

final decision because the show could have continued without him but that was never seriously considered. The producers and Paramount had always taken the stance that they didn't want the show to go out on a low note either in the ratings or creatively, and now the show will go out while it's still fun and creative."

Another source, however, put the decision at the feet of Danson, saying the details for a 12th season had already been agreed upon by Paramount and NBC and that "CBC was also on board."

The decision to discontinue the series, by whomever, means that all parties appear to lose. For Danson, the star of the show, the absence of another season means a loss of almost \$12

million. That is what the actor reportedly pulls in per season for his portrayal of bartender Sam Malone. For Paramount and CBC, NBC was paying more than \$2 million an episode in license fees for the series and each season's worth of episodes padded the volume of episodes being sold very successfully in syndication. By the end of this season the syndication package will total 271 episodes.

Perhaps the biggest loser, however, is NBC, which, regardless of the comings and goings of other shows on Thursday night, felt confident the night was theirs as long as *Cheers* could be found at 9 p.m. The show is one of the main reasons that *Wings*, as the lead-out show, has been as successful as it has, and is responsible for

providing a considerable audience to *L.A. Law*, although that show has dropped in ratings.

"We, along with millions of *Cheers* fans, celebrate what we feel is one of America's all-time great television comedies," says Warren Littlefield, president, NBC Entertainment. "While we regret that this will be their last season, we respect their decision and are grateful to the talented producers, writers and cast for giving us an unparalleled 11-year run."

The network may take some comfort in the knowledge that the show may be back in some form for the 1993-94 season. A source said a spin-off idea from the show is under consideration, but no decision has been made. ■

NEW WORLD CREATES NEW DIVISIONS

Action, family programming will be produced in different divisions, headed by Rick Ungar

By Steve Coe

New World Entertainment has formed two new divisions for the development and production of children's and family programming. The two new areas, New World Family FilmWorks and New World Action Adventure, will be overseen by Rick Ungar, president and chief operating officer. New World's Marvel Productions, who will serve as president and

chief executive officer of the two new divisions.

Ungar says the two new divisions will be differentiated by the type of programming each department produces. "New World Family Film Works will be softer programming for the entire family. And the action stuff we do will be done out of New World Action Animation." He cited Marvel Productions' *Biker Mice from Mars* as the type of action programming to be

produced out of the action animation division.

The first project from the action division will be *War of the Worlds*, an animated action series set to debut in fall 1994. Ungar says the project will almost certainly be sold in syndication.

New World is also developing an animated project with singer-composer Barry Manilow to be produced under the FilmWorks banner. ■

DISNEY EXPANDS INTO LONG FORM

By Steve Coe

Already the leading supplier of network comedies, Disney is expanding its long-form activities by signing a deal with ABC to produce at least five made-for-TV movies for the 1993-94 and 1994-95 seasons. The deal was announced last Tuesday by Dean Valentine, executive vice president, Walt Disney Television, who also said Disney will increase its made-for output for the other networks.

"The last two years have seen us emerge as the largest single supplier of half-hour comedies in the television industry; our goal now is to be the industry leader in long form, as well,"

says Valentine.

The first project in the ABC deal is *A Family Promise*, written by Anna Sandor, whose credits include last year's Emmy-winning *Miss Rose*

White. The project will be executive-produced by Janet Faust Krusi. Disney has also enlisted the services of Marian Rees Associates to produce one or more of the projects. ■

LYNN SIGNS DEAL WITH COLUMBIA

Director Jonathan Lynn, who most recently oversaw Eddie Murphy's theatrical "The Distinguished Gentleman," has signed an exclusive development deal with Columbia Pictures Television. Lynn currently has a series commitment with NBC but will be developing projects for all networks. The multi-year deal includes the development of comedies, dramas and miniseries. His first project, for NBC, is a half-hour comedy, and Columbia expects to pitch the project to network executives this week. If all goes well, the series would be ready for inclusion on NBC's fall schedule. Lynn also created and co-wrote the BBC series *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*. ■

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