min.); 130 episodes; cash • *Carter Country* (30 min.); 44 episodes; cash • *The Facts Of Life* (30 min.); 209 episodes; cash • *Fish* (30 min.); 35 episodes; cash • *Good Times* (30 min.); 133 episodes; cash • *One Day At A Time* (30 min.); 209 episodes; cash • *Punky Brewster* (30 min.); 88 episodes; cash • *Sanford & Son* (30 min.); 136 episodes; cash • *Silver Spoons* (30 min.); 116 episodes; cash • *Square Pegs* (30 min.); 20 episodes; cash • *That's My Mama* (30 min.); 39 episodes; cash • *The Three Stooges* (30 min.); 190 episodes; cash.

CONTEL-CON HARTSOCK & CO.

1100 Glendon Ave., Suite 945, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024; (213) 208-6091

The Lawless Years (30 min.); 52 episodes; cash • *The Jerry Lewis Show* (60 min.); 52 episodes; cash • *Convict Cowboy* (52 min.); 1 episode; cash • *The Naked Sea* (60 min.); 1 episode; cash.

CORAL PICTURES CORP.

6850 Coral Way, Miami, Fla. 33155; (305) 661-8922

Your Show Of Shows (30 min.); 65 episodes; cash.

DANCIN' ON AIR PRODUCTIONS

413 Cooper St., Camden, N.J. 08102; (609) 963-6473

Great Weekend Countdown (60 min., first run); 52 episodes; cash + barter • *Splash* (30 min., first run); 130 episodes; cash + barter • *Block Party* (60 min., first run); 52

episodes; cash + barter • *Dancin' On Air* (30 min., first run); 260 episodes; cash + barter.

EBONY/JET SHOWCASE

820 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60605; (312) 322-9407

Ebony/Jet Showcase (30 min.); 26 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split • *Great Moments In Black History* (60 seconds); 28 vignettes; for February window only; cash.

ELECTRA PICTURES INC.

3 Dallas Communications Complex, Suite 212A, LB 91, Irving, Texas 75039-3510; (214) 869-2462

Peppermint Place (60 min.); 39 episodes; barter 4/5 split • *Liz Carpenter And The Good Ol' Boys* (60 min.); 1 episode; February window; barter 3/6 split • *All American Cowboy* (60 min.); 1 episode; Oct.-Nov. window; barter 3/6 split • *The Beam—Black Entertainment And Music* (60 min.); 52 episodes; barter 6/6 split.

ENOKI FILMS USA INC.

4970 Odessa Ave., Encino, Calif. 91436; (818) 907-6506

Songs And Rhythm Of Mother Goose (30 min., first run); 3 episodes; cash • *Sevendipity* (30 min.); 26 episodes; cash • *Heidi And Alpine Friends* (30 min.); 52 episodes; cash • *Sweet Strawberry Queen* (30 min.); 26 episodes; cash • *Star Fleet* (30 min.); 24 episodes; cash.

EXCEL TELEMEDIA INT'L CORP.

745 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10151-0077; (212) 371-7333

Pathfinders (60 min., first run); 13 episodes; cash • *The Leonard Rosen Show* (30 min., first run); 26 episodes; cash • *American Campus Tour* (60 min.); 1 episode; cash.

FOX/LORBER ASSOCIATES INC.

432 Park Ave. S., Suite 705, New York, N.Y. 10016; (212) 686-6777

The Dr. Fad Show (30 min.); 26 episodes; barter split TBA • *Micheloeb Presents Sunday Night* (60 min.); 26 episodes; barter 5/8 split • *Great Performers* (60 min.); 23 episodes; cash • *Extra! Extra!* (30 min./60 min.); 12 hours, 7 half hours; cash • *Country* (60 min.); 4 episodes; cash.

DIRECTORY

FREMANTLE INT'L INC.

660 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021; (212) 421-4530

The Campbells (30 min.); 100 episodes; terms TBA • *Swiss Family Robinson* (30 min.); 26 episodes; cash.

FRIES DISTRIBUTION CO.

6922 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90028; (213) 466-2266

The New Generation (30 min.); 26 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split.

GAYLORD SYNDICOM

66 Music Square W., Nashville, Tenn. 37203; (615) 327-0110

Hee Haw (60 min.); 26 episodes; barter 6/6-1/2 split • *Babe Winkelman's Good Fishing* (30 min.); 72 episodes; cash.

GROUP W PRODUCTIONS

3801 Barham Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90068; (213) 850-3800

Couch Potatoes (30 min., first run); strip; cash + 1 min. barter • *Missing/Reward* (30 min., first run); weekly; available fall '89; terms TBA • *This Evening* (30 min., first run); strip; cash • *Bugzbugy* (30 min., first run); 65 episodes; barter 2-1/2/3-1/2 split • *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (30 min.); 65 episodes; barter • *Life's Most Embarrassing Moments* (30 min.); weekly; barter 5/8 split • *Gary Collins' Hour Magazine* (60 min.); strip; cash + 2 min. barter • *Ghostbusters* (30 min.); 65 episodes; barter 5/7 split first-third quarters, 4/8 split fourth quarter.

GTG

150 E. 52nd St., 19th Fl., New York, N.Y. 10022; (212) 888-7830

The Beverly Sills Show (60 min., first run); 260 episodes; cash + barter • *USA Today* (30 min. strip + weekend hour, first run); 260 half hours, 52 hours; cash + 1 min. barter.

ITC ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

12711 Ventura Blvd., Suite 440, Studio City, Calif. 91604; (818) 508-3350

Secrets And Mysteries (30 min.); 26 episodes; cash • *Thunderbirds* (30 min., first run); 24 episodes; cash • *Space Odyssey* (60 min.); 40 hrs. of "Space: 1999," and 23 hrs. of "UFO"; cash • *The Prisoner* (60 min.); 17 episodes; cash • *Secret Agent* (60 min.); 45



ITC Entertainment's *Secret Agent*

episodes; cash • *The Saint/Return Of The Saint* (60 min.); 136 episodes; cash • *The Muppet Show* (30 min.); 120 episodes; cash • *When Havoc Struck* (30 min.); 12 episodes; cash.

JIM OWENS ENTERTAINMENT

1525 McGavock St., Nashville, Tenn. 37203; (615) 256-7700

Crook And Chase (30 min.); 260 episodes; barter 3/4 split • *Weekend With Crook And Chase* (30 min.); 52 episodes; barter 3/4 split.

JM ENTERTAINMENT INC.

133 E. 58th St., New York, N.Y. 10022; (212) 753-8856

Bearwitness News (30 min., first run); 26 episodes; barter 3-1/2/3 split • *Story Of A People* (30 min.); 26 episodes; barter 3-1/2/3 split • *Youthquake* (30 min.); 26 episodes; available fall '89; barter 3-1/2/3 split • *Women In Motion* (30 min.); 13 episodes; barter 3-1/2/3 split.

