

'Today' to offer some new faces, extra ingredients

Daily features added, duties of Shalit and Furness expanded

A spiced-up format for the *Today* show is set to premiere next Monday (Sept. 19) as NBC News enlarges the morning program's cast of characters and its inventory of features.

The changes—which Executive Producer Paul Friedman said “will add up to a brighter, fresher program”—will follow the introduction of a new *Today* set by about two weeks. After Labor Day, the network eliminated anchor desks from the basic set *Today* shares with the *NBC Nightly News* (BROADCASTING, Sept. 5).

Joining *Today* (7-9 a.m. NYT) on regular assignment will be correspondents Eric Burns and Jack Perkins who are to provide major pieces each week from Chicago and Los Angeles, respectively. Each will be backed by his own production unit.

New daily features will include “What’s Hot” and “Living.” According to Mr. Friedman, the former will “be concerned with little things that make up contemporary culture in America” and the latter will consist of life-style stories of how people cope with matters ranging from money management to home decorating. *Today* regulars will handle “What’s Hot”; new contributors for “Living” are being sought.

Another new feature, on Mondays, will have government officials answering questions from people on the street. Called “Washington on the Spot,” this segment will feature politicians live from NBC in Washington responding to questions taped by various news bureaus. Lead-off guest next Monday is Joseph Califano, secretary of health, education and welfare.

Today's primary trio—Tom Brokaw, Jane Pauley and Gene Shalit—remains but the format changes call for a larger role for Mr. Shalit. Instead of contributing only one “Critic’s Corner” piece every two weeks, he will present one every Tuesday

Ball bounced. Reruns of Lucille Ball's last regular television series, *Here's Lucy*, will be edged off the CBS-TV daytime schedule Nov. 4 to make room for the new one-hour version of the soap opera, *The Guiding Light*. Miss Ball has had a series on the network almost continuously since the now-classic *I Love Lucy* program started in 1951. The original *I Love Lucy* was filmed live and won the comedienne a string of Emmys and other awards, as well as top-10 ratings. In 1957 the weekly series was replaced by *The Lucille Ball—Desi Arnaz Show*, five variety specials yearly featuring such subjects as Lucy mining uranium with Fred MacMurray and June Haver and skiing in Sun Valley with Fernando Lamas. After a two-year break, she returned to the network in 1962 with *The Lucy Show*, which later was renamed *Here's Lucy*, and which ran until 1974.

and Thursday. The three will share responsibility for short daily pieces—Mr. Brokaw on Monday, Ms. Pauley on Thursday and Mr. Shalit on Tuesday and Wednesday. Correspondent Edwin Newman will take a turn on Friday.

In addition, *Today* will expand Betty Furness's consumer reports to twice weekly (Tuesday and Thursday). Continuing with three pieces a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) will be *Today*'s doctor, Art Ulene. As before, Floyd Kalber will report the news and Lew Wood, the sports and weather.

Two new games at NBC

NBC-TV has placed two new half-hour game shows in its daytime schedule. Both premiere Oct. 3.

Knockout, with comedian Arte Johnson as host, is described by the network as “a game of strategy, quick-thinking and deception.” To win, three contestants try to identify a relationship between three out of four words. The first contestant to do so eight times wins. The program, a Ralph Edwards production, airs from 11:30 a.m.

to 12 noon NYT. It replaces *It's Anybody's Guess*.

To Say the Least, described as a “word elimination game with celebrity teams,” will be emceed by long-time game host Tom Kennedy. A celebrity team and a contestant team take turns at conveying a clue sentence to each other in the fewest possible words. A Heater-Quigley Production, *To Say the Least* will air from noon to 12:30 p.m. It replaces *Shoot for the Stars*.

HBO fills in its hand for fall

New package of movies, expanded entertainment features on tap

Home Box Office, Time Inc.'s pay-cable programming arm, last week announced its fall line-up, with promise of a new show each Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening in prime time.

Among the new HBO offerings of 24 theatrical films for cable are “All the President’s Men,” “Taxi Driver,” “The Seven Percent Solution,” “Two-Minute Warning,” “The Shootist,” “Mahogany,” “Lipstick,” “The Man Who Fell to Earth” and “The Fox.”

Returning as a regular monthly feature is *Standing Room Only* which begins Sept. 18 with the spotlight on comedian Jerry Lewis. According to Michael Fuchs, HBO vice president, sports and specials, and SRO executive producer, the 90-minute Lewis show “is our most ambitious project to date,” representing “nearly a full summer of taping.” After its premiere, the program will be rerun on Sept. 22 and 26 and Oct. 1. SRO's October entry will feature Neil Sedaka, singer and songwriter, and the following month, the stage show, “Casino de Paris.”

HBO's *On Location* monthly series of nightclub performances and backstage interviews begins Sept. 24 with “The Second Annual Home Box Office Young Comedians Show” and continues in October with Soupy Sales and in November with Frank Gorshin.

Encore performances of HBO programs this season will include “Nightowl” late shows on Friday and Saturday nights.

On the sports side, HBO is adding a new weekly series, *Inside the NFL*. With a start date of Sept. 22, the hour program will feature a detailed review of the week's key National Football League game, highlights of other action and predictions on upcoming games. The show, being put together by HBO and NFL Films, will have a 17-week run, until the January 1978 Super Bowl.

HBO claims to supply programming to some 80% of the U.S. pay-TV industry, with more than 700,000 homes on its subscriber lists and about 350 cable system affiliates. Later this month, it celebrates its second anniversary of satellite transmission and two months after that, its fifth anniversary in the business.

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