

# SeaGull establishes beachhead

Joins DIC for new half-hour teen strip in fall '95

By David Tobenkin

**N**ewly launched production and syndication company SeaGull Entertainment has made a deal with DIC Entertainment to co-produce its first show, a half-hour sitcom strip created exclusively for the first-run syndication marketplace and targeted for fall 1995 launch.

*Beverly Hills Beach Club* is touted as a combination of the good-looking cast and beach setting of *Baywatch* and the teen relationship elements of *Beverly Hills, 90210* and *Saved by the Bell*. The show will feature upscale teens in oddball situations in and around a California beach club and is targeted to run in early fringe and prime access.

"We want to have the next major show, so we wanted a strip—and the only new strips working in syndica-

tion this season are off-network sitcom strips," says Paul Siegel, president of SGE. "So that's what we will show when we go out with our presentation, only it will be a fresh, new show." Sixty-five episodes will be offered by SGE under a barter arrangement whose terms had not been determined as of last week.

DIC Chief Executive Andy Heyward and Robby London, senior vice president of creative affairs at DIC, will serve as executive producers on the show.

SeaGull was formed by brothers Henry and Paul Siegel after they were ousted from top positions at All American Television following parent company All American Communications' acquisition of the assets and management team of international distributor Freemantle International last

July. The Siegels and DIC collaborated on this year's new live-action kids strip, *Superhuman Samurai Syber-Squad*, which has debuted to middling ratings among new kids strips.

London says that strong writing will be a key to *Beach Club*, and noted that the credits of lead writers and father-and-son team Bruce and Reed Shelly include *Happy Days*, *The Lucy Show*, *Eight Is Enough* and *M\*A\*S\*H*.

The lead character, a lifeguard named Lonnie, will be played by teen heartthrob Shane McDermott. The balance of the show still is being cast. There will be six main teenage characters and at least four adult supporting characters.

DIC and SGE also are collaborating on a second strip for fall 1995, with more details expected on that show this week. ■

## ABC, Fox make prime time news moves

'Turning Point' retooled as specials; Fox cans new magazine

By Steve McClellan

**A**BC and Fox made changes in their programming strategies last week. ABC canceled *Turning Point* as a weekly show, effective in January, and Fox abandoned plans to

launch *Full Disclosure*, a magazine that had been in development for six months. Instead, Fox will develop a daily late-night news program.

*Turning Point*, fourth-ranked among prime time news shows this season

and tied for first among adults 18-49, will become a series of specials (at least six are planned) starting in January. Less than a month ago, ABC News announced scheduling changes that would move *Turning Point* to Monday, *PrimeTime Live* to Wednesday, and *Day One* to Thursday, effective in January.

One reason *Turning Point* was moving to Monday, news executives say, was so that its staff would have extra time to produce shows, since the program would not air until January, when *Monday Night Football* ends.

Producing a single-topic news hour is more time-consuming than producing a traditional news magazine with 12-15 minute pieces, says Alan Wurtzel, senior vice president, ABC News, in charge of the division's prime time programs.

Wurtzel says it would be "virtually impossible" for *Turning Point* staffers to produce the 40 stories a year, of the quality required, if the show stayed on Wednesday. By moving the show to

### Tying up the ball

La Cadena Deportiva, Prime Ticket's Spanish-language sports cable network, has signed a five-year deal with New Forever Corp. for the U.S. television rights to air eight tournaments and more than 1,000 league matches from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. The deal includes the rights for La Copa America and La Copa de Oro, two of the most important soccer tournaments in the Western Hemisphere. The deal with New Forever Corp., which is represented by Inter/Forever Sports in the U.S., adds to La Cadena Deportiva's soccer coverage. The channel, the only Spanish-language sports cable network in the country, already owns the rights to more than 440 league matches from Argentina, Mexico, Portugal and Spain. Coinciding with the announcement of the deal is the network's one-year anniversary on Nov. 15. According to Dick Barron, vice president, programming operations, Liberty Sports Inc., the channel is the country's "fastest-growing Spanish-language cable network." The network reaches more than 1 million subscribers and more than 250,000 homes on 24 systems in Southern California.

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