

half-hour market. Worldvision recently started selling *You Again* which runs on NBC, and *Throb*, a first-run syndicated show. Cohen said both have been cleared in Italy on Globo Telemontecarlo, and in France on Antennae 2. However successful half-hours become overseas, Cohen said that international buyers are still looking for "non-topical, exciting" hour-long series.

DEG's Rich said that he will give international buyers the same testing opportunity now being afforded domestic buyers of *Honey-moon Hotel* starring Isabel Sanford. In both cases buyers will get to test a week of the show in November. □

Rivers TV show debuts in Boston on radio

Without a TV affiliate in city, Fox honors request of WMRE(AM) to broadcast syndicated show

Joan Rivers's new talk show debuted last Thursday (Oct. 9) on 99 television affiliates and one radio affiliate—WMRE(AM) Boston. The station lobbied Fox Broadcasting Co. President Jamie Kellner aggressively in its pursuit of the Boston rights to the Rivers show. That opportunity emerged after FBC failed to get a commitment from CBN's WXNE-TV Boston to carry the program, even though Fox has a pending application at the FCC to purchase that outlet. Word last week was that CBN was refusing to carry the broadcast as long it had control of the station because the Rivers program shows a "lack of good taste," as one source put it.

The *Boston Herald* ran a story last Monday (Oct. 6) reporting that the Rivers show would not be seen in Boston until Fox had closed on its deal to buy WXNE-TV, expected to occur in the next two months. According to Jack Roberts, program director at WMRE, morning personality Dana Hersey came up with the idea to persuade FBC to let the station carry an audio feed of the Rivers pro-

gram to Boston listeners. Hersey didn't waste any time either. On the air early Tuesday morning he began by drumming up listener support demanding that the Rivers show be made available to Boston and then put in a call to Kellner at his home in Los Angeles at about 5 a.m. Pacific time.

Kellner was "a little upset" at the early timing of the call, said Roberts, and requested that future calls not be placed to his home before 9 a.m. his time. He also let Hersey and his on-air sidekick, Hillary Stevens, know that he thought: "You guys in Boston are whacked out. You can't put a TV show on the radio." A Fox spokesman said that the early call "blew him away" at first, but that after Kellner thought about it, the idea didn't seem so implausible—at least until the deal to buy WXNE-TV goes through. With WMRE carrying the show, Rivers will have coverage in every top-30 market with the exception of Milwaukee (28th Arbitron and 29th Nielsen market). Milwaukee is the only other market where FBC would consider a radio affiliation until a television outlet is lined up, a spokesman said. A last-minute offer from another Boston television station (WQTV(TV)) came in for the Rivers show, but Fox declined since it would eventually own a station in the market.

WMRE got the word last Wednesday that it could carry Rivers for the program's first several weeks on the air. Roberts said Rivers did a call-in interview on the station that same day (Oct. 8) to promote her launch in Boston. WMRE switched from a big band to a talk format four weeks ago and Roberts said he was excited at the prospect of integrating Rivers's famous "Can we talk?" phrase into its promotional campaign.

WMRE received the feed via microwave from nearby Fox affiliate WNAC-TV Providence (ch. 64, and formerly WSTG(TV)) for week one but switched to phone lines this week. WMRE is carrying the program live at 11 p.m. Monday through Friday. There was one union problem—commercials designed for television distribution may not be broadcast on radio stations. In the case of all but two advertisers, the station will block out the TV spots and sell its own spots locally. Those two, Gillette and Polaroid, have

agreed to feed the station separate radio spots that will air simultaneously on WMRE as the televised spots go out to affiliates nationwide. □

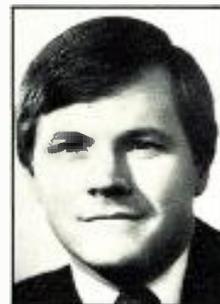
Blair Entertainment increases production

Blair Entertainment will take four new series for fall 1987 and a new film package to NATPE this year. The move by the distribution arm of John Blair & Co. comes with the reported assurance from its new parent, Reliance Capital Corp., that it wants the company to continue to grow under its present management team of Richard C. Coveny, president, and Guy Mazzeo, executive vice president. Both Coveny and Mazzeo say they have been assured by Blair that they would have the first opportunity to buy the company if Reliance were to sell it.

Along with the previously announced *Strictly Confidential* (BROADCASTING, Aug. 11), a half-hour reenactment of a group therapy session with Dr. Susan Ford moderating. Blair will have a game show strip. *Sweet-*



Mazzeo



Coveny

hearts, produced by Richard Kline. Kline also produced *Strike It Rich* and *Break the Bank* for Blair. *Sweethearts* is described as a celebrity quiz show with couples as contestants. A pilot will be shot in November.

Blair will enter the weekly half-hour market with a demographic alternative to a sitcom that will be skewed to teen-agers. *Fan Club* will feature live celebrity interviews using a host (yet to be named) and audience members. There will also be phone-in opportunities. *Fan Club* is designed for early

Syndication Marketplace

LBS Communications will distribute the first-run weekly, *American Bandstand*, currently on ABC, on a barter basis beginning in the fall 1987. There will be 46 original *American Bandstand* episodes in the first year of its syndicated run. The association on AB is one of number of joint ventures between the two companies. As part of their initial deal, LBS will also jointly develop first-run sitcoms. The first project, for fall 1987, will have the working title *Third Time Lucky*. LBS will also distribute a weekly one-hour talk show produced by Dick Clark Productions with a host that will be announced shortly. LBS will also distribute six Dick Clark Productions off-network specials, including "Celebrities, Where Are They Now?" and will either syndicate or sell to cable a weekly two-hour series, *Dick Clark Presents*, beginning in the fall 1987.

Tribune Entertainment has cleared *American Vice: The Doping of a Nation*, the first of four specials hosted by Geraldo Rivera, on 124 stations covering 85% of the country. Produced at WGN-TV Chicago, the two-hour program will consist of taped segments as well as shots from live surveillance cameras. It will air at 8-10 p.m. simultaneously across the country on Dec. 2. Barter distribution of the show gives stations and Tribune 12 minutes of advertising time each.

Clearances include the Tribune stations as well as WTAJ-TV Philadelphia, WLVI-TV Boston, WDCA-TV Washington, KHSTV(TV) Houston, WCIX(TV) Miami and WBFF(TV) Baltimore.

Jerry Free Productions has cleared the sixth annual *Battle of the Bands* competition, being televised for the first time, on 150 stations. Hosted by Sammy Davis Jr. and Louise Mandrell, the competition features the winners of regional competitions in eight cities with more than 2,000 bands in competition. Stations will air the 90-minute special between Nov. 20 and Jan. 4. Barter distribution gives stations 12 minutes and Jerry Free nine. Among the stations that have cleared the program are WNYW-TV New York, WPWR-TV Aurora, Ill. (Chicago), WXNE-TV Boston, WFTY(TV) Washington, WXYZ-TV Detroit, and KTXA(TV) Dallas.

Scott Entertainment will offer a half-hour talk show strip for fall 1987, hosted by June Cain Miller, who currently hosts a show on KBOC-TV Anaheim, Calif. Scott Sobel, president of the Long Island, N.Y.-based company said the show will be a female version of *Donatella*, with Miller's Joan Rivers-style of humor. The show will be produced in Hollywood by Miller's Hurray for Hollywood Productions. Initial sales will be for 13 weeks on a cash basis.