

# Television

## PRODUCTION IS HALTED ON 'JANE'

*Show may go on in syndication and cable*

By Steve McClellan

**D**espite some impressive ratings in the show's target audience, production on *Jane*, the saucy and provocative talk show targeted to teens and young women, was halted a week ago with Twentieth Television's (Fox) decision not to go forward with the project. However, the show may go on, in syndication or cable, or both, according to Pat Mastrandrea, group publisher and director of broadcast services for Lang Communications.

Lang is publisher of *Sassy* magazine, whose editor, Jane Pratt, hosted *Jane*. The show was co-developed by Fox, under the direction of Garth Ancier and Lang, represented principally by Mastrandrea, former vice president of sales at Fox Broadcasting Co., who for a time also held key posts at other News Corp. companies.

Initially, Fox had hoped to launch the show at its flagship station WYNW(TV) New York, then roll the show out to other Fox-owned stations and into syndication. But after 11 weeks in production and roughly \$3 million in development and production costs, Twentieth Television pulled the plug, after deciding the show was too expensive to make a return on the investment.

From its debut in mid-March on WNYW, the show strived for a controversial edge, and that raised concern among advertisers. With subject matter such as women and AIDS, and "X-rated ways to work your way through college," the program was a "very tough sell," according to one station source.

## SYNDICATION UPDATE

■ All American Communications will begin production of a second season of first-run action-adventure *Baywatch*, with 120 markets and 85% of the U.S. renewed for year two. Production will resume July 6 with a two-hour season-opening special. All American has also signed Robert Conrad to host the live two-hour special *The Kennedy Assassinations: Coincidence or Conspiracy*, to be broadcast nationally July 7.

■ DSL Productions has signed Christopher Reeve to host *Hollywood F/X Masters*, a fall 1993 weekly reality series on film special effects. A domestic distributor has yet to be signed. Reeve will also host the second season of *Hollywood Stuntmakers*, a weekly series on The Discovery Channel.

■ Krypton International Corp. inaugurated its *All Night at the Movies* on June 8 as a satellite-fed syndicated overnight movie programming service. The service had been in development and tested for the last year on Krypton-owned WABM-TV Birmingham, Ala.; WNFT-TV Jacksonville, Fla., and WTVX-TV West Palm Beach, Fla.

■ Barruch Entertainment's eight-

part miniseries, *Shark Terror*, has been cleared in 102 markets (75% coverage), with major market deals concluded with WWOR-TV New York, KCAL-TV Los Angeles, WFXT(TV) Boston, WXON(TV) Detroit, WOIO(TV) Cleveland, WFTS-TV Tampa and KITN(TV). Stacy Keach is host of the summer specials, which Barruch is distributing for producer Atlas Media Corp.

■ Turner Broadcasting System's weekly *News for Kids* has been sold in more than 150 markets (90% coverage) for a September 1992 syndication debut. Turner's CNN and TBS Productions are producing the half-hour, which will share a simultaneous cable window with Turner's WTBS(TV) Atlanta.

■ Litton Syndication and Engle Productions report that production has begun on the second 13 episodes of a new mid-season weekly, *ZooLife with Jack Hanna*. Currently cleared in 131 markets—40 of the top 50—representing 87% of the U.S., Litton has received most recent clearance deals with KPIX-TV San Francisco, WJLA-TV Washington, WEWS-TV Cleveland and KSTP-TV Minneapolis. —MF

Said Mastrandrea of Fox's move out of the show: "We regret the decision. We believe the show was very successful. It was up 30% in household share in the time period and number one among women 18-34 [and number two among women 12 to 24, behind *Saved by the Bell*]. Our plan is to move forward."

Mastrandrea declined to provide specifics, but sources with knowledge of the plans said Lang has discussed syndication opportunities with both Buena Vista Television and Viacom, among others. In addition, sources confirmed Lang and Lifetime are talking about a possible run on the cable network, which would not rule out a

syndication deal.

As to content, Mastrandrea said, "We had some concerns about the tabloid nature of the show." Lang and Fox, in agreement on that point, she said, were taking steps to tone it down in that regard.

There was also some debate last week as to whether *Jane* could continue in or close to its current format without Fox's blessing. According to Garth Ancier, who is under contract to Fox and who had been executive producer for the show up to the time production halted, Fox owns both the program's name and the show's concept.

"We are at a legal impasse right