

each of the network proponents. "There's some shadow boxing going on right now," he said.

While Metromedia hopes to launch its network late this summer, Paramount is looking toward the second quarter of 1984, when Olympics broadcasts and national elections will have tightened inventories on the three major networks. The Tribune-Taft-Gaylord-Chris Craft venture, which is to be nonprofit, has no specific deadline. Because Paramount anticipates doing some original production for its network, it must be ready to go into pre-production by this summer, according to Reiss. That means stations in the top markets and major advertisers must be lined up by June. □

Embassy activity. While talk of the creation of new, occasional prime time networks continues, a quarterly, advertiser-supported movie network announced in March by Embassy Telecommunications Inc. signed stations in New York and Boston last week, bringing its lineup to about 30 stations, according to company president, Gary Lieberthal. *Embassy Night at the Movies*, which will begin with a broadcast of "Escape From New York" during next November's local ratings sweeps, has added Tribune Broadcasting Co.'s WPIX(TV) New York and WGN-TV Chicago and Metromedia's WCVB-TV Boston to its lineup, which already included KTLA(TV) Los Angeles.

Embassy also has signed a number of stations in markets below the top 20, according to Lieberthal, and in the top 20 markets (other than the four already signed), it is entertaining bids from a number of competing stations. "We're going very slowly," said Lieberthal.

Lieberthal would not reveal which advertisers have expressed interest in the Embassy network, which does not require broadcasts in prime time. Here also, Embassy is "moving slowly" and will not establish rates for "Escape from New York" until it knows what the conventional networks will charge for movies aired during the same quarter.

TELECASTINGS

Tribune topics

Tribune Entertainment has entered into agreements to develop a four-hour mini-series and a two-hour movie for television syndication. The mini-series will be based on the true story of Cornelia Connelly, a 19th-century woman of nobility who left her marriage to become a nun and, after rising through the hierarchy to a position of power within the church, became the center of international controversy when she rejected her husband's efforts to try to force her to return to married life. Tribune's partners in the project, which will be shot in the U.S., the United Kingdom and Rome, are Britain's HTV Ltd. and D.L. Taffner Ltd. The new movie, to be produced by Dave Bell Associates of Hollywood, will tell the story of Nadia Comaneci, Romanian gymnastics star of the 1976 Olympics. *Scared Straight* is among previous projects of Dave Bell Associates.

Also in the works at Tribune Entertainment: Gary Deeb, former television and radio critic for the Chicago *Sun Times*, is being screen tested for a TV series similar to Tribune's highly successful *At the Movies*, that would offer criticism of upcoming TV fare, including programs offered on cable and other alternative media. According to company President Sheldon Cooper, Tribune has not yet decided whether to go ahead with the project.

2 time

CBS-owned WCVB-TV New York will air its own production for prime access time five nights a week, starting next fall. Its *2 on the Town*—the 2 representing the station's channel assignment as well as program co-hosts Adrienne Maltzer and Lloyd Kramer—will expand from Friday and Saturday-night appearances to Monday through Friday, replacing the *Muppet Show* on Mondays through Thursdays. Bobbee Carson, WCVB-TV's director of broadcasting, who announced the changes, said the *Muppets* may replace *2 on the Town* on Saturdays at 7:30

p.m. but that no firm decision has been made.

"We are very excited about the challenge of programing a locally produced show five times a week in access," Carson said.

The program explores the New York area, pointing up unusual life styles and events. Though no formal announcements have been made, WCVB-TV's access time competition on the other network-owned stations is expected to keep on doing what it's doing: *Family Feud* stripped Monday through Friday on NBC-owned WNBC-TV and *Entertainment Tonight* similarly stripped on ABC's WABC-TV. Both have been running substantially ahead of the *Muppets/2 on the Town* combination in the ratings.

New 'Essence'

Essence, a half-hour weekly magazine for upscale black viewers, premiered May 5 on WPIX(TV) New York at 10:30 a.m. A joint project of WPIX Inc. and Essence Communications Inc., both New York, *Essence* is meant to go beyond the purview of the 13-year-old magazine of the same name upon which it is based, by appealing to men as well as women. Susan J. Taylor, editor-in-chief of *Essence* magazine, will host the new program, which, in its early installments, features interviews with actress/choreographer Debbie Allen of the NBC-TV series, *Fame*; actor Howard Rollins; fashion model Peggy Dillard; Attallah Shabazz, daughter of Malcolm X, and activist Kwame Toure (Stokely Carmichael). In addition to celebrity interviews, the show will feature a weekly discussion of controversial issues and regular segments on cooking and exercise.

At a reception announcing the new show in New York last Monday (May 2), Leavitt J. Pope, president of WPIX Inc., called *Essence*, "an opportunity for national syndication." In addition to its regular run at 10:30 a.m. on Thursdays, *Essence* will be given an early morning run the same day, to test its reach

among working viewers, as well as some experimental runs on Saturday mornings.

Essence is WPIX Inc.'s second program venture with a publishing company; the other is the weekly *Wall Street Journal Report*. It is Essence Communications' first foray into TV programing, according to publisher Ed Lewis, who said he believes the program will fill the same kind of void as that filled by the magazine, which, since its creation in 1960, has increased its circulation from 50,000 to 700,000.

Generosity

The television broadcast of *Hollywood: The Gift of Laughter*, which aired on ABC-TV last year, has proved profitable for several educational and research organizations. The Motion Picture Association of America to the proceeds from the broadcast and donated \$946,000 to eight organizations.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, American Film Institute, California Institute of the Arts Film School, Motion Picture and Television Fund, New York University School of the Arts, University of California at Los Angeles Film School and the University of Southern California Film School. Each received \$124,500 and Columbia University received \$74,500.

In the marketplace

Family, the off-network series of 86 hours offered by Lexington Broadcast Services the NATPE International conference in March, has cleared stations in 71 markets covering 70% of U.S. households. It began airing in September. The lineup for the Columbia Pictures-produced program includes WOR-TV New York, KTLA(TV) Los Angeles and WGN-TV Chicago. *Morning Stretch*, KPIX(TV) San Francisco's half-hour daily exercise program hosted by Joanie Greggains, has cleared 83 stations, including nine in the top 10 markets.