KING FEATURES ENTERTAINMENT

235 E. 45th St., New York, N.Y. 10017; (212) 455-4000

Original Popeye (5.5 min.); 220 cartoons; cash • *All New Popeye* (30 min.); 65 episodes; cash • *Popeye And Son* (30 min.); 13 episodes; cash • *Animated Flash Gordon* (30 min.); 24 episodes; cash • *Defenders Of The Earth* (30 min.); 65 episodes; cash • *Fight Back! With David Horowitz* (30 min.); weekly; cash + barter • *Beatles* (30 min.); 39 episodes; cash • *Cool McCool* (30 min.); 20 episodes; cash • *Hearst Reports* (60 min.); 64 episodes; cash • *Perspective On Greatness* (60 min.); 26 episodes; cash • *Bonaventure Travel* (30 min.); 25 episodes; cash • *Great Adventures* (60 min.); 4 episodes; cash.

KING WORLD

1700 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10019; (212) 315-4000

Inside Edition (30 min., first run); 260 episodes; cash + barter • *Wheel Of Fortune* (30 min.); 195 episodes; cash + 1 min. barter • *The Oprah Winfrey Show* (60 min.); 220 episodes; cash + 2 min. barter • *Jeopardy!* (30 min.); 195 episodes; cash + 1 min. barter.

LARRY HARMON PICTURES CORP.

650 N. Bronson Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90004; (213) 463-2331

Bozo's 3-Ring Schoolhouse (30 min., first run); 65 episodes; cash or cash + barter • *Bozo's Big Top* (30 min.); 130 episodes; cash or cash + barter.

LBS COMMUNICATIONS INC.

875 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022; (212) 418-3000

What's Happening! (30 min.); 131 episodes; cash • *Crazy Like A Fox* (60 min.); 74 episodes; available April '89; barter 5/8 split • *The Monkees* (30 min.); 58 episodes; barter 2-1/2/4 split; special 15-week summer strip starting June '89 • *Hardcastle & McCormick* (60 min.); 67 episodes; barter 5/7 split (weekly) or cash + 1 min. barter (strip) • *Gidget* (30 min.); 80 episodes; barter 2-1/2/4 split; available cash only, fall '89 • *Family* (60 min.); 85 episodes; cash.

LIONHEART

1762 Westwood Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90024; (213) 470-3939

The Pope (50 min., first run); 3 episodes; cash • *Supersense* (30 min., first run); 6 episodes; cash • *The Living Isles* (30 min.); 10 episodes; cash • *'Allo 'Allo!* (30 min.); 54 episodes; cash • *Eastenders* (30 min.); 195 episodes; cash. *All Creatures Great And Small* (60 min.); ten episodes; cash.

LORIMAR TELEPICTURES CORPORATION

10202 W. Washington Blvd., Culver City, Calif. 90232; (213) 280-8000

Alvin And The Chipmunks (30 min.); 65 episodes; barter 2-1/2/3-1/2 split first-third quarters, 2/4 split fourth quarter • *Fun House* (30 min.); 170 episodes; barter 2-1/2/4 split • *Gumby* (30 min.); 65 episodes; barter 2/4 split • *Nightmare On Elm Street: Freddy's Nightmares* (60 min.); 22 episodes; barter 6/6 split • *It's A Living* (30 min.); 100 ep-

DIRECTORY

isodes; cash • *Mama's Family* (30 min.); 110 episodes; cash.

MCA TV

445 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022; (212) 759-7500

\$Reward\$ (30 min., first run); strip; cash + barter • *Star★Play* (30 min., first run); strip; available fall '89; cash + barter • *Lassie* (30 min., first run); 24 episodes; available fall '89; barter • *The Munsters Today* (30 min., first run); 24 episodes; barter 3/4 split • *My Secret Identity* (30 min., first run); 24 episodes; barter 3/4 split • *The Morton Downey, Jr. Show* (60 min., first run); strip; cash + 2 min. barter • *Amen* (30 min.); 110 episodes; cash • *Charles In Charge* (30 min.); 100 episodes; weekly or strip; barter 3/4 split • *Out Of This World* (30 min., first run); 24 episodes; barter 3/4 split.

MGM/UA TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Filmland Corporate Center, 1000 W. Washington Blvd., Culver City, Calif. 90232; (213) 280-6000

Straight To The Heart (30 min., first run); strip; available fall '89; terms TBA • *The New Twilight Zone* (30 min.); 94 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split • *Group One Medical* (30 min., first run); strip; cash + barter • *Fame* (60 min.); 136 episodes; (30 min.); 90 episodes; cash • *Highway Patrol* (30 min.); 156 episodes; cash • *Outer Limits* (60 min.); 49 episodes; cash • *Patty Duke Show* (30 min.); 104 episodes; cash • *Rat Patrol* (30 min.); 58 episodes; cash • *Sea Hunt* (30 min.); 155 episodes; cash.

MG/PERIN INC.

124 E. 40th St., New York, N.Y. 10016; (212) 697-8687

G.L.O.W. (60 min.); 26 episodes; barter 5/7 split • *B.C.—The First Thanksgiving* (30 min.); 1 episode; cash • *B.C.—A Special Christmas* (30 min.); 1 episode; cash.

M&M SYNDICATIONS INC.

1000 Laurel Oak Corporate Center, Suite 108, Voorhees, N.J. 08043; (609) 784-1177
Boxing Illustrated (30 min., first run); 24 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split • *The Record Guide* (30 min.); 52 episodes; barter 2/4-1/2 split • *Melba Moore's Collection Of Love Songs* (30 min.); 52 episodes; barter split TBA • *Country Record Guide* (30 min.); 52 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split.



MTM Television's *Remington Steele*

M.K. THOMAS & CO.

155 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 511, Chicago, Ill. 60601; (312) 819-1100

Colors Of Success (30 min., first run); 26 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split • *Dorothy's House* (30 min.); 1 episode; April window; barter 3/3 split • *Rock N Roll's Magic Moments* (60 min.); 1 episode; barter 5-1/2/7-1/2 split • *Cotton Club Revue* (60 min.); 1 episode; barter 5-1/2/7-1/2 split.

MTM TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION GROUP

P.O. Box 7406, 12001 Ventura Place, Suite 600, Studio City, Calif. 91604; (818) 760-5051
Remington Steele (60 min.); 94 episodes; available fall '89; cash • *Newhart* (30 min.); 138 episodes; cash • *St. Elsewhere* (60 min.); 137 episodes; cash • *Hill St. Blues* (60 min.); 146 episodes; cash.

MULLER MEDIA

23 E. 39th St., New York, N.Y. 10016; (212) 683-8220

The Making Of (30 min.); 26 episodes; cash • *Mr. and Mrs. North* (30 min.); 57 episodes; cash • *The New Three Stooges* (30 min.); 156 episodes; cash.

