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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA ■ NEWSPAPER

PULITZER PRIZED

Bidding for TV stations could hit \$1.8 bil

By RICHARD MORGAN
and MARTIN PEERS

NEW YORK — Hearst-Argyle Television and Hicks Muse Tate & Furst lead a group of four companies vying for Pulitzer Publishing Co.'s TV station group, Wall Street sources said, with the bidding expected to push the price to as much as \$1.8 billion.

After the first round of offers was made earlier this month, the short list also includes Clear Channel Communications and Gannett Co., although neither is favored to

win the auction. The auction is expected to be finalized within weeks.

St. Louis-based Pulitzer Publishing announced in late February that it had retained investment firms Goldman, Sachs & Co. in New York and Huntleigh Securities in St. Louis to "explore potential strategic alternatives" for its broadcast division.

In this era of get big or get out, however, the announcement was seen as putting the broadcast properties of print-dominated Pulitzer on the block.

Pulitzer owns nine network affiliated stations in markets that include Orlando, Fla.; Omaha, Neb.; Win-

ston-Salem, N.C.; and Albuquerque, N.M. Orlando is seen as the station with the most strategic value, because its market is growing so fast.

Hearst-Argyle is likely to be an aggressive bidder as Wall Streeters see Pulitzer's stations as both a strategic and geographic fit.

The 15-station group, itself the result of a merger last August, is committed to increasing its national coverage to 20% from its current 11%. Its acquisition of Pulitzer's properties, which cover 5.5% of the country, would take Hearst-Argyle more than half way toward this ambitious goal.

Moreover, a recent Merrill Lynch report estimates that Hearst-Argyle's borrowing capacity of

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'Godzilla' tapped to close Cannes

By DAN COX

Sony Pictures Entertainment will make a big Mediterranean splash at the Cannes Film Festival with the closing night (May 24) screening of Dean Devlin and Roland Emmerich's "Godzilla," sources said Wednesday.

Cannes execs were eager to find a closing night film the audience gathered for the awards would actually want to stay and watch. In past years, the closing night pic has drawn a lackluster turnout.

"Godzilla" opens in the U.S. May 20 on more than 6,000 screens. Sony had discussed presenting a special screening of the lizard pic in Cannes more than a month ago, but wavered. The decision was made recently.

In addition, Sony execs announced it will not bring "Apt Pupil," the Bryan Singer-helmed drama with Ian McKellan, to the fest. Phoenix Pictures chairman Mike Medavoy had considered it, but decided the October release date for the pic was too far away from the fest.

"We just thought it was all too soon," added Duncan Clark, president of Columbia TriStar Film Distributors Intl. Sources said Sony will push the pic for the Venice Film Festival and Deauville Film Festival in the fall.

Parks boost Disney profit

By MARTIN PEERS

NEW YORK — Higher earnings from theme parks helped Walt Disney Co. overcome lower film and flat TV profits, producing a 22% higher net profit of \$384 million in the three

months to March 31 on flat revenue of \$5.2 billion, it said Wednesday.

Disney also announced a three-for-one stock split, to get Disney's rocketing stock price back down to levels that "are more affordable for our smaller shareholders," Disney chairman Michael Eisner said in a statement.

That news gave a surge to Disney stock, which had recently been stalled between \$110 and \$115, but closed New York Stock Exchange trading slightly down at \$116.06 Wednesday. In after-market trading, Disney stock soared \$5.25 to \$122, an all-time high.

Disney had warned Wall Street analysts in early March about the unspectacular performance in film and television, but analysts said the earnings result was better than expected in the wake of those warnings.

Lehman Bros. analyst Larry Petrella noted that much of the difference from expectations was due to a \$24 million one-time gain recorded by Disney on the sale of its stake in Scandinavian Broadcasting Systems Inc.

Disney's earnings growth was also affected by adjustments for the timing of the sale of Disney's stake in its L.A. TV station KCAL and its publishing interests, completed a year ago. Without those adjustments, Disney's operating income (before interest and taxes) fell 1.7% in the quarter to \$849 million and its net profit rose only 15%.

