

er readers" and "fewer writers in the field. What we need out there are intelligent men and women with a gift for the ad-lib, to provide context for what unfolds before him, do the color and the play-by-play without necessarily hours of research beforehand. People who can rival Edward R. Murrow from London, and maybe even do him one better." The industry needs educated reporters with "a broad range of reporting experience," so they know what questions to ask, she said, adding that "we're all going to have to learn to use these things and it's going to be a bumpy ride, like it is every time technology changes. But it's a wonderful new piece of equipment."

While changes in the television industry are "tumultuous," Williams said, the end result "is more news, not less, from more

sources, not fewer. And that is very much in the public interest." And although the television news industry is changing, "it doesn't mean that part of it is dying." She said that "44 million Americans each evening rely on the awesome news organizations of ABC, NBC and CBS. The fact that no single effort is a runaway, that they share roughly equal slices of the pie, means that the American audience is giving them equal blessing. That's a compliment. It benefits no one to see them fail. Certainly not us," she said.

February rise

ESPN's average prime time rating for February increased 20% over the same month last year, according to ESPN. Its February 1987 prime time rating average was 1.8, com-

pared to 1.5 in 1986. The network's 24-hour average rating also increased—from 0.6 in 1986 to 0.7 in February of this year, ESPN said. In other news, ESPN hired Thom McKinney & Associates, a management, sales and cable TV advertising consulting firm, to assist ESPN's affiliates in selling National Football League local advertising availabilities, said Roger Werner, ESPN executive vice president. ESPN will allocate 40% of its NFL advertising inventory to cable affiliates for local sale, or at least 20 units per game.

And the winner was...

HBO's documentary, *Down and Out in America*, narrated and directed by actress Lee Grant, was the first original pay cable program to receive an Academy Award, according to HBO. The hour-long production was a co-winner with *Artie Shaw: Time Is All You Got* in the Best Achievement in Documentary Features category at the 59th annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles. *Down and Out*, which also received a 1986 National Cable Television Association ACE Award for best documentary special and a certificate of merit at the Chicago International Film Festival, will be cablecast again on the pay cable service in June. The documentary was produced by Joseph Feury.

HBO said that to qualify for an Academy Award nomination, a production must either win the top prize at an internationally recognized film festival or receive a one-week theatrical exhibition in Los Angeles county. *Down and Out* had its theatrical premiere in October 1986 at the Laemmle Theater in Los Angeles. Last year, another HBO documentary, *Soldier in Hiding*, received an Oscar nomination.

In other HBO news, the pay service has reached an exclusive agreement with ITC Entertainment Inc., to provide the latter with exclusive domestic television distribution rights to eight theatrical films owned by HBO. The "multimillion-dollar pact," according to Arthur Kananack, president of ITC, includes "Sweet Dreams," with Jessica Lange and Ed Harris, and "Volunteers," with Tom Hanks and John Candy. Also included in the package are "Flashpoint," "Heaven Help Us," "The Hitcher," "Head Office," "Odd Jobs" and the yet-to-be released "The Trouble with Spies," with Donald Sutherland and Ruth Gordon.

PPV plans

Request Television said last week that Centel Cable Television will roll out a pay-per-view service to Centel's 46,000 Michigan addressable subscribers by the middle of 1988. The first phase of roll-out will be completed by the fourth quarter of this year, involving four systems in the northwestern part of state, Request said. By June 1988 five more systems will be added. All Centel systems will use an Automatic Number Identification (ANI) order-entry system, utilizing a single seven-digit number per event for the entire state, Request said, adding that Centel plans to offer Request to all of its more than 85,000 basic subscribers in Michigan within five years, as additional systems become addressable. Centel will also offer Request to its 20,000 addressable subscribers in Aurora, Ill., by next summer, Request said.

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