MULTIMEDIA ENTERTAINMENT

75 Rockefeller Plaza, 22nd Fl., New York, N.Y. 10019; (212) 484-7025

Donahue (60 min.); 210 episodes; cash + 2 min. barter; *Sally Jessy Raphael* (30 min., 60 min.); 225 episodes; cash + 2 min. barter • *Sweethearts* (30 min., first run); 195 episodes; cash + 1 min. barter • *Young People's Specials* (30 min.); 10 episodes; barter 2-1/2/2-1/2 split.

NEW WORLD TV

130 E. 59th St., New York, N.Y. 10022;

(212) 755-8600

Sledgehammer (30 min.); 41 episodes; available July '89; cash • *Life Of Riley* (30 min.); 146 episodes; cash • *Zorro* (30 min., first run); 25 episodes; available fall '89; terms TBA • *Marvel Action Universe* (90 min.); 65 episodes; barter 7-1/2/12 split.

NFL FILMS

330 Fellowship Rd., Mt. Laurel, N.J. 08054; (609) 778-1600

This Is The NFL (30 min.); 22 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split.

ORBIS COMMUNICATIONS

432 Park Ave. S., New York, N.Y. 10016; (212) 685-6699

Headlines On Trial (30 min., first run); 30 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split • *Public People, Private Lives* (60 min., first run); 26 episodes; barter 5/7 split • *The Kidsongs TV Show* (30 min.); 26 episodes; barter 2-1/2/4 split.

ORION TV SYNDICATION

1888 Century Park E., Century City, Calif. 90067; (213) 282-0550

Crinewatch Tonight (30 min., first run); 185 episodes; available Sept. '89; cash + barter • *Cagney & Lacey* (60 min.); 103 episodes; cash • *Addams Family* (30 min.); 64 episodes; cash • *Mr. Ed* (30 min.); 143 episodes; cash • *The Best Of Saturday Night Live* (30 or 60 min.); 102 episodes; cash.

PALLADIUM ENTERTAINMENT

444 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022; (212) 355-7070

Jackpot! (30 min., first run); strip; available fall '89; cash + 1 min. barter • *Eye-Q* (30 min., first run); 260 episodes; available fall '89; cash + 1 min. barter • *The Lone Ranger* (30 min.); 182 black-and-white episodes, 39 color; cash • *Sgt. Preston Of The Yukon* (30 min.); 178 episodes; cash.

PARAMOUNT TELEVISION GROUP

5555 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90038; (213) 468-5000

Arsenio Hall Show (60 min., first run); 200 episodes; barter • *Wipeout* (30 min., first run); 195 episodes; cash + 1 min. barter • *War Of The Worlds* (60 min., first run); 24 episodes; barter 6-1/2/5-1/2 split • *Friday*

DIRECTORY

The 13th: The Series (60 min., first run); 26 episodes; barter • *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (60 min., first run); 26 episodes; barter • *Entertainment Tonight* (30 min.); strip; cash + 1 min. barter • *Brothers* (30 min.); 116 episodes; available fall '89; cash • *Cheers* (30 min.); 147 episodes; cash • *Family Ties* (30 min.); 150 episodes; cash.

PERENNIAL PICTURES FILM CORP.

2102 E. 52nd St., Indianapolis, Ind. 46205; (317) 253-1519

A Merry Mirthworm Christmas (30 min.); 1 episode; cash • *A Mirthworm Masquerade* (30 min.); 1 episode; cash • *Mirthworms On Stage* (30 min.); 1 episode; cash • *The Three Fishketeers* (30 min.); 1 episode; cash.

PHOENIX COMMUNICATIONS GROUP/MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PRODS.

1212 Ave. of Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036; (212) 921-8100

This Week In Baseball (30 min.); 29 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split • *Grandstand* (30 min.); 26 episodes; barter 2-1/2/4 split • *Sports Dateline* (60 min.); 1 episode; barter.

POLARIS ENTERTAINMENT INC.

28 Field Rd., Riverside, Conn. 06878; (203) 637-3220

I'd Rather Be Fishing (30 min., first run); 60 episodes; cash or barter • *Great Inns Of America* (30 min., first run); pilot available; cash or barter • *How To Play Your Best Golf* (30 min.); 8 episodes; barter • *How To Play Your Best Tennis* (30 min.); 8 episodes; barter • *Decorator's Open House* (30 min.); pilot available; cash or barter.

PROSERV TV INC.

10935 Estate Ln., Suite 100, Dallas, Texas 75238; (214) 343-1400

Sports Fantasy (30 min.); 13 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split.

QINTEX ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

345 N. Maple Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90210; (213) 281-2600

Crime Diaries (30 min., first run); 260 episodes; available fall '89; barter split TBA • *Roller Games* (60 min., first run); 56 episodes; available fall '89; barter split TBA • *National Lost And Found* (30 min., first



T&T from Qintex Entertainment

run); 36 episodes; available fall '89; barter split TBA • *The New Leave It To Beaver* (30 min.); 85 episodes; cash • *T&T* (30 min., first run); 24 episodes; barter 3/3-1/2 split.

RAYMOND HORN SYNDICATION

38 W. 32nd St., Suite 1610, New York, N.Y. 10001; (212) 564-4144

It's Showtime At The Apollo (60 min., first run); 26 episodes; barter 6/6 split • *D.C. Follies* (30 min., first run); 26 episodes; barter • *America's Black Forum* (30 min., first run); 39 episodes; barter 3/3 split • *Dance Connection* (60 min.); 26 episodes; barter 6/6 split.

REPUBLIC PICTURES CORP.

12636 Beatrice St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90066; (213) 306-4040

On Trial (30 min., first run); 175 episodes; cash + 1 min. barter • *Bonanza* (60 min.); 310 episodes; cash • *Get Smart* (30 min.); 138 episodes; cash • *High Chaparral* (60 min.); 98 episodes; cash.

SAMUEL GOLDWYN CO.

10203 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90067; (213) 552-2255

American Gladiators (30 min., first run); 26 episodes; available fall '89; cash + barter • *Body By Jake* (30 min., first run); 26 episodes; available Sept. '89; barter 3/4 split.

SELECT MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

885 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022; (212) 355-0033

Relatively Speaking (30 min., first run); 195 episodes; barter 2-1/2/4 split • *Insport* (30 min., first run); 50 episodes; cash + barter • *Mrs. Of The World Pageant* (120 min.); 1 episode; March-April window; barter 12/12 split • *Victor Awards* (60 min.); 1 episode; July-Aug. window; barter 6/6 split.

SFM ENTERTAINMENT

1180 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036; (212) 790-4800

Zoobilee Zoo (30 min.); 65 episodes; barter • *The Care Bears* (30 min.); 65 episodes; barter.