After the adjustments for the

Turn to page 85

UTA's upper echelon expands by 5

By CHRIS PETRIKIN

Enlarging its management ranks, United Talent Agency has upped Dan Aloni, Chris Harbert, John Leshner, Cynthia Shelton-Droke and Jay Sures to partners at the seven-year-old percenter.

The five thirtysomethings, all of

whom have been with UTA since its inception, become principals in the agency and will take a more active role in the day-to-day management of the 60-agent firm.

They join existing partners J.J. Harris and David Schiff and board of directors Peter Benedek, Jim Berkus, Gary Cosay, Nick Stevens and Jeremy Zimmer.

While the board of directors runs the company, the newly installed partners have a say in many of the company's management decisions.

"Each of these agents have made tremendous contributions

toward the growth and success of the agency," said Berkus, chairman of UTA. "This charts our course for the future: They've come up through the ranks of UTA and now are taking management roles in the agency."

Aloni has been co-head of the motion picture literary department since 1996. He segued from investment banking at Goldman Sachs in New York in 1991 to the Bauer-Benedek agency, which later merged with Leading Artists Agency to become UTA.

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Mizrahi walks D'Works ramp

By ANDREW HINDES

DreamWorks Pictures has buttoned up the rights to fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi's three-part comic book "The Adventures of Sandee the Supermodel," which it plans to develop into a feature film and possibly an animated TV series.

The comics, which are illustrated by artist William Frawley, follow the exploits of Sandee, a statuesque blond beauty who is discovered in a New York coffee shop by Yvesaac, a character based on Mizrahi himself.

Mizrahi is attached to produce the film along with his partner Nina Santisi.

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REAGAN MINI IN MOTION

By MICHAEL FLEMING

Former First Lady Nancy Reagan will be the subject of an ABC miniseries, signaling the network's new commitment to producing edgier movies and series.

The four-hour work is described by its makers as "an unauthorized and unvarnished look at the Reagan presidency and (Nancy's) role in it."

The mini is being exec produced by Storyline Entertainment partners Craig Zadan and Neil Meron, who most recently produced the ratings hit "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella" for ABC.

"Everybody wonders when we will have the first female Amer-



Reagan

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INSIDE

3 'Jerry' jilted

Chicago stations are wrestling over "Jerry Springer" after the show is pressured off WMAQ.

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Slamdance organizers "Dig" into Cannes; "Les Miz" steals onto silver screen; femme playwrights honored.

88 Glad Hatter

Tim McGraw takes home four Country Music Awards.

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INSIDE MOVES

Moore's sitcom in rewrite

ABC is unhappy with the script for 20th Century Fox's upcoming sitcom with Mary Tyler Moore and Valerie Harper, which is now likely to be pushed back to midseason, sources say. Writer Jeff Lowell ("Spin City"), who recently signed a nearly \$8 million overall deal at ABC's parent studio Disney, is getting a second crack at the script, but ABC is entertaining the idea of bringing in a new writer, according to sources at the web. The Alphabet web has ordered 13 episodes of the series, which will feature Moore and Harper reprising their roles as Mary Richards and Rhoda Morgenstern from "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Moore's isn't the only high-profile project that's been pushed back to midseason. NBC's Paul Reubens variety show was also bumped from the fall development list, while ABC and Carsey-Werner are still talking to Bette Midler about a series, but were unable to close a deal with her in time for fall consideration.

— Jenny Hontz

Fisher, Pope toil on nanny script

Peripatetic writer/actress Carrie Fisher and TV writer Elaine Pope have set up a deal to write an untitled screenplay for Working Title Films, sources said. No details were available on the plot of the film, but sources said that it would be a comedy about a nanny, loosely based on an idea by Working Title.

Fisher, who is a regular Hollywood script doctor, has done uncredited re-writes on "Lethal Weapon 3," "The Wedding Singer" and "Anastasia," among other pics. Last year she entered into a \$3 million, two-year deal to develop sitcoms for Universal Television, which has since been purchased by Barry Diller's HSN Inc. and renamed USA Networks Studios.

