

## Group W slates two more shows for the bird

'Hour Magazine' and 'John Davidson' will join its 'PM Magazine' in satellite distribution in January

The role of satellites in broadcasters' futures, and particularly in the future of Group W, has been underscored as Group W Productions announced it will commence satellite distribution in January of two more daily series while the co-owned Group W Satellite Communications prepared to break news of a joint satellite-delivered cable programming joint venture with Walt Disney Productions (see this page).

*Hour Magazine* and *The John Davidson Show* will join *PM Magazine* in the sky, the last having been available to stations

by satellite since August. (Conventional tape distribution of all three will continue as well.) Some 12 stations currently take *PM Magazine* by satellite, a number that Group W expects to edge up to 16 by year-end. Commitments are already in from 18 stations to take *Hour Magazine* off the satellite, and from eight stations to take *Davidson*. Those figures could grow by another 16 for *Hour* and double for *Davidson* in the first quarter of next year, Group W says.

The satellite distribution of Group W Productions material is handled by its duplication and distribution subsidiary, TVSC. That unit's vice president and general manager, George Sperry, notes that at present TVSC is arranging for occasional transponder time from various sources and on various satellites to feed Group W programs and other material it handles for outside clients (such as Golden West Broadcasters' *Richard Simmons Show*). In the future, Sperry expects that TVSC would probably utilize unused transponder time that Group W has ar-

anged for its Group W Satellite Communications operation (which has already announced plans for use of four Westar transponders in partnership with ABC for cable news services). Separately, Group W, acting for TVSC, has made an offer to RCA for two transponders that would be freed when cable traffic is switched off Satcom 1. And Sperry says TVSC will be present at RCA's auction today (Nov. 9) in New York for transponder allocations on Satcom IV.

## Group W, Disney latest cable joint venturers

Plans call for 16-hour daily, family-programing package

Group W and Walt Disney Productions have entered a joint venture to produce and distribute family-oriented programming for a pay-cable channel.

The specifics will be discussed by Jim Gimmero, president of Walt Disney Telecommunications and Nontheatrical Co., and Jonathan Hayes, president of Group W Satellite Communications, tomorrow (Nov. 10) in New York at the Park Meridian hotel.

BROADCASTING has learned, however, that the new channel—which will program 16 hours a day—is expected to be launched in 1983 and will be distributed over two transponders on Westar V. That satellite is due to be launched in the fall of 1982. The two transponders will be used to cover the four time zones.

Some movies will be aired on the channel, but the accent is on "all original programming," according to one source familiar with the planned operations. Family-entertainment series are planned, the source said, noting Disney had been in contact with a number of independent producers concerning programming ideas.

## CPB's annual honors

Winners of the 1981 Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Public Television Local Program Awards for excellence and creativity in local public television program production were presented at the Public Broadcasting Service Program Fair Oct. 28 in New Orleans.

The 1981 winners:

- KCTS-TV Seattle □ *Pacific Northwest Ballet* (performance).
- WTTW(TV) Chicago □ *The Rehearsal* (performance).
- WEDW(TV) Bridgeport, Conn. □ *Windcrossing* (drama).
- Nebraska ETV Network, Lincoln, Neb. □ *Sandhills Album* (cultural documentary).
- WTVS(TV) Detroit □ *While You're Out of Work* (target audience).
- WCBB(TV) Augusta, Me. □ *So You Think You Know Maine: 1981 Junior High Championship* (children's programming).
- Wisconsin ETV Network, Madison, Wis. □ *Inside Story: The Smart Parts* (instructional).
- WITF-TV Hershey, Pa. □ *Let's Make a Deal: Plea Bargaining* (documentary).
- WGBH-TV Boston □ *Pat Ewing and an American Dream* (public affairs).
- WKAR-TV East Lansing, Mich. □ *Reagan Cuts: The Michigan Impact* (informational programming).

## Monitor

**Naming names.** NBC-TV has changed title of its new *Angie Dickinson* series, slated to premiere early in 1982, to *Cassie & Co.* Drama features Dickinson as private investigator in program produced by Carson Productions in association with Saracen Productions. John Ireland will co star as retired detective who sells Cassie (Dickinson) his private investigation agency. Series was originally set to begin Saturday, Jan. 9, at 10-11 p.m. (ET), but latest network announcement does not specify start date.

**Standing by.** Actor Rock Hudson, who is recovering from coronary by-pass, will debut in new NBC-TV detective series *The Devlin Connection* "early next year" instead of Nov. 27 as scheduled. So far no temporary replacement for show has been found.

**MSG signings.** Madison Square Garden Network will syndicate nationally for second year in row five-game package of college basketball games under *Prime Time Sports* banner. Games include Indiana-Notre Dame and East Coast Athletic Conference Holiday Festival championship contests on Dec. 1 and Dec. 29, respectively. In addition, three games of annual National Invitational Tournament will be covered in March. MSGN also announced signing of five-year contract with WOR-TV to broadcast road games of New York Knicks professional basketball team and New York Rangers professional hockey team. WOR-TV is carried on cable systems nationwide.

**New market.** NBC Enterprises and Warner Home Video, subsidiary of Warner Communications Inc., have announced joint agreement for distribution of NBC programs in home video market. Agreements cover 28 NBC-produced programs in U.S. and Canada in videocassette and laserdisk formats. It also makes Warner outlet for original NBC Enterprises productions produced specifically for home video market.

**Gearing up.** ABC-TV has ordered production of *Darkroom*, new one-hour horror/suspense anthology series from Universal Television. Network is making multi-episode commitment to program for 1981-82 season, although no premiere date has been set.

**Drying ink.** Actor Richard Chamberlain's production company, Cham Enterprises, has entered two-year production partnership with Warner Bros. Television to develop movies for television and other projects. Under terms of agreement, Chamberlain's acting services will be exclusive to studio in TV mini-series and movies for TV. Cham will also develop theatrical motion pictures for Warner Bros. studio.

**Campbell return.** Bristol Myers and Lexington Broadcast Services have announced availability of as yet unnamed new prime-time access music variety series, to become available in September 1982. Half-hour series, hosted by singer Glen Campbell, will feature "major personalities from the music/entertainment field" and be distributed on barter basis with Bristol-Myers as national sponsor.