THE SILVERBACH-LAZARUS GROUP

9911 W. Pico Blvd., Penthouse M, Los Angeles, Calif. 90035; (213) 552-2660

The Littlest Hobo (30 min.); 114 episodes; cash • *Cimarron Strip* (90 min.); 23 episodes; cash • *The Adventures With Sir Edmund Hillary* (60 min.); 13 episodes; cash • *Faerie Tale Theatre* (60 min.); 26 episodes; cash.

D.L. TAFFNER/LTD.

31 W. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10019; (212) 245-4680

Talkabout (30 min., first run); 130 episodes; cash for Jan. clearance, cash + barter for fall • *5-4-3-2-RUN* (30 min., first run); 17 episodes; available fall '89; barter split TBA • *Family Animated Classics* (60 min., first run); 6 episodes; barter split TBA • *Count Duckula* (30 min., first run); 65 episodes; barter split TBA • *Three's Company* (30 min.); 222 episodes; cash • *The Ropers* (30 min.); 26 episodes; cash • *Three's A Crowd* (30 min.); 22 episodes; cash • *The Benny Hill Show* (30 min.); 101 episodes; cash • *Danger Mouse* (30 min.); 50 episodes; cash • *Too Close For Comfort* (30 min.); 129 episodes; cash • *Check It Out!* (30 min.); 66 episodes; cash • *Thames Comedy Originals* (30 min.); 156 episodes; cash • *Robins Nest* (30 min.); 48 episodes; cash • *After Benny* (30 min.); 40 episodes; cash • *Man About The House* (30 min.); 39 episodes; cash • *George & Mildred* (30 min.); 38 episodes; cash • *Keep It In The Family* (30 min.); 22 episodes; cash • *World At War* (60 min.); 36 episodes; cash • *Hollywood* (60 min.); 13 episodes; cash • *Crime, Inc.* (60 min.); 7 episodes; cash.

TELEVISION PROGRAM ENTERPRISES

875 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022; (212) 759-8787

Cop Talk: Behind The Shield (30 min., first run); episodes TBA; barter 6/6 split • *Dionne & Friends* (30 min., first run); episodes TBA; barter • *At The Movies* (30 min.); 48 episodes; barter 2-1/2/4 split • *Dick Clark's Golden Greats* (30 min., first run); 26 episodes; barter 3-1/2/3-1/2 split • *Lifestyles Of*

DIRECTORY

The Rich And Famous (60 min., first run); 26 episodes; barter 6-1/2/6-1/2 split • *Mousters* (30 min., first run); 24 episodes; barter 3-1/2/3-1/2 split • *Star Search* (60 min.); 26 episodes; barter 6-1/2/6-1/2 split • *Triple Threat* (30 min., first run); 26 episodes; barter 3-1/2/3-1/2 split • *Runaway With The Rich And Famous* (30 min.); 26 episodes; barter • *Soul Train* (60 min.); 40 episodes; barter • *T And T* (30 min.); 24 episodes; barter • *Tales From The Darkside* (30 min.); 26 episodes; barter.

THE PROGRAM EXCHANGE

375 Hudson St., New York, N.Y. 10014;
(212) 463-3500

Woody Woodpecker And Friends (30 min., first run); 91 episodes; barter • *Dennis The Menace* (30 min.); 78 episodes; barter • *Scooby Doo* (30 min.); 155 episodes; barter • *The Flintstones* (30 min.); 166 episodes; barter • *Bullwinkle* (30 min.); 98 episodes; barter • *Underdog* (30 min.); 62 episodes; barter • *Bewitched* (30 min.); 180 episodes; barter • *I Dream Of Jeannie* (30 min.); 109 episodes; barter • *The Partridge Family* (30 min.); 96 episodes; barter • *Rocky And Friends* (30 min.); 78 episodes; barter • *Uncle Waldo* (30 min.); 52 episodes; barter • *Biscuits* (30 min.); 13 episodes; barter • *Young Samson* (30 min.); 20 episodes; barter • *Space Cadets* (30 min.); 20 episodes; barter • *Beauford Files* (30 min.); 13 episodes; barter • *Jana Of The Jungle* (30 min.); 13 episodes; barter • *Gooper And Ghosts* (30 min.); 16 episodes; barter • *Abbott And Costello* (30 min.); 52 episodes; barter • *Greats Of The Game* (30 min.); 33 episodes; barter.

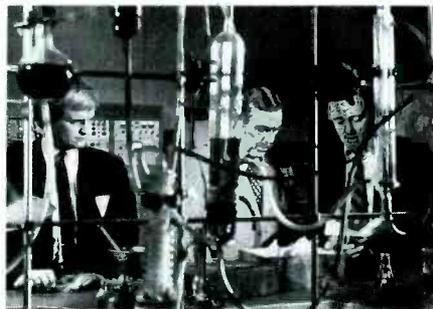
TRIBUNE ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY

435 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1982, Chicago, Ill. 60611; (312) 222-4441

The Joan Rivers Show (60 min., first run); strip; available fall '89; cash + barter.

TURNER PROGRAM SERVICES

One CNN Center, P.O. Box 105366, Atlanta, Ga. 30348-5366; (404) 827-2085
Secret World (30 min.); 24 episodes; barter • *National Geographic "On Assignment"* (60 min.); 12 episodes/monthly; barter • *Cousteau's Rediscovery Of The World* (60 min.); 12 episodes, one per quarter; barter • *Gilligan's Island* (30 min.); 98 episodes; cash • *Medical Center* (60 min.); 170 episodes; cash • *CHiPs* (60 min.); 138 episodes; cash • *The Courtship Of Eddie's Father* (30 min.);



The Man From U.N.C.L.E. from Turner

73 episodes; cash • *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* (60 min.); 99 episodes cash • *Please Don't Eat The Daisies* (30 min.); 58 episodes; cash • *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.* (60 min.); 29 episodes; cash • *Daktari* (60 min.); 89 episodes; cash.

VESTRON TELEVISION

1010 Washington Blvd., P.O. Box 10382, Stamford, Conn. 06901; (203) 978-5400

Dirty Dancing: Live In Concert (120 min.); 1 episode; barter 11/13 split • *The Eyes Of War* (120 min.); 1 episode; barter 11/13 split.

