

Nickelodeon and Turner's own Cartoon Channel started to eat into TNT's late-afternoon programming. "Quite frankly, we started to take a little bit of a dip," Siegel says.

Siegel says TNT's decision to shift from children's to syndicated action series was a way to cultivate an audience more in keeping with its evening programming. "Having two hours of

children's programming leading into prime time just was not delivering the eyeballs that we needed to see our promotions for prime time and then actually flow into prime time," says Siegel. "Our decision to change was based on audience compatibility."

The major beneficiary of the TNT and USA move out of late-afternoon animated programming: Nickelodeon.

Howard Schimmel, vice president of audience research, MTV Networks, says Nickelodeon has upped its national ratings 53%, jumping from a 2.8 to a 4.3 during the fourth quarter last year. But Schimmel says the network's early evening ratings jump comes as much from improvements in Nickelodeon's programming as from thinning competition. ■

H E A D E N D I N G S

Request PPV promo

Request TV will hold an "Oscar Weekend" pay-per-view promotion on the weekend before the Academy Awards ceremony March 25. During the March 22-24 weekend, Request will give viewers the chance to see the five movies nominated for best picture for 1995.

PASS adds hometown hoops

Detroit-based regional sports network PASS Sports has added "Wednesday Night Hometown Hoops"—a lineup of exclusive Michigan and Michigan State college basketball games to its winter sports

programming schedule. The program runs Jan. 3-March 6 (with the exception of Jan. 10 and Feb. 28). It airs Michigan Wolverines or Michigan State Spartans games each Wednesday at 8 p.m. A special Saturday edition will be telecast March 9 at 4:30 p.m.

Cartoon premieres four

The Cartoon Network will debut four new Hanna-Barbera "World Premiere Toons" cartoon shorts each Sunday evening at 7 during January. The special series begins Jan. 7 with C. Miles Thompson's *Boid N Woim*, and follows with *CAT in Help?* Jan. 14, *Podunk Possum in One Step*

Beyond Jan. 21 and *The Powerpuff Girls in Crime 101* Jan. 28.

HBO boxing doubleheader

HBO Sports will air a live boxing doubleheader, *World Championship Boxing*, featuring Roy Jones Jr. vs. Merqui Sosa and Tim Witherspoon vs. Al Cole from Madison Square Garden in New York Jan. 12 at 9:30 p.m. HBO's en Español broadcast team will call the fight.

TMC plays cupid

The Movie Channel will air a "True Love" romance movie special Jan. 20 featuring classic and contemporary love stories, including "Romeo and Juliet," "It Could Happen to You," "Sleepless in Seattle" and "Murphy's Romance."

Fox stands up to violence

Fox cable network FX continues its on-air "Take a STAND" public service campaign with 12 new celebrity-hosted PSAs on how to prevent neighborhood violence. New 30-second STAND (Stop The Anger and Neighborhood Destruction) celebrity spots will air daily and will address such issues as kids and weapons, rape, gay bashing and gang violence. Spots will provide information on national associations and antiviolence programs.

Outdoor Life reaches 2.7 million subs

Officials of Outdoor Life had predicted that the sports and hunting network launched last August would reach 2.7 million subscribers by Jan. 1. Chief Operating Officer Roger Williams says the network has exceeded its original goal of 2 million subscribers by year-end, adding close to 1 million new subscribers in the past 30 days. —RB,CM

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: TOP CABLE SHOWS

Following are the top 15 basic cable programs for the week of Dec. 18-24, ranked by households tuning in. The cable-network ratings are percentages of the total households each network reaches. U.S. ratings are percentages of the 95.9 million households with TV sets. Source: Nielsen Media Research.

Program	Network	Time (ET)	Hhs. (000)	Rating Cable U.S.
1. <i>NFL Regular Season</i>	ESPN	Sat 8:00p	5,134	7.6 5.4
2. <i>Alex Mack Christmas</i>	NICK	Sat 8:00p	2,751	4.2 2.9
3. <i>Rugrats</i>	NICK	Sat 7:30p	2,561	3.9 2.7
4. <i>NFL SportsCenter</i>	ESPN	Sat 10:57p	2,471	3.7 2.6
5. <i>Movie: 'A Christmas Story'</i>	TBS	Mon 8:05p	2,460	3.7 2.6
6. <i>NFL Gameday</i>	ESPN	Sun 11:30a	2,402	3.6 2.5
7. <i>Movie: 'Coming to America'</i>	USA	Sun 8:07p	2,399	3.6 2.5
8. <i>Rugrats</i>	NICK	Fri 6:30p	2,367	3.6 2.5
9. <i>Cartoon Mondays</i>	NICK	Mon 5:30p	2,366	3.6 2.5
10. <i>All That Christmas</i>	NICK	Sat 8:30p	2,312	3.6 2.4
11. <i>Movie: 'Scrooged'</i>	USA	Sun 10:37p	2,263	3.4 2.4
12. <i>Movie: 'Incident at Deception Ridge'</i>	USA	Wed 9:00p	2,248	3.4 2.3
13. <i>Doug Christmas Story</i>	NICK	Sat 6:00p	2,209	3.4 2.3
14. <i>Rugrats</i>	NICK	Tue 6:30p	2,207	3.4 2.3
15. <i>Movie: 'A Christmas Story'</i>	TBS	Sun 10:35a	2,156	3.2 2.2

Following are the top five pay cable programs for the week of Dec. 18-24, ranked by households tuning in. Source: Nielsen Media Research.

1. <i>Movie: 'True Lies'</i>	HBO	Sat 10:00p	2,191	9.1 2.3
2. <i>Movie: 'Little Women'</i>	HBO	Sat 8:00p	1,847	7.6 1.9
3. <i>Movie: 'Forrest Gump'</i>	HBO	Sun 9:00a	1,819	7.5 1.9
4. <i>Movie: 'Temptation'</i>	HBO	Fri 12:40a	1,799	7.4 1.9
5. <i>Movie: 'Clear and Present Danger'</i>	HBO	Fri 10:15p	1,770	7.3 1.8