

to-date. *Benson* (22d) ranks as ABC's highest rated new program. NBC's is *Misadventures of Sheriff Lobo* at 33d rank.

Among returning series, there has been a considerable fall-off for many of the ABC programs that carried that network to its rating dominance last year. Although *Three's Company* (second), *Eight Is Enough* (sixth) and *Charlie's Angels* (eighth) have remained in their customary top-10 positions, other network stalwarts such as *Barney Miller* (13th), *Mork & Mindy* (14th), *Happy Days* (20th), *Taxi* (23d) and *Laverne & Shirley* (28th) have dropped out of that exclusive club.

CBS has done well with its long-dominant Sunday night line-up, which is headed by the number-one program of the season, *60 Minutes*. Its other Sunday programs among the top-10 are *Alice* (fourth), *One Day at a Time* (fifth) and *The Jeffersons* (ninth). CBS's performance has also been boosted by the continuing strong showing of *M\*A\*S\*H* (third) and the number-10 show, *Dallas*. Of all returning programs on any network, *Dallas*'s improvement over last season is the greatest. (At this time last year, it ranked 59th.)

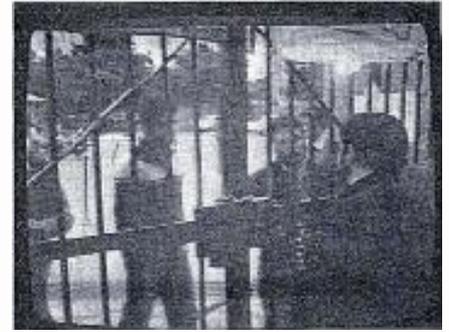
NBC's *Little House on the Prairie* remains as that network's only top-10 show—as it was last year—but the network's over-all improvement can best be seen toward the bottom of the scale. In sharp contrast to last season when seven NBC shows were among the bottom-20 programs, thus far this season it has four—*Kate Loves a Mystery* (54th), *Shirley* (57th), *Eisched* (61st) and *Prime Time* (64th).



**Insider.** America's Iranian crisis became the news focus of the nation last week, and ABC News, the only network with staff newsmen in Iran during the early days of the crisis, claimed some notable beats. NBC News and CBS News people were admitted to Iran on Thursday (American time) and began trying to catch up. CBS and NBC had been using coverage provided them by foreign news people until then.

ABC News correspondent Bob Dyk and his news crew were let into Iran on Sunday, shortly after Iranian students stormed the American embassy in Teheran and held U.S. officials hostage there. Dyk was said by ABC News to be the only American newsman in Iran during the early days of the crisis. He and his crew were reported working virtually around the clock providing coverage by satellite.

An NBC News crew led by correspondents Martin Fletcher (for TV) and Phil Till (radio) was admitted Thursday night. CBS News said two of its newsmen were also let in on Thursday but declined temporarily to identify them "for security reasons."



## Viacom-Sonderling deal passes FCC muster

### Program-cable firm adds eight radio stations, one TV to portfolio

By unanimous vote of the FCC last week, Viacom International was transformed from a program syndicator and cable operator with a UHF station as a sideline into a major broadcast group owner.

Last Tuesday the commission approved the merger of Sonderling Broadcasting Co.

into Viacom. Viacom presently owns UHF wvtt(TV) New Britain, Conn., and is a leading program syndicator and cable operator. Sonderling owns six AM stations, five FM's and one VHF Two AM's and an FM are being spun off.

The Sonderling deal, valued at roughly \$32 million, will give Viacom control of WMZQ(FM) Washington, WWRL(AM)-WRVR(FM) New York, WDIA(AM)-

## InBrief

In what is believed to be **largest single spot radio program buy in history**, **K Mart Corp.**, Troy, Mich., has begun campaign to last more than one year on prime newscasts of radio stations in 47 major markets. Placed through Ross Roy Inc., Detroit, effort by nationwide discount chain is reported to cost **\$2 million-\$3 million**. CBS Radio Sales and Christal Co. are credited with having spearheaded negotiations but station list includes outlets handled by other representatives.

Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), in letter to FCC Chairman Charles Ferris, has expressed **great dissatisfaction with announcement that commission is considering setting minimum time standards for educational children's TV**. Goldwater said increased regulation is exactly what Congress doesn't want, and he plans to take action. "I think I can safely say that the Subcommittee on Communications is not going to stand still for this over-regulating of the industry and if it becomes necessary to act in a piecemeal way I am going to recommend to the chairman that we meet, write legislation prohibiting this in-depth regulation and just see where the ball bounces," Goldwater wrote. **"If you are interested in deregulating, then let's do it. If you are not, say so, and let's have the lines of battle drawn."**

ABC-TV hopes to be **"first network to break the \$2-billion mark** [in annual sales] in 1981, and we should double that in 1984," James E. Duffy, ABC-TV network president, said Friday in speech to Western regional conference of American Advertising Federation at Phoenix. He said ABC-TV had about 30% of three-network market in early 1970's, now has about 37% after becoming "largest single advertising medium

in the world in 1977 as the first network to break the \$1-billion mark in annual sales." Duffy said television's growth has not been as damaging to other media as popularly supposed, and that "whatever television is doing to other media has largely been done. A fairly stable pattern has emerged in which the major media have assumed complementary roles."

Star Channel, Warner Cable's pay service, goes **from 16 to 24 hours** daily Dec. 1, under **new name: The Movie Channel**. It's part of Warner and (future partner) American Express's plans to beef up pay-TV presence. Right now Star has 175,000 subscribers but mostly in Warner systems. Competitive thrust, according to Jack Schneider, president of new Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment Corp. subsidiary (BROADCASTING, Nov. 5), is to sell Movie Channel as companion service in addition to—and not instead of—likes of Home Box Office and Showtime. Also being considered is new Warner/Amex venture, perhaps "shopping channel."

Warner Communications also announced last week it has sold its **9.5% holding in Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of New York** to Atlanta-based parent Coca-Cola Co. 1,825,000 shares went for \$8.10 each, \$14.8 million total, while stock closed Thursday at \$6.25. Meanwhile, New York Coca-Cola is planning to **get out of partnership with Larry Israel** in wixt(tv) Syracuse, N.Y. Coke was 51% participant in group that acquired station in 1977 for \$11 million. Bottler's interest will be sold to Israel's group, Wixt Inc., after January 1981, when trafficking prohibition no longer will apply.

National Association of Broadcasters has filed friend-of-court brief defending three TV networks' refusal to sell Carter-Mondale Presidential Committee half hour of prime time for nationwide broadcast (see also page 72). **NAB said basic issue is "not whether any particular**