VIACOM

1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10036; (212) 575-5175

Betcha (30 min., first run); 175 episodes; available fall '89; cash + 1 min. barter • *Remote Control* (30 min., first run); strip; barter split TBA • *Super Mario Brothers "Super" Show* (30 min., first run); strip; barter split TBA • *Trial By Jury* (30 min., first run); strip; available fall '89; cash + barter. • *Double Dare* (30 min.); 130 episodes; barter 2-1/2/4 split • *Finder's Keepers* (30 min.); 130 episodes; barter 2-1/2/4 split • *Superboy* (30 min., first run); 26 episodes; 3/3-1/2 split • *The Cosby Show* (30 min.); 125 episodes; cash + 1 min. barter • *All In The Family* (30 min.); 207 episodes; cash • *This Morning's Business* (30 min.); strip; barter 3/3-1/2 split • *The Andy Griffith Show* (30 min.); 249 episodes; cash • *Cannon* (60 min.); 122 episodes; cash • *Gunsmoke* (60 min.); 402 episodes; cash • *Hawaii Five-O* (60 min.); 282 episodes; cash • *The Honeymooners* (30 min.); 107 episodes; cash.

WALL STREET JOURNAL REPORT

200 Liberty St., New York, N.Y. 10281; (212) 416-2000

The Wall Street Journal Report (30 min.); 52 episodes; barter 3/3 split.

WARNER BROS. TV DISTRIBUTION

4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Calif. 91522; (818) 954-6000

Growing Pains (30 min.); 101 episodes; cash • *Night Court* (30 min.); 101 episodes; cash • *Head Of The Class* (30 min.); 101 episodes; cash • *Scarecrow And Mrs. King* (60 min.); 88 episodes; cash • *Matt Houston* (60 min.); 68 episodes; cash • *Private Benjamin* (30 min.); 39 episodes; cash • *The Dukes Of Hazzard* (60 min.); 147 episodes; cash • *Alice* (30 min.); 202 episodes; cash • *The FBI* (60 min.); 234 episodes; cash • *Batman/Superman/Aquaman* (30 min.); 69 episodes; cash • *Tarzan* (60 min.); 57 episodes; cash.

WORLD EVENTS PRODUCTIONS LTD.

4935 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, Mo. 63108; (314) 454-6475

Denver, The Last Dinosaur (30 min.); 13 episodes; barter 2-1/2/3-1/2 split • *Vytor, The Starfire Champion* (30 min., first run); 13 episodes; barter 2-1/2/3-1/2 split • *Voltron — Defender Of The Universe* (30 min.); 126 episodes; cash • *Saber Rider And The Star Sheriffs* (30 min.); 52 episodes; barter 2-1/2/3-1/2 split.

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

P.O. Box 3857, Stamford, Conn. 06905; (203) 352-8600

WWF Wrestling Challenge (60 min.); 52 episodes; barter 5/7 split • *WWF Wrestling Spotlight* (60 min.); 52 episodes; barter 5/7 split • *WWF Superstars Of Wrestling* (60 min.); 52 episodes; barter 5/7 split.

WORLDVISION ENTERPRISES INC.

660 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021; (212) 832-3838

Make Your Move (30 min., first run); 195 episodes; available fall '89; cash + barter • *After Hours* (30 min., first run); 130 episodes; available fall '89; barter split TBA • *Huckleberry Hound And Friends* (30 min.); 65 episodes; available fall '89; barter split TBA • *Snorks* (30 min.); 65 episodes; barter 2/4 split • *The Jetsons* (30 min.); 75 episodes; barter • *The Love Boat* (60 min.); 140 episodes (the first 5 years); cash.

Compiled by Barbara Ellis and Beth Sherman.

Movie Packages

The following is a directory of film packages released since last year's NATPE convention. Included are the names of the distributors, package title, number of films in each package, start date, terms and a brief description of the types of movies in each package. Listing information was supplied by the Broadcast Information Bureau and individual syndicators.

ACAMA FILMS MOVIE GREATS NETWORK II

130 titles
start date: April '89; one year window
terms: barter
Action/adventure theatricals available for late night or prime time.

BLAIR ENTERTAINMENT NEW MOVIE PACKAGE

32 titles
start date: TBA
terms: cash
A combination of theatrical and made-for-television titles including *Can You Feel Me Dancing?*, *The Spy Who Never Was* and *Savage Dawn*.

CASABLANCA IV THE WINNERS

12 titles
start date: now through 1990
terms: cash
A mix of theatrical and TV movies including *Right to Die* (Raquel Welch) and *Women of Valor* (Susan Sarandon).

COE FILM ASSOCIATES AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE

6 titles
start date: now through Dec. '89
terms: cash
Made-for-television comedies and dramas including *The Great American Fourth of July and Other Disasters* (Matt Dillon) and Philip Roth's *The Ghost Writer*.

COLUMBIA PICTURES TELEVISION COLUMBIA SHOWCASE I

22 titles
start date: TBA
terms: cash
A theatrical package featuring horror (*Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*), comedy (*Tootsie*, *Roxanne*), suspense (*Someone to Watch Over Me*) and romance (*About Last Night...*).

FRIES DISTRIBUTION MARK TWAIN COLLECTION

6 titles
start date: Oct. '89-Mar. '90; one title each month
terms: barter
A collection of classic stories such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Life*



Orion IV: *No Way Out*

on the Mississippi for family viewing.

FRIES DISTRIBUTION FRIES DYNAMITE

11 titles
start date: now through April '90
terms: cash
Included are action/adventure films like *Bedroom Eyes*, *Deadly Intent* and *Desire of the Vampire*, never before seen on television.

HARMONY GOLD; HARMONY PREMIERE NETWORK

2 titles
start date: fall '89
terms: cash + barter
Two four-hour, first run miniseries: *Confessional* and *Dakar Dakar*.

ITC ENTERTAINMENT VOLUME VIII

18 titles
start date: now through 1992
terms: cash
Comedy (*Volunteers*), drama (*Sweet Dreams*) and intrigue (*The Big Easy*) highlight this package.

LAMPLIGHTER-TV MOVIE MATINEE

27 titles
start date: available now
terms: cash
A mix of action, comedy and drama with stars such as Simone Signoret (*Four Days Leave*) and Sophia Loren (*Two Nights With Cleopatra*).

LBS COMMUNICATIONS LBS SPECTRUM II

6 titles
start date: TBA
terms: barter
A made-for-television package featuring action, mystery and comedy. Titles include: *Bonanza: The Next Generation*, *Vietnam War Story*, *The Canterville Ghost* (Sir John Gielgud) and *The Impossible Spy*.

MULLER MEDIA LETHAL WEAPONS

6 titles
start date: now through Oct. '89
terms: cash
Sci-fi, drama and adventure theatricals.

DIRECTORY

NEW WORLD PICTURES NEW WORLD THREE

20 titles
start date: now through 1991
terms: cash
Hellraiser, Dead Heat, Creepshow II and other horror films.

ORBIS COMMUNICATIONS COLOR CLASSICS

9 titles
start date: now through Nov. '89
terms: barter
Colorized films include *Algiers, Angel on My Shoulder* and *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

ORION ENTERTAINMENT ORION IV

21 titles
start date: Feb. '89 - Nov. '90 (premiere window)
terms: cash + barter
Recent theatrical hits include *No Way Out, Robocop* and *Throw Momma From The Train*.

