



## TNT takes its first step

**New cable service to debut with 'Gone with the Wind' and subscriber count estimated at 17 million**

Butterfly McQueen may know "nothin' 'bout birthin' babies," but Ted Turner knows more than a little about birthin' cable networks. Turner Network Television, which he and his partners hope will be the next leap in the development of cable programming services, will premiere tonight (Oct. 3) at 8 p.m. (technically 7:55) with the first part of "Gone With the Wind." Over the next four years, the movie-dominated service will be supplemented by original programs that Turner believes will rival any broadcast network.

Turner himself will introduce the network tonight. "Our promise to you," Turner plans to say, "is to provide viewing choices aimed at the highest common denominator. Programming that will inform, educate, inspire, enlighten and entertain." Original programs on the network, beginning at the rate of one

per month, will be increased to 200 per year in four years.

At a New York Academy of Television Arts and Sciences luncheon on Wednesday, Sept. 28, Gerald Hogan, president of Turner Entertainment Networks, announced that TNT would launch with 17 million homes, far exceeding the largest previous cable network launch, which he said was VH-1 at 2.5 million homes.

Hogan said TNT will be "the first cable network to directly challenge the three broadcast networks." And Hogan believes TNT will be a reason for the nearly 30 million homes that have access to cable but do not subscribe to do so. "Our purpose is to create competition [with the three networks] in noncable households," he said. TNT's original programming will be "a quality level equal to and hopefully significantly better than what's on the broadcast networks."

The four minutes of local advertising that cable operators will be able to sell, Hogan said, will allow cable operators to go "toe

toe with television and radio sales operations in their markets."

Hogan reviewed TNT's original production schedule and announced one new addition, a program on the life of Ulysses S. Grant, starring Richard Dreyfuss. The higher degree of creative freedom TNT allows its stars and production companies, said Hogan, has helped draw the talent, such as Charlton Heston, Faye Dunaway, Dreyfuss and Martin Sheen and his son, Emilio Estevez, who traditionally have not done television productions.

Turner has also persuaded Ted Geisel, author of the Dr. Seuss series of children's books, to allow the 1984 "Butter Battle Book" to be produced for TNT, the first time since the mid-1970's that Geisel has allowed his work to be animated for television.

Hogan said that between 15 and 20 of television's top 25 advertisers have bought time on TNT; he singled out Peugeot, Volvo and Oldsmobile for their "sizable commitment."