Pope's writing credits include episodes of "Murphy Brown" and "Seinfeld."

Working Title is a unit of Polygram Filmed Entertainment.

— Benedict Carver

Demme pic in Lions lair

By MONICA ROMAN

NEW YORK — Lions Gate Films has followed up its acquisition of Paul Schrader's "Affliction" (*Daily Variety*, April 17) with a deal to distribute Ted Demme's untitled

Irish-American working-class drama starring Denis Leary.

Pic, which premiered with the title "Snitch" at Sundance, appeared at South by Southwest under the name "Noose." It will have a new title for its fall release.

"I am as proud of this film as any creative endeavor I've undertaken, and to be in business with Lions Gate, which shares my passion for the project, is a dream," says Demme, who is currently helming "Life" for Universal starring Eddie Murphy and Martin Short.

Shot on location in Charlestown, Mass., Demme's pic tells the story of petty criminals whose honor code of silence is challenged when one of their own is gunned down. In addition to Leary, the film stars Billy Crudup.

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ARTISAN AXES INT'L

Summit to handle global sales; 10 pinkslipped

By BENEDICT CARVER

One week after announcing the formation of a sales alliance with Summit Entertainment, Artisan Entertainment has closed its own foreign sales division, shedding around 10 employees.

The axe fell on the unfortunates late Tuesday afternoon, after a week-long review of the situation by upper-tier Summit and Artisan management.

Observers had expected Summit to absorb a number of Artisan Intl. employees, given that from now on it will be representing both Artisan's 2,500-title library and the company's new productions along with its own slate and library.

However, sources said that even though "everything was moving over to Summit," only three Artisan employees had received offers to transfer. They have not yet responded to the offers.

Senior Artisan Intl. execs, including senior vice president of international distribution Mark Reinhart and vice president of international marketing Randy Parker, are expected to get up to four months severance in the form of a consultancy.

Other employees, per sources, will receive between two weeks and two months, depending on how long they have worked at the company.

No information was available as

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Di Bonaventura goes solo at WB

By DAN COX and PAUL KARON

Ending its two-year experiment in the buddy system of film production management, Warner Bros. announced Wednesday that Lorenzo Di Bonaventura will take over as sole prexy of production and that Bill Gerber will depart the executive offices for a production deal with the studio.

The news, which broke late Tuesday (*Daily Variety*, April 22),

ended months of speculation about the installation of a new president of production or studio president above Di Bonaventura and Gerber.

No surprise

But Gerber's exit came as no surprise to many producers and agents who'd long complained about the fragmentation of authority in the WB feature division under Di Bonaventura and Gerber.

Di Bonaventura, who was given a

new multiyear contract, said he expects the new management structure to result in streamlined decision-making in development and production.

"I now have the opportunity to be the single creative voice of the production team, and it's exciting to have that," said Di Bonaventura, who will continue to report to chairmen and co-CEOs Bob Daly and Terry Semel.

"In the creative process we work in, there really are no black-and-

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'Springer' cashes in on WMAQ's dumping

By CYNTHIA LITTLETON

Spurned by its old flame, the "Jerry Springer Show" is being chased into the arms of another TV station in Chicago.

Under pressure from religious and community groups, NBC O&O WMAQ, the show's longtime Chicago outlet, has asked "Springer" distributor Studios USA for a release from the remaining three years on its contract to carry the show.

Late Wednesday, sources said



Springer

USA was close to cutting a deal with another station in the market — for a hefty license fee increase. Fox O&O WFLD was said to be the leading contender, but UPN affil WPWR and indie WCIU were also in the running, allowing USA to up the price.

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WB NET TAPS LEE NEW VP

By JENNY HONTZ

The WB TV Network has named Joseph Lee to the newly created position of vice president of special projects and has added two other VPs and a director to its staff.

In addition to Lee, Craig MacEachern has been named vice president of on-air production edit facility operations.