REPUBLIC PICTURES CORPORATION REPUBLIC PREMIERE

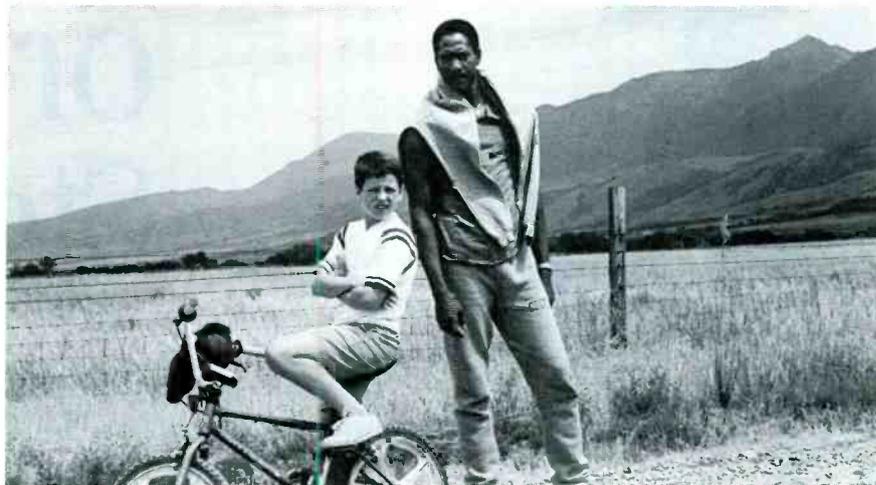
12 titles
start date: 1990-1992
terms: cash
Film titles and genre have not yet been announced.

SFM ENTERTAINMENT SFM HOLIDAY NETWORK

11 titles
start date: available now
terms: barter
Family fare from Hollywood's heyday includes *The Greatest Show On Earth, My Blue Heaven* and *I'd Climb The Highest Mountain* (Susan Hayward).

D.L. TAFFNER; MYSTERY WHEEL OF ADVENTURE

10 titles
start date: two runs — fourth quarter '89 and second quarter '90
terms: barter
A made-for-television package including six titles based on the fictional detective, *The Saint*, and three others adapted from Dick Francis mystery novels.



Pegasus I: *Amazing Grace & Chuck*

TELEVENTURES; PEGASUS I

20 titles
start date: now (barter titles) through 1993 (cash titles)
terms: cash + barter
Comedy, drama, adventure and stars such as Jackie Gleason (*Nothing in Common*), Kathleen Turner (*Peggy Sue Got Married*) and Jane Fonda (*Agnes of God*).

TURNER PROGRAM SERVICES COLOR CLASSIC NETWORK THREE

24 titles
start date: available now; one title each month
terms: barter
Jezebel, To Have and Have Not, Treasure of the Sierra Madre, Angels with Dirty Faces and *Gunga Din*—in new colorized versions.

20TH CENTURY FOX FOX HOLLYWOOD THEATER '88/'89

5 titles
start date: now through March '89
terms: barter
Theatrical dramas including such polar opposites as *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Paris, Texas*.

20TH CENTURY FOX PREMIERE MOVIES

9 titles
start date: April '89 - March '90
terms: barter
Comedy (*Mischief, Moving Violations*) and suspense (*Manhattan Project, Project X*).

VESTRON TELEVISION; ALL AMERICAN CLASSIC THEATRE

4 titles
start date: available now
terms: barter
Classic tales of *Christopher Columbus, Oliver Twist* and others.

VESTRON TELEVISION DOUBLE IMAGES

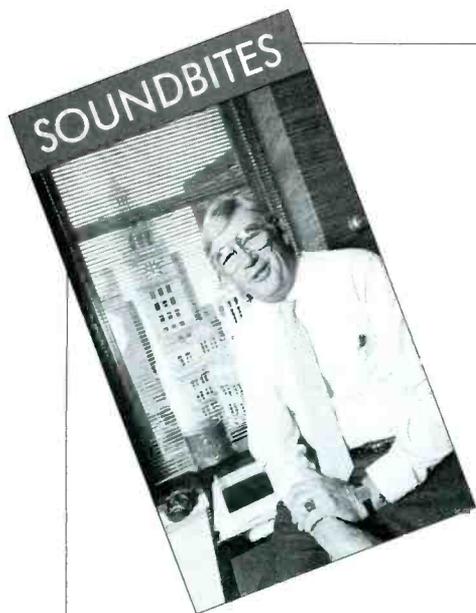
10 titles
start date: now through 1990
terms: barter
Fantasy, adventure and drama mix in titles like *Brother from Another Planet, The Wraith* (Charlie Sheen) and *8 Million Ways to Die* (Jeff Bridges).

VESTRON TELEVISION HOT TICKETS

12 titles
start date: 1990
terms: cash + barter
Romance and revenge are played out in features such as *Steel Dawn* and *You Can't Hurry Love*.

VIACOM; FEATURES XIII

20 titles
start date: now through July '94
terms: TBA
A combination of theatrical and made-for-television films, including *Surrender* (Sally Field), *Superman IV* and *Return to Mayberry*. —Compiled by Barbara Ellis



In The Eye Of The Storm

Has independent television shot itself in the foot? Tribune Broadcasting's Jim Dowdle explains how.

One of the largest operators of independent television stations in the U.S. stood at the center of controversy last year when it broke ranks with the rest of its industry and fought reimposition of the Federal Communication Commission's syndicated exclusivity rules. As the buying season for new first-run syndicated shows got underway this past fall, Tribune continued to swim upstream by refusing to buy exclusive rights to syndicated shows. That stand threw new program development for fall 1989, in the words of one syndicator, "into chaos." Dowdle, president of Tribune, which also operates syndication companies Tribune Entertainment and Teletrib, discussed syndex and other issues with Kathy Haley.

Syndicated Exclusivity

The one advantage independent stations had over network affiliates was the additional outlying coverage they got from regional cable carriage. It's hard for me to believe independents would give that advantage up so quickly by favoring the return of syndicated exclusivity. It's strange that 34.5 miles from the transmitter, the most important issue is must carry. At 35.2 miles, they don't care. It became a religious issue [for independents]. They talked about it long enough and when it came up, it was psychologically a big issue for independent television to win. They hadn't won much, and now they had the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission in their corner.

First-Run and Syndex

There are many regional independents,

thanks to cable carriage, that boost the coverage of first-run shows and the value of their barter time. It goes way beyond WGN in Chicago and WPIX in New York. There is WSBK in Boston, KUTV in San Francisco, KTLA in Los Angeles and KWGN in Denver, to name only a few. These older, established independents have been carried on cable throughout those areas. We have a nine o'clock news on KWGN, for example, that's viewed in six states. The barter revenue [from extra cable coverage] helps the economics of first-run shows. Independents, at one point, were crying for fresh product. The barter syndication market gave us that. And now we want to shoot it in the foot. The reimposition of syndicated exclusivity was the result of short-term thinking. Our problem at Tribune was that when we tried to convince independents of our point of view, they'd right away say, "Oh, that's because of WGN." They wouldn't even listen to us. I wish somebody else had come out other than us and said the very things we have said.

