

Satellite Footprints

Fine, no time. Captain Midnight will stay out of jail. John R. MacDougall, who confessed to disrupting Home Box Office's satellite feed twice last April, was fined \$5,000 and given a year's probation at his sentencing last Tuesday (Aug. 26). The sentence was part of a plea bargain by MacDougall when he pleaded guilty to violating a federal anti-interference law after the FCC caught up with him last month (BROADCASTING, July 28).

Using a commercial uplink of the Central Florida Teleport in Ocala, Fla., where he worked part time as a technician, MacDougall overpowered the HBO signal on a Galaxy I transponder and replaced the HBO programming briefly with color bars on April 20 and with color bars and a character generator message on April 27. The message was a protest of HBO's scrambling of its satellite feeds and its charging backyard dish owners to subscribe to its services.

In a statement released at the time of his arraignment, MacDougall said the scrambling had crippled his two-and-a-half-year-old home dish business. "I have been watching the great American dream slip from my grasp," he said. "In retrospect, I realize the means I used may not have been the best. I regret what I did, but I hope it may have served to focus public attention on a problem that affects millions of Americans."

Ready cash. Comsat Corp. has agreed to sell its headquarters building at Washington's L'Enfant Plaza to an unidentified real estate syndicator, but the satellite communications company will not be going anywhere. The purchase agreement provides for Comsat to lease back and manage the 270,000-square-foot building for the next 10 years. The closing is expected to occur during the fourth quarter.

Although Comsat would not disclose the price, it said it would realize an after-tax gain of approximately \$32 million from the sale, about \$6 million of which is expected to be reported in the fourth quarter of 1986. The balance—\$26 million—will be reported in approximately equal amounts over the next 10 years.

With the closing of the deal, Comsat will have to start paying rent. According to Comsat spokesman Richard McGraw, the payments will amount to \$5.7 million a year.

Comsat decided to enter into the lease-back arrangement, McGraw said, because the property represented a "substantial asset that wasn't generating any return for the shareholders." Comsat plans to invest the proceeds in the expansion of one of its existing businesses or in the acquisition of a new one, he said. If Comsat decides to buy a business, he said, it will be in the telecommunications field. One purchase Comsat is reportedly considering is that of MCI/SBS IV from MCI Communications Inc.

The distributor's distributor. Despite increased competition, Wold Communications has landed contracts to distribute 21 additional syndicated TV series via satellite, increasing to 79 the number of series that will make up the so-called Wold Satellite Television Network for the fall season.

Counting the new shows, Wold will transmit an average of 146 hours of programming a week or nearly 21 hours a day. Most of the transmission will be over Wold's transponder on Telstar 301.

The new series (with date of first transmission): *Nightlife* with David Brenner (Sept. 8), *The Oprah Winfrey Show* (Sept. 1), *True Confessions*, (Sept. 1) and *Rock 'n' Roll TV News* (Sept. 12), all from King World; *Dream Girls* (Sept. 9), *9 to 5* (Sept. 8) and *\$100,000 Pyramid* (Sept. 8), all from Fox Television; *Hollywood Squares* (Sept. 7) from Orion TV Syndication in association with Hearst Broadcasting; *Card Sharks* (Aug. 31) from TV Program Source; *New Dating Game* (Sept. 8) from Chuck Barris; *Check it Out* (Sept. 5) from D.L. Taffner; *Crook and Chase* (Aug. 24) from Jim Owens Productions; *Superior Court* (Sept. 8) and *Silverhawks* (Sept. 1), both from Lorimar-Telepictures; a half-hour strip and weekly hour of Jimmy Swaggart from Jimmy Swaggart Ministries (Aug. 11); *Money Pro-News* (Sept. 1) from Crowley Financial Network; *What a Country* (Sept. 24) from Viacom; *You Write the Songs* from TPE; *America's Top 10* (Sept. 21) from All American TV, and *Sports Lifestyles* (Sept. 4) from GCP.

They all count. Given the poor performance of U.S. launch vehicles over the past year, the satellite communications industry will take a closer than usual interest in the launch of a weather-research satellite by the U.S. Air Force from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, now set for Sept. 7.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration satellite will be launched aboard a General Dynamics Atlas-E rocket, a cousin of the Atlas Centaur rocket that General Dynamics is making available for the launch of commercial communications satellites. A successful launch would give satellite carriers more confidence in the Atlas Centaur.

A spokesman for General Dynamics said the Atlas Centaur, which can carry a payload of up to 5,200 pounds, has a 96% success rate. It last failed in 1984 with an Intelsat V satellite on board, he said, but successfully carried three Intelsat V's into orbit last year.

Atlas Centaur launches resume next November with the launch of a satellite for the Department of Defense, the spokesman said. Two Atlas Centaurs are left, both slated to carry DOD payloads, he said. Another Atlas Centaur will not be built until another customer—commercial or government—comes in the door with a check, he said.

James D. Ireland, III & Ivan E. Braiker

acting on behalf of the subsidiaries of

OLYMPIC BROADCASTING CORP.

have acquired radio stations

**KYAK/KGOT-FM, Anchorage, AK
KIAK/KQRZ-FM, Fairbanks, AK**

from

BINGHAM BROADCASTING, INC.

Robert R. Bingham, President

for in excess of

\$11,000,000

including certain deferred contingent payments.

Our Associate **Elliot B. Evers** initiated the transaction and assisted in the negotiations.



CHAPMAN ASSOCIATES®

nationwide media brokers

Elliot B. Evers

568 Howard Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 495-3516