

needed to experience the same job she had. I don't think I believed that when she left I was going to be at ABC a long time. But they offered me her job and they made it appealing to me so I stayed. But I knew that could get out. I had a very short-term deal with [the network] and an option to get out very soon and I exercised that option."

From their own network experiences, the two producers believed they could produce popular, and well done, comedy programs for the networks, despite the widely held notion in the early 1980's that the genre had run its course, and was proclaimed by many to be "dead."

But despite strong confidence in their own abilities neither dreamed they would produce a hit on the order of *Cosby*. "A hit, yes," Carsey said. "Because we believed wholeheartedly in Bill." But the best way for any producer to go for a hit show, she said, is not to think "hit," but rather "follow what you believe in and don't let anyone tell you how crazy you are or how stupid it is, because they do, all the time."

Indeed, they were advised by many that *Cosby* would not work. "I can't tell you how many people," said Carsey, "told us how his will never pay off, the idea was not glitzy enough, that comedy was dead. You just have to put blinders on, and do what you have to do because you believe in the thing you're doing."

Next season will be Carsey-Werner's most challenging yet, juggling three on-air programs in prime time, with *Cosby* produced in New York (they take turns flying back and forth during weekly production) and *Roseanne* and *A Different World* produced in Los Angeles.

And next season, the producers will take advantage of the synergies between *Cosby* and its spin-off program as they try to improve the scripts and add new characters to *A Different World*. The program's star, *Cosby* TV daughter Lisa Bonet, is pregnant in real life, and her character will drop out of college to return home to the *Cosby* program for the fourth quarter of 1988. Her pregnancy will not be incorporated into the script, just as Phylicia Rashad's pregnancy two seasons ago was not written into *Cosby*. Bonet will probably rejoin her own show next January.

Carsey and Werner admit that *World* has yet to live up to the producers' expectations. "The show has had a long birthing process," says Carsey. The basic problem, to be addressed in the scripts, is that the show is about college life, a time of transition from childhood to adulthood. "Sometimes we slipped back into high school" last season, Carsey explains. "We are trying to tread a line. We can't make them too grown up because it's the transition we are writing about." In addition, some older characters will be introduced.

Meanwhile, *Cosby* is sailing into its fifth season, and NBC and the show's producers are awaiting word on whether Bill Cosby will do a sixth year. Network and producers are willing and ready.

But whatever happens to those two shows, the welcome mat at NBC for Carsey-Werner will be there for some time to come—a "long and continuing relation-

Superboy barter. In a move to expand its barter advertising sales involvement, Viacom Enterprises has announced that MTV Networks' national advertising sales division will handle the barter advertising time for Viacom's *Superboy*, a syndicated series premiering this fall.

This marks the first time that the MTV advertising sales organization will handle the barter sales for a non-MTV Networks production. MTV Networks, a Viacom subsidiary, also handles the barter sales for Nickelodeon's *Finders Keepers* and *Double Dare*, both produced under the MTV Networks banner. Douglas Greenlaw, senior vice president, advertising sales, MTV Networks, said he hopes the expansion leads to MTV Networks handling outside product, and eventually being able to "offer our clients a multi-tiered marketing vehicle."

"With firms like Teletrib handling most of our products and now working within, with MTV Networks, we have the best of both worlds. We're very pleased with the options now available to us," said Dennis Gillespie, senior vice president, marketing, Viacom Enterprises. Gillespie also said that Viacom would be looking to MTV to handle the sales for future Viacom product, but said the decision would be made on a product-by-product basis. "It was natural for us to turn to MTV originally to do the barter for *Double Dare* because the show was going to cable on Nickelodeon, and we've been very pleased with the job they've done," said Gillespie.

ship," the way Neuman sees it.

The two producers expect to be around, producing good TV for some time to come, as well. "We adore broadcasting," states Werner. "To have this opportunity . . . to be able to say something, as we intend every episode, is so fulfilling." How do you top *Cosby*? "Why top it?" asks Carsey. "That doesn't matter so much as just having a solid show that a core of audience watches that we're proud of."

HBO's Festival to go dark

Cable service to bow out at end of year due to lack of channel capacity, according to company

HBO Inc. said last week that the party will be over by the end of the year for its pay-television channel, Festival—its others are HBO and Cinemax. Executives at parent Time Inc. attributed the demise of the one-year-old service's schedule of family movies, classic movies and various specials to a dearth of available channel capacity on cable systems. Those limits have left cable operators demanding more in the way of financial performance from channels.

HBO said that limits to the cable programming universe were especially apparent when a renewed marketing effort behind Festival that was made in the first and second quarters of this year did not meet expectations (BROADCASTING, June 20). Some 102 cable systems offer the service to three million homes. Of that number, 30,000 homes subscribe at a price of between \$3 and \$7 per month.

Larry Carlson, HBO senior vice president with oversight of Cinemax and New Business Development, said that when "the initial return from this year's marketing began coming back it didn't show signs" of hope for growth in Festival's subscriber base. A final decision was reached "in the last week or two," he said.

When HBO launched Festival, it was called "the clean machine" because its programming was targeted at an audience that rejects pay television fare that occasionally includes sex and violence. Recent movie offerings have included "Hoosiers," "Nothing in Common" and "Trading Places."

Over the course of a month, Festival shows an average of 62 movies (with one-fourth being classics), as well as music, comedy and nature specials.

With that in mind, HBO began by marketing the service to families with children and older households that did not subscribe to a pay service. HBO changed that marketing thrust to homes that already carried a pay service this year to take advantage of individual systems' consumer marketing representatives who would be pitching the service. That offering involved discounting the service to as little as \$3 in combination with other pay channels.

Carlson said that it had been hoped the latest marketing push would increase the service's penetration growth from its current 3%-4% of homes passed to 6%-7% of homes passed. He said that a "totally mature" subscriber base for Festival was planned at between 1 million and 1.5 million homes. HBO is carried in 50% of homes passed and Cinemax in 20%-30%.

One reason for Festival's decline is the shifting fortunes in the pay television universe. In order to maintain market share, pay services have to undertake increasingly costly marketing and remarketing campaigns. Margins have grown smaller in the pay universe. When subscribers disconnect, it costs cable operators \$35 to service that call. With those economics, operators have turned to adding basic services, said Linda Frankenbach, vice president, new business development, at HBO, where advertising revenue and possible increases in basic rates can more than offset the pay channel economics. In many cases, she said, "there's no comparison."

Even as HBO was rolling out its last marketing attempt for Festival (BROADCASTING, June 20), operators were wary of its possible success. Robert Stengel, senior vice president, programming, Continental Cablevision, said last week that HBO's decision was not a surprise. "HBO deserves some credit for giving it a run," he said. And although the rationale was sound, he said, the marketplace proved otherwise. "It may well be that there are too many pay services and not enough consumers," he said, in the present available basic subscriber pool. The economics of marketing a pay service, and a niche service at that, he said, makes it a "very difficult marketing decision."