Syndex and Syndicators

There was a lack of knowledge on their part. They thought they could get a little more money for their shows with syndicated exclusivity. Many didn't understand the economics of the barter business and the impact of the loss of all that extra coverage. There was confusion among the syndicators.

Ratings and Syndex

There is a terrible misconception [among independents] that they're going to get it [ratings] all back. Any in-

creases will be minimal and what are they opening the door for? USA Network, Lifetime, TNT. The difference is that superstations don't take any advertising money out of the market. USA, TNT and the other basic networks will do that. They will be the big beneficiaries of syndicated exclusivity.

Regional Cable Nets

It gets down to programming and I don't think there's enough out there to support it. Are you really, on a local cable channel, going to buy *Gomer Pyle* and pay the price for the eight or ten markets a channel like that would cover? That's what the syndicator will charge you, because he wouldn't be able to sell it to broadcast stations in those markets.

Nonexclusive Pricing

I don't know that we paid a premium for the Viacom XIII movie package. We bought it for five or six markets and I can't say I know everything that was going on in every one of those markets. It's possible that we'll have to pay more for nonexclusive rights. I really don't know. The marketplace, again, will dictate a lot of what we do.

Exclusive, Nonexclusive Deals Coexisting

That could happen. I don't like to keep coming back to the marketplace, but it really dictates so much of what's going to happen. Go back to the *Cosby* frenzy. How much difference would syndicated exclusivity have made in that bidding process? Not much. Because the marketplace was in a frenzy. If you have a show that's perceived a winner,

and you go into the market and refuse to sell exclusive rights to anybody, you'd have stations that really wanted the show buying it without exclusivity.

Unwired Networking

We're in a changing business. I don't believe in limiting myself or the company to future opportunities. In the deal we and WTBS made with Procter & Gamble, we found an opportunity to sell our stations together with the additional coverage. Should superstations band together to offer unwired network deals? We haven't thought about doing it. I don't know if it's a good idea.

Agency Mergers and National Spot

It might be one of the reasons for the soft national spot market. As you look at the fourth quarter, the networks fared far better than the local stations as far as national spot goes. That's because it's so much easier to buy network than it is spot. With the consolidation that has taken place in the agencies, there is a possibility some agencies are doing it the easy way. It saves money, saves personnel. How do we counteract that? I can't really say. As you look at it, though, you see the national advertisers getting more and more involved in the media. If they suspect or see shortcutting, they won't let it go on very long.

Package Goods, Mega-Mergers and Advertising

It's too early to tell [what the impact is]. You could have one company buying another and ending up owning several products in one category. Let's say that in one category, they own the number-one product and in another, the number two. They have to protect their investment and make sure those products stay number one and two and they do that with advertising. But with these mergers as big as they are, if there's a slowdown in the economy and the merged company has to meet interest payments, they may just say, "Hey, let's take a ride this month and save \$25 million in advertising. We'll come in next quarter." You could have examples going both ways. You have to realize we are not standing still. It's going to be different. How it's going to be different, I don't know.

Syndication's Buyer's Market

We won't ever see the business the way it was four years ago because, through all this, a lot of broadcasters have learned a tremendous lesson as to the economics of buying programming. At least in this generation of management, you won't see that happen again.

'The USA Network, TNT and the other basic cable networks will be the big beneficiaries of syndicated exclusivity—not stations.'



Tribune's Programming Costs

Three years ago, our programming expenses were 60 percent and they've gone up 15 percent a year since then. We've worked like hell to cut the other 40 percent, so that even with programming going up 15 percent, we remain stable. You have to remember that programming we bought three or four years ago is just now coming on the air. We can't just automatically say, "Okay, we're going to cut down on our programming expenses." We'll see the percentage of budget we spend on programming go down over the next five years.

Broadcasters' Regulatory Status

There's no question ours is the best broadcast system in the world, and what makes it so unique is localism in combination with national network programming. Why change that? Most homes have multiple sets, anyway, with only one set hooked up to cable. Through the other sets, the local market is still being served directly by local stations.

Television Marketing

From a local standpoint, many stations are probably undermanned. There is a lot more opportunity out there than we are taking advantage of, primarily in local sales. We have a different project underway at each of our six stations that addresses different aspects of the problem.

Co-production Deal With the Kirsch Group

We have a couple of things in the works, one that might be ready for broadcast this year. Our primary push initially is in miniseries.

Possible Studio Merger

It wouldn't necessarily happen. We looked at this situation three or four years ago. So many businesses are contracting and merging. Look at what's going on with Pillsbury, Kraft or Philip Morris. We thought four or five years ago that it would never happen in our business. That was very naive thinking. We're no different from the general economy. That's why we bought KTLA and got into the programming business. We felt if we didn't, we wouldn't be a major force in this future economy. How much more it's going to contract, I don't know.