Franz Kurath is the new vice president of graphics production and Galit Vaturi has been named director of affiliate marketing.

Lee, MacEachern, Kurath and Vaturi will all report to Bob Bibb and Lewis Goldstein, co-executive vice presidents of marketing.

Lee, who comes to the WB from NBC, will oversee all areas of marketing for the WB's prime-time shows and the network itself, except week-to-week promotion, including the network's image campaign.

At NBC, Lee wrote, developed and produced promotional campaigns for "Jenny," "The Jeff Foxworthy Show," "Mad About You," "Sleepwalkers" and other series, as

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RODRIGUEZ PIC'S CAST SWELLS

By BENEDICT CARVER

Salma Hayek and Bebe Neuwirth have become the latest thespians to join the cast of Dimension Films' untitled Rodriguez/Williamson project.

Pic already stars Elijah Wood, Robert Patrick, Clea Duvall, Shawn Hatosy and Josh Harnett.

Pic, which is said to be in the "sci-fi alien" genre, combines the talents of "Scream" writer Kevin Williamson with those of "From Dusk Till Dawn" director Robert Rodriguez.

Though little is known about the storyline, sources said that Neuwirth has one of the larger ensemble roles,

while Hayek will have a cameo.

Hayek moves to the "Rodriguez/Williamson" project following a starring role in the disco drama "54" for Dimension parent Miramax Films.

Neuwirth is best known for her role as the caustic Lilith in the sitcoms "Cheers" and "Frasier."

Hayek is repped by William Morris Agency's John Fogelman. Neuwirth is repped by ICM's Risa Shapiro and Aleen Keshishian.

Dimension Films president Cary Granat and senior VP of business and legal affairs Brian Burkin negotiated on behalf of Dimension.

Farrow, Root join Bandeira's 'Soon'

By ANDREW HINDOES

Mia Farrow and Bonnie Root have joined the cast of Bandeira Entertainment's coming-of-age comedy "Coming Soon."

The pair join Gaby Hoffmann, Ryan Reynolds, Spalding Gray, Trisha Vessey and James Roday in the indie production, which begins shooting Monday in Gotham.

Farrow plays Judy, an ex-hippie and founder of an all-natural cosmetics company who moves from

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JUST FOR VARIETY

ARMY ARCHERD

GOOD MORNING and happy 70th birthday to Shirley Temple: She says she was thrilled when I invited fans in the stands at this year's Academy Awards at the Shrine to sing her (an early) "Happy Birthday." But today, she and husband Charles Black, their three children and granddaughter celebrate quietly, "in hiding" from you-know-whose lenses. Her fans are faithful and ageless — and are still buying the line of Shirley Temple dolls. "The one that makes me laugh is a new one, 'Bathing Beauty,' on the sands at Santa Monica." There's also a charm bracelet (via Danbury) containing her tap shoes, a Shirley Temple police badge (!) and the lighthouse from "Captain January." Temple, who was the U.S. Representative to the United Nations' 24th General Assembly from 1969-72, dined with current U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan during his stopover in SanFran. Shirley was also our ambassador to Ghana (Annan's homeland) from 1974-76 ... At Annan's BevHilton showbiz reception hosted by Jack Valenti, the Secretary General asked Gil Cates about possible TV-show exposure for the United Nations. Cates produced (with Don Mischer) the recent Israel 50th anni special on CBS ... Cable channel AMC, which had in the past aired the 1953 "Titanic" from 20th Century Fox and the 1958 "A Night to Remember" from Rank, is planning to air 'em again. The '53 "Titanic" was directed by Jean Negulesco and starred Clifton Webb, Barbara Stanwyck, Richard Basehart, plus Robert Wagner and Audrey Dalton in a shipboard romance. The screenplay won an Oscar. "Night to Remember," also about the sinking of the Titanic, starred Kenneth More, David McCalm, Honor Blackman, etc. and was directed by Roy Baker. *Daily Variety's* reviewer said this excellent version "will satisfy all but those who like their entertainment glossed over with contrived fiction." It would be interesting to again see the latter film.

