Community Service. Money in America: The Business of Banking, a new three-part public television consumer education series, scheduled to air at 10 p.m. NYT, Jan. 3, 10 and 17, found its corporate underwriting in a highly extraordinary manner. Following 10 years, prosecution of a consumer class-action suit against Wells Fargo for alleged excessive bounced check processing charges, a 1987 settlement provided that the bank set aside $1 million for public education, $750,000 of that for public TV.

Producer Beverly Ornstein’s proposal won a re-launch of CBNA as part of a settlement of a class-action suit, and series host Sylvia Chase begins each segment with an explanation noting that the power of the consumers filing the original suit made the program possible.

Signings. Pamela Petter has signed an exclusive development deal with Columbia Pictures Television to create and produce television series. Petter wrote and developed two specials for NBC last year, The Incredible Ida Early and Annie Oakley, as well as the pilot episode of Shelly Duval’s Tall Tales. Also signing with Columbia on an exclusive basis to create, write and produce half-hour comedy series is Katherine Green and Stephen Neigher. Green's writing credits include Women in Prison, Married...With Children, The Facts of Life, Taxi, Cheers and Newhart. In his 10-year career, Neigher has written for Barney Miller, The Jefferrsons and The Facts of Life. He has also been writer-producer on Sweet Surrender and for the Showtime series Brothers.

Fries Entertainment has signed writer-producers Jay Moriarty and Mike Milligan to an exclusive contract to develop made-for-TV pilots and hour-long and half-hour comedies. Moriarty and Milligan for six years acted as writers, story editors, producers and executive producers of The Jeffersons. Other writing credits include Good Times, Chico and the Man, Maude and All in the Family. Fries has also signed producer Malcolm Stuart to an exclusive contract to produce series, mini-series and made-for's through his Stuart Phoenix Productions. Stuart’s executive producer credits include Ghost of a Chance, The Deliberate Stranger, Dallas: The Early Years and Blood and Orchids.

Reeves Entertainment Group has entered into an agreement with drive-in movie critic and humorist Joe Bob Briggs to develop a prime time comedy series. Briggs, author of the nationally syndicated column “Joe Bob Goes to the Drive-In,” is also the host of The Movie Channel’s Drive-In Theatre.

Comedian Jay Leno has signed an exclusive multi-year contract with NBC-TV, which includes an extension of his guest-hosting duties on The Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson through the 1989-90 season. In addition to the Tonight Show, Leno has been the host of two comedy specials on NBC and has appeared on Late Night with David Letterman, Saturday Night Live and Friday Night Videos.

Talk talk. Morton Downey Jr., Maury Povich, Sally Jesse Raphael and Geraldo Rivera will participate in a panel discussion called ‘TV With A Bite: New Directions in Talk and Magazine Shows,” to be held at the NATPE International conference in Houston, on Jan. 25, 1989, at 8:30 a.m. at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Also, comedians David Brenner and Bronson Pinchot (Perfect Strangers) have been announced as entertainment for the annual Iris Awards. Brenner will host and Pinchot will be one of the key award presenters for the ceremony to be held on Friday, Jan. 27.

CBN on ratings rebound

Program Notes

Cos and with Aquino before and after she took office. WNYC-TV New York’s two-year-old program, The Kwitny Report with Jonathan Kwitny, will make its national debut Jan. 8 at 5 p.m., where it will air weekly through July 30. Kwitny, a longtime Wall Street Journal reporter, each week will present mini-documentaries.