

ing the same market-by-market strategy employed to build the success of *Wheel and Jeopardy!*, and the show is designed to have the flexibility to play in a variety of dayparts. *Monopoly* will be hosted by Peter Tomarken, formerly host of CBS's *Press Your Luck*. No information was available at press time regarding the show's actual format.

*Challengers*, *Trump* and *Monopoly* are the "big three" going into NATPE, accord-

ing to Kurlander (an opinion offered prior to *Joker*'s announced "go" status), with the best chances for those much sought-after access slots. "Most game shows will have early fringe, daytime and access," he said. "Nobody's going to get universally in access. I think the big three probably will see most access positions."

Among the shows that Kurlander describes as "very, very iffy" are *Name That Tune*, from Orion Television Enter-

tainment, *Quiz Kids* from Barris Industries and Worldvision's *Scruples*, which "has game show elements," Kurlander said, despite Worldvision's insistence that the program does not fit into the game show category.

"Perhaps more game shows than any other genre will get on the air as strips for next year," Bjork said, "but that's dictated by available time periods and economics." -RG

## NBC makes 'Grand' commitment to Carsey-Werner

Show will air at 9:30 p.m., Thursdays; 'Dear John,' moving to Wednesday, is renewed for full 1990-91 season

NBC confirmed last week that it would add a third situation comedy from producers Marcy Carsey and Tom Werner to its schedule effective Thursday Jan. 18. The comedy, about three oddball families in a fictional Pennsylvania town, is called *Grand*, with Pamela Reed (*Tanner '88*) and Michael McKean (*Laverne & Shirley*). The show will start off in the coveted 9:30 p.m. position between the well-established *Cheers* and *L.A. Law*.

The program will be the fourth comedy on the network airwaves for Carsey-Werner Productions, putting the company back in the top-15 producers of network prime time programs, accounting for two hours a week. In addition to *Cosby* and *A Different World* on NBC, the company also produces *Roseanne* for ABC.

NBC Entertainment President Brandon Tartikoff said last week that the network is currently in negotiation with Bill Cosby and Carsey-Werner to do a seventh year of *Cosby*, starting next fall.

During a teleconference he held last week with affiliates and reporters, Tartikoff said that *Dear John*, which has been in the Thursday 9:30 p.m. time period, would move to Wednesdays at 9:30 p.m., currently occupied by *My Two Dads*. Tartikoff also said that *Dear John* has been renewed for the full 1990-91 season, the first NBC show to be officially picked up for next fall.

*Dads* will move back to a weekend time period, where it started the season, in January, said Tartikoff. "We still think it's an 8 p.m. or 8:30 p.m. show," he said. The show has ranked second or third since moving to Wednesdays almost two months ago, although NBC has consistently won the night since then.

On Fridays, which he described as a "problem night" for the network, Tartikoff announced that freshman program *Man-cuso*, *FBI*, currently in second place in its 10 p.m. time period, has been picked up for the full season. The network has also picked up the Friday leadoff show *Baywatch* for the full season. A new 9 p.m. show, *True Blue*, premiered there just three weeks ago.

Meanwhile, another show in development, *Nasty Boys*, based on the telefilm from last season, based on an elite law enforcement team, "will come into play on Fridays," said Tartikoff. Another backup

for Fridays continues to be *Hardball*, now on hiatus for some "creative retooling," that will focus the show with more gripping storylines and action sequences than when it first ran on the schedule. Tartikoff said the show, with six more episodes in the works, would get another shot in early March.

For Sunday nights, where NBC is also struggling, two new sitcoms are in development, including a Robert Mitchum vehicle called *Regular Joe*, from Grosso Jacobson Productions, in association with NBC Productions. In his first regular series role, Mitchum will play surrogate father to a group of children. Tartikoff said it will be launched probably in March in a two-hour movie.

Also in March, a new Nell Carter comedy will get a try. The show is from Columbia Pictures Television.

Other shows that will get a shot before the setting of the new schedule next May include:

■ *Shannon's Deal*, based on the NBC Productions telefilm from last year, and starring Jamie Sheridan, which began production last week in Philadelphia.

■ *Carol & Company*, a Carol Burnett comedy (she'll play a different character each week) from Walt Disney.

■ *FM*, from MTM, starring Robert Hayes, about life at a small California radio station.

## Blair rallies to meet the competition

In competitive world of syndication, Blair expands its base from production into barter sales and foreign co-ventures

In a business that is becoming more crowded every year with new programs and proposed new shows, Blair Entertainment has demonstrated there is more than one way to compete in syndication.

A deal the company made last week with Republic Pictures underscores its year-long effort to expand beyond the mainstream business of clearing strip or weekly shows on television stations.

Last week, Blair Entertainment closed an arrangement to sell Republic's entire inventory of barter advertising for sale in several movie packages, quarterly specials and possibly one or more series Republic may package for next season's syndication market.

■ *Wings*, a sitcom about two brothers running a small commercial airline, from Paramount.

■ *The Seinfeld Chronicles*, from Castle Rock, based on an NBC comedy special from last season.

■ *Down Home*, a comedy from Paramount, starring Judith Ivey.

In other news, Tartikoff said that a mini-series from Michael Mann, entitled *Drug Wars: The Camerena Story*, will have a tie-in with NBC News. The mini-series, a fact-based saga about events surrounding the kidnapping and murder of a federal drug enforcement agent, will air Jan. 7-9. On Jan. 7, immediately following the first installment, NBC News will do an update on the battle against drugs, from 10:45 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Tartikoff also denied a report that NBC will get out of the game show business. While game shows are a tougher sell these days to advertisers, said Tartikoff, the network has three game show pilots in development that are candidates to join the daytime schedule in the first quarter. Also in development are some talk/information projects, including one with Marsha Warfield.

Additionally, following the strong performance of a *Saturday Night Live* prime time special last September, the network has decided to make a annual event of the program. -SM

According to sources familiar with the deal, it may represent between \$15 million and \$20 million in advertising sales over the next year. A year ago, Blair Entertainment's barter sales revenue, coming solely from the six-year-old syndication show, *Divorce Court*, totaled between \$3 million and \$4 million.

Blair has expanded into other areas as well, including foreign co-ventures, such as a series of telefilms based on Frederick Forsyth suspense novels, the first of which aired on USA Network last week. The company has also developed a new business combining barter advertising, vignettes and 900 number telephone technology.

In addition, the company has just agreed to distribute programs being developed by Action Media and Robert Halmi for the 1990 syndication season.

Over the past year, the company, under the guidance of Alan Berkowitz, has under-