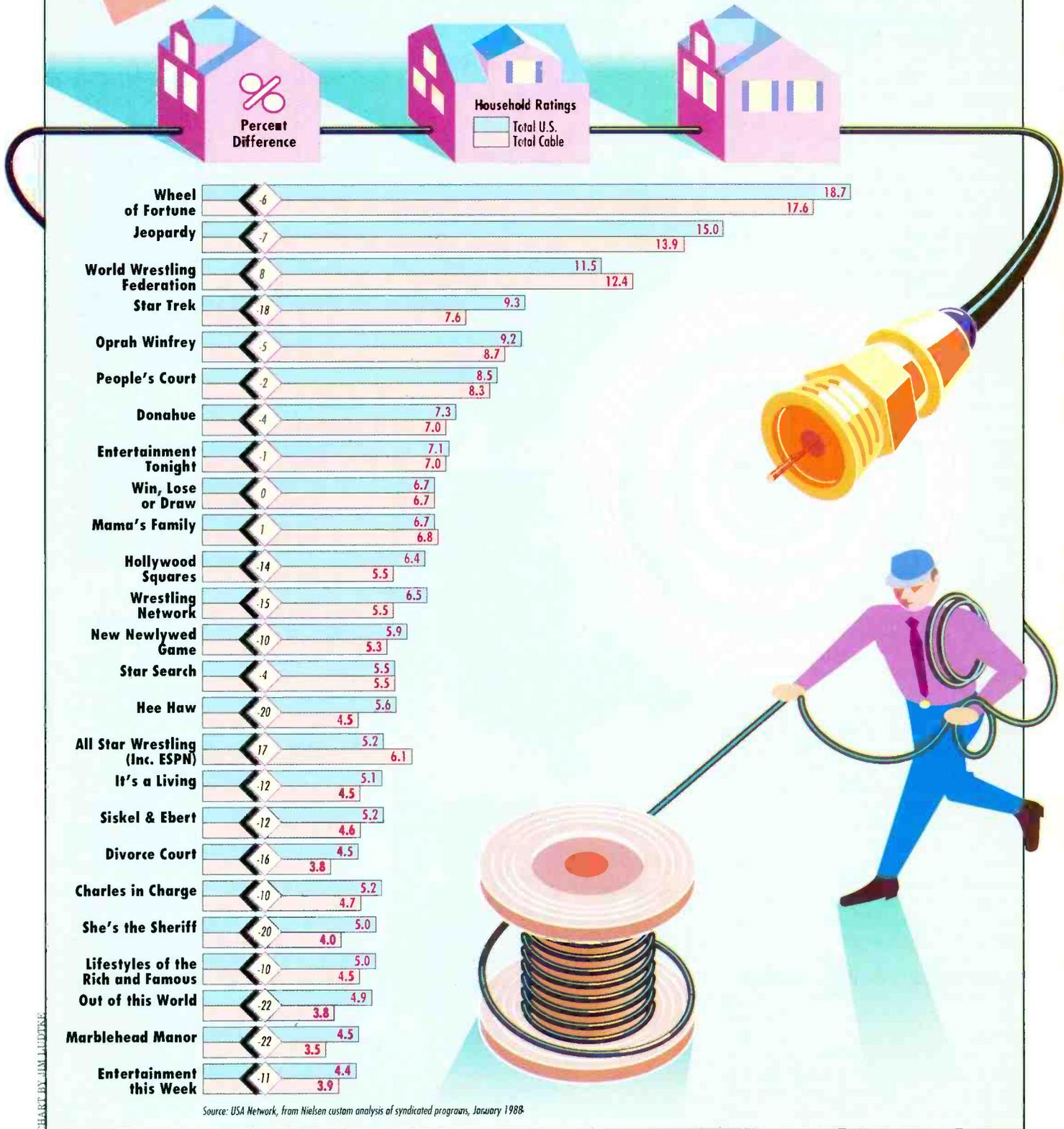
Tribune's Programming Priorities in 1989

Hits.

RUNNING THE NUMBERS

Syndication on the Wire

Which syndicated programs hold up best in cable households? A study conducted last season by USA Network found talk shows holding up best with cable's typically younger, more upscale viewers. Sitcoms, on the other hand, tend to lose rating points. On the whole, syndicated shows underdelivered by about 6 percent in cable households. Network prime-time ratings during the same season were 14 points lower in cable households than in non-cable homes, according to the Cable Advertising Bureau.



Source: USA Network, from Nielsen custom analysis of syndicated programs, January 1988

CHART BY JIM LAUTKE

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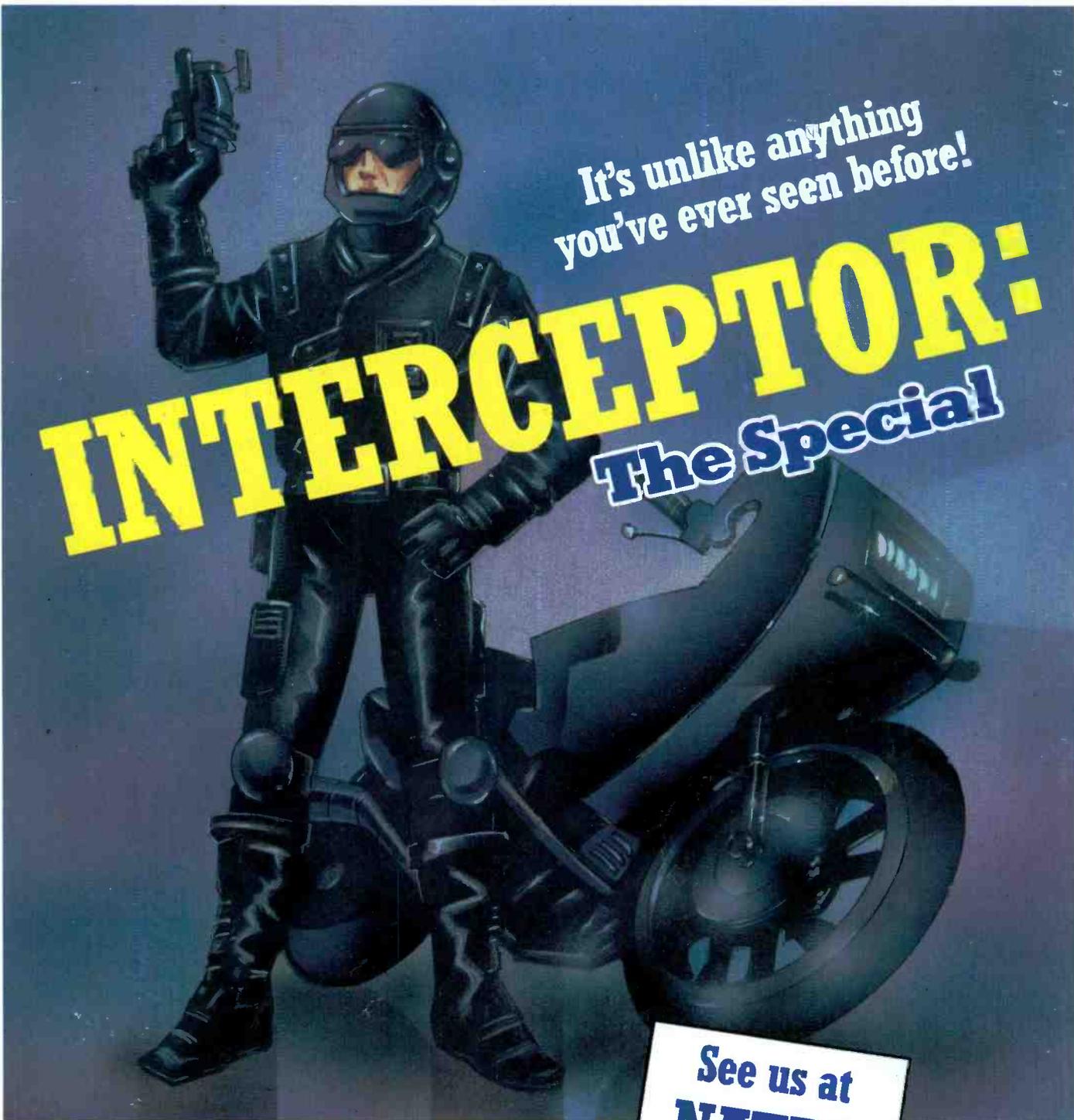
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