

TELECASTINGS

Quarterly gains

CBS won the daytime ratings in the second quarter, although NBC showed the greatest improvement in period-to-period comparisons. According to Nielsen's national ratings for the second quarter (March 19-June 17), CBS ended the quarter with an average 6.9/25 (up 6% over 6.5/25 during the second quarter of 1983), and ABC averaged 6/21, down 15% from the previous year's 7.1/26 average. NBC, although still in third place, averaged 5.1/19, an increase of 16% over the 4.3/17 average in the comparable 1983 period.

'Flash' back

National Lampoon Inc. has moved back the release date for its syndicated late-night television strip, *Hot Flashes*, to "some time" in 1985. The show was originally scheduled to go into first-run distribution in the fall of 1984, and 65 stations participated in a one-week test last month. Five barter test shows were co-produced by National Lampoon with Golden West Television and Tribune Broadcasting. National Lampoon said more time was needed to refine the production.

In the marketplace

Mutual Insurance Co. will underwrite a one-hour Statue of Liberty special, a co-production of noncommercial WNET(TV) New York and Florentine Films, in association with American Heritage. The special, which will air in October 1985 over PBS, will trace the history of the statue, from its design by sculptor Auguste Bartholdi to its arrival in the U.S. ■ *The Joy of Gardening*, distributed by Troy, N.Y.-based Garden Marketing Associates, has cleared 79 stations representing 47% coverage for next fall. Thirteen new half-hour episodes will be produced, adding to 26 produced over the last two seasons. Last year, 70 stations carried *Joy of Gardening*, mostly in daytime periods on week-ends. ■ D.L. Taffner Ltd. has become exclusive distributor of HTV International Product for Australia, New Zealand, Southeast Asia and Japan. HTV, part of the United Kingdom's ITV system, produces over 20 hours of programming each week. ■ Tribune Entertainment is making available for airing in the fourth quarter a 90-minute feature, *Smurfs and The Magic Flute*. The special is being sold on cash-plus-barter basis. It is not part of the NBC-TV Saturday morning series. ■ Dancer Fitzgerald Sample has cleared 21 markets for *Campaign Buttons*, a series of program inserts produced by the Corporation for Entertainment and Learning that give historical campaign snippets from previous election years. Toyota Motor Sales has an adjacency. ■ Lexington Broadcast Services and Chelsea Communications

have banded together to produce a pilot with the working title, *The Making Of...* One-hour magazine format special will feature behind-the-scenes glimpses of the making of the year's most popular movies, records, music videos, commercials and concerts. LBS said it expects to clear over 100 stations for the special, which is a possible pilot for a weekly syndicated series in 1985. ■

Future film

ABC is developing another made-for-TV movie with an apocalyptic theme. The production, *Topeka, Kansas...U.S.S.R.*, is set in 1994 and envisions a Soviet takeover of the United States. ABC is predicting that the program could air in the 1985-86 prime time season. According to ABC Motion Pictures President Brandon Stoddard, the program will "examine what happens to American freedom when another country has control of the United States." It is in the development stage and will not be ready for broadcast this season, the network said. Added Stoddard, "We hope that the film will not be political and that it will not take a point of view or spark attitudes that will please or upset any sides." The title of the broadcast may be changed. Stoddard also noted that ABC will have fewer hours of mini-series than both CBS and NBC in the coming season, although the individual productions may be longer than the four-hour programs usually scheduled in the past. Mini-series slated for broadcast during the 1984-85 prime time season are *The Kennedys of Massachusetts, Texas, A Death in California, North and South* and *Hollywood Wives*.

Computer talk

Mark J. Estren, former executive producer of *The Nightly Business Report*, on WPBT(TV) Miami, is now vice president of programming and production for Squarecom Inc., a television production company that opened its offices in New York last week. The company, funded by J.H. Whitney & Co., a New York-based venture capital firm, has plans for a syndicated series for midseason and has a commitment in hand for a series on the USA Network beginning next October. Both series will be about personal computers (PC's) and the "electronic life style." Estren, who will be staffing the company dur-

ing the next month, has already hired Harriet Meth, formerly assistant director for broadcasting at WCBS-TV New York, as senior producer for both projects. Estren said, "I think computers are entertaining and I want to do programming about them that's entertaining." He characterized current shows on the subject as "relatively dull instructional programming," which he said scares people away. In addition to the series, future projects might include the production of short vignettes about PC's to be aired on local news programs. President of Squarecom is Janet Norman, formerly an executive with Singer Co. and International Paper Co.

Money for ads

According to the Public Broadcasting Service's new president, Bruce Christensen, "The simple answer to why people aren't watching [public television] is because they don't know about the programs." Christensen made his remarks to PBS public information directors at a conference in Las Vegas. In line with that thinking, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's board of directors has passed a resolution to give \$700,000 to the public television Tune-In Advertising Project, \$200,000 for the same in public radio and \$60,000 for a research project on potential public broadcasting audiences.

Commemorative cooperation

Four hundred years ago the first Englishmen arrived in the New World. To commemorate that event, WRAL-TV Raleigh, N.C., and the Center for Public Television, a North Carolina noncommercial network, will broadcast *On the Shores of Roanoke Island* on Friday, July 13. The program, airing live from Manteo, N.C., will show television viewers in North Carolina and Southwest England, a celebration featuring Princess Anne of Great Britain, the British ambassador, North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt and the U.S. Marine Corps band, among others.

The program will be broadcast by Television Southwest, the only local television station in Southwest England. The event involves an international exchange of reporters between WRAL-TV and TSW. The U.S. Postal System will issue a commemorative stamp. And in addition to the WRAL-TV-CPT broadcast, *PM Magazine* will record a segment at Manteo Friday at 7:30 p.m.

Center sold. ABC Inc. has sold its ABC Entertainment Center in Los Angeles to Pacific Financial Group, a Beverly Hills, Calif.-based real estate investment company. No price was given for the office complex, theaters and restaurants but reliable sources place it between \$40 million and \$50 million. The transaction was a sale-leaseback, meaning that the company's West Coast headquarters will remain at Entertainment Center and that, for accounting purposes, proceeds of the sale will be divided over the life of the lease. ABC also announced it had increased its line of credit with a consortium of banks from \$150 million to \$300 million. The funds can be used for general corporate purposes, including the \$202-million acquisition of ESPN from Texaco Inc. ("Cablecastings," June 25).