

during HA!'s first year, increasing to 50% in year three. HA!'s on-air I.D. promotion package is \$5 million, while its programing budget has been reported to be in the \$45-million range.

HA!'s Monday-Friday programing schedule for April looks like this: The week will begin with *The Ha! Afternoon Show*, at 4-5:30 a.m. This block will include former network series whose quick demise HA! considers premature, said Mike Klinghoffer, vice president, programing and production, HA!. Among these shows are *The Associates*, *Working Stiffs* and *Occasional Wife*. According to Deborah Beece, senior vice president, programing, HA!, the "afternoon" block was put together primarily by Fred Silverman, HA! consultant and former programer for ABC, CBS and NBC.

At 6-8 a.m., HA! will run four acquired

half-hour series, *Car 54, Where Are You?*, *Sergeant Bilko*, *McHale's Navy* and *CPO Sharkey*. At 8 a.m., TV's *Bloopers and Practical Jokes* will have its first off-network run, followed at 8:30 by *Candid Camera*.

*The One and Only's*, at 9-10 a.m., will feature clips from vintage sketch comedy programs such as *Your Show of Shows* and Red Skelton's shows, introduced by contemporary comedians. *The Best of Groucho* will run at 10 a.m., followed by the half hour *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, a new improv program from Britain.

SCTV, at 11 a.m., will be followed at 11:30 by *Saturday Night Live*, followed by *Love, American Style*; *That Girl*; *Rhoda*; *Phyllis*; *The Betty White Show*, and *The Lucy Show*. Beginning at 4 p.m., with Silverman's *Afternoon* show, the rest of HA!'s

day is a mix of the above programs.

April's four weekends will feature 48-hour marathons, running from Friday at midnight to Sunday at midnight. Weekend one will feature *Saturday Night Live—The Eddie Murphy Years*; weekend two, *The Lucy Show*; weekend three, *Candid Camera*, and weekend four, *Saturday Night Live—The Billy Crystal Years*.

In May, HA!'s weekday schedule will be augmented by the addition of *Open Audition*, in which nonprofessionals can win appearances on HA!, and *Clash*, a game show in which teams holding diametrically opposed viewpoints compete (i.e., smokers vs. nonsmokers, firewalkers vs. podiatrists). Weekends in May will see a combination of HA!'s regular schedule, movies (including the Hope-Crosby "Road" pictures), and new programs. —RG

## The Comedy Channel gets new style

**HBO CEO Michael Fuchs says basic cable service came out 'too early'; TCC will have original programing, including 'interactivity' with viewer**

The Comedy Channel, HBO's struggling, three-and-a-half-month-old basic cable service, is undergoing changes in style and content which will eventually result in its complete overhaul. "This channel, in a year or two, will be 100% different from what it is now," said Michael Fuchs, chairman and chief executive officer, HBO.

Speaking in New York to a gathering of the trade press, the programing executive admitted that "we did come out too early for what we had," with "minimal circulation," but decided to launch for competitive reasons. (TCC currently has 6 million subscribers, according to Dick Behrs, president, TCC, with commitments for 15 million.)

"In the long run, The Comedy Channel has to exist on its own original programing," said Fuchs. "We're not going to get in the race and spend billions of dollars for old sitcoms," he said, in a thinly veiled reference to Viacom's forthcoming HA! comedy service, whose schedule will rely heavily on acquired programing (see page 40). "It's going to take us longer to shake this baby out," Fuchs said, adding: "There's no doubt about it. It will take longer than what we thought."

Starting a basic cable channel now is "like running through the worst Indian gauntlet you could ever imagine," said Fuchs. "Guys have razor blades on the edge of their elbows."

The Comedy Channel is not now being looked at as either long-form or short-form, Fuchs explained, although it "will be more short-form than a channel filled with existing programing." Fuchs and staff plan to fill TCC with "personalities and shows, and what we call real-time, whether live or on tape, where part of the channel [includes] interactivity with the viewer.

"This channel is not meant to have you rolling on the floor of your living room 24 hours a day," said Fuchs. "If we could do that, we would." Instead, TCC will contin-

ually reflect "a comedy attitude," he said.

HBO is willing to discuss equity deals for TCC, Fuchs said. "We have had many conversations," he said, "and there are no operators that say they don't want equity. We've been talking all along [about it]." Fuchs also said he was not interested in tying HBO and/or Cinemax to TCC in attempts to improve carriage opportunities. "We're not tying anything to anything," he said. "[TCC] stands on its own. We're not in the business of discounting HBO or Cinemax."

According to Behrs, recent focus groups reached a "strong consensus" about different directions in which the service should move. At the end of these sessions, Behrs

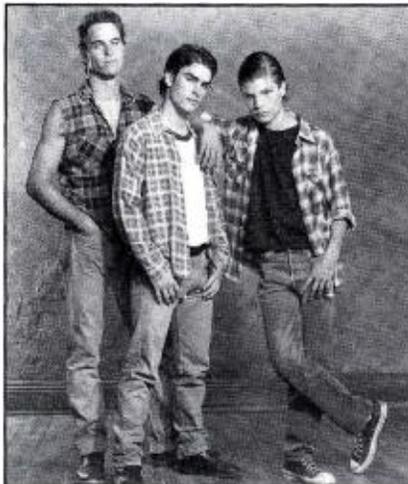
said, "we drew out the HA! concept and they absolutely dismissed it out of hand. They said: 'Why would we care about that? It's all over cable.'"

The Comedy Channel and HA! emanate from "very different concepts," Behrs said. "We have talked internally that really MTV is converting VH-1 into Nick-At-Nite and they're calling it HA!" Viacom is feeling "so competitive" because it does not want HBO in the basic cable business, Behrs said. Fuchs charged that HA! "has spent a lot of time giving one schedule to the press and one schedule to cable operators, and they've spent a lot of time announcing subscriber counts they're not going to get near." —RG

## Fox reworks weekend lineup

**'Ullman' moves to Saturday; 'Reporters' on hiatus; two news programs introduced**

Fox Broadcasting, looking to shore up its Saturday night 9-10 time period currently occupied by *The Reporters*, and to fill the



'The Outsiders'

void left by *It's Garry Shandling's Show* (which announced two weeks ago that it would cease production later this spring), is adding *The Outsiders* and *In Living Color* to its schedule. In making the additions, Fox is moving *Booker* and *The Tracey Ullman Show* to new time periods.

*The Outsiders*, an hour drama, is based on Francis Ford Coppola's theatrical release of the same name, with Coppola serving as executive producer on the project. That series will have a special, 90-minute premiere on Sunday, March 25, at 9:30-11, following *Married...With Children*, Fox's most highly watched show. *The Outsiders* debuts in its regular time period of 7-8 p.m. on Sundays beginning April 1. The series will replace *Booker*, which moves to the Sunday 10-11 time slot, also on April 1.

With *Booker* moving to Sunday at 10 p.m., the hour action/adventure replaces *The Tracey Ullman Show* and *It's Garry Shandling's Show*, which has its last broadcast on March 18.

*In Living Color*, "a contemporary sketch comedy," is produced by and stars Keenan Ivory Wayans. The series premieres in its regular time of 9-9:30 p.m. on the newly structured Saturday lineup. Joining *In Liv-*