WHILE NEW LINE RE-RELEASES "GWTW" in a Technicolor print June 28 to several hundred theaters, WB is readying to release a "GWTW" video later this year; TNT will then air. WB's versatile recycling of classics is now making the rounds on stage (currently in Chi) in "The Wizard of Oz" co-starring Eartha Kitt and Mickey Rooney. The 14-month tour will bring 'em to the Universal Amphitheater at Christmas. With WB involved in "High Society," coming next week to B'way, it's only a matter of (short) time before WB initiates new legit projects, a la Disney ... Warren Beatty's begun to beat the bushes for "Bulworth." He took off Wednesday for N.Y. and then to D.C. No, he is not showing his politically daring pic to Clinton, but he will show it to some politicians — who will hopefully laugh at Beatty's no punches-pulled bravado ... An emotional Alfre Woodard hosted the premiere of "Africa's Elephant Kingdom," at the Imax theater of the Calif. Science Center. The film is produced by Discovery Communications and a percentage of proceeds go to wildlife preservation. Woodard is related by marriage to the film's scientific advisor, Dr. Iain Douglas Hamilton, founder of Save the Elephants, responsible for stopping the slaughter of elephants in Africa. Woodard has been making trips to East and South Africa and shared an experience in the land of those mighty creatures.

IT'S A BLESSING," says John Lithgow of the fallout of a feature project he was to do on hiatus from "3rd Rock": "The last month was exhausting." They just wound the season with "a crisis" situation, natch. Lithgow will appear in Deanna McDanel's "Courage: Profiles in Creativity" preeming tonight at Raleigh Studios ... Joe Roth, chairman of Walt Disney Studios, will be honored by the So. Calif. Multiple Sclerosis Society's Dinner of Champions, Sept. 14 at the Century Plaza. In honor of Joe, guests will be asked to arrive with *no* tie! Last year's event, honoring News Corp. prez-chief operating officer Peter Chernin, raised \$2.1 million ... Wednesday night's Rockefeller Center reception touting Hallmark's "Merlin" April 26 bow on NBC, featured a 70-foot inflated "Merlin" in the skating rink. Stars, including Martin Short, Sam Neill and Isabella Rossellini, sipped "Merlin Martini's" — the non-alcoholic drink by Merlin's Energy Source Beverage ... Bill Cosby receives an honorary degree at Pepperdine's undergrad commencement, Friday ... Syracuse U. Alumni Club of So. Cal honors Ed Goren, exec producer of Fox Sports, with the Distinguished Alumnus Award Saturday at the Four Seasons in L.A. ... Bob Willoughby's photo exhibit of 20 years on/off film sets bows tonight (until June 28) at the Motion Picture Academy and another exhibit starts at N.Y.'s Staley Wise Gallery (560 B'way) on the 28th. Willoughby, an alumnus of every major magazine, is helping Life ready a special issue on Frank Sinatra ... The Women's Guild of Cedars-Sinai once again benefits from the gala opening night party of the L.A. Antiques Show, April 30 at the Barker Hangar at the Santa Monica Airport, continuing through May 3 ... ECO (Earth Communications Office) holds a benefit book signing tonight at the Regency Club for board member/author Bambi Holzer's "Retire Rich: The Baby Boomer's Guide to a Secure Future."

FILM REVIEW



Bokeem Woodbine, left, Lou Diamond Phillips, Mark Wahlberg and Antonio Sabato Jr. topline TriStar's action-comedy "The Big Hit."

The Big Hit

(Action-comedy)

A Sony Pictures Entertainment release of a TriStar Pictures presentation of an Amen Ra Films/Zide-Perry/Lion Rock production. Produced by Warren Zide, Wesley Snipes. Executive producers, John Woo. Terence Chang, John Eckert. Co-producers, Craig Perry, Victor McGauley, Roger Garcia.

Directed by Che-Kirk Wong. Screenplay, Ben Ramsey Camera (Deluxe color), Danny Nowak; editors, Robin Russell, Pietro Scialia; music, Graeme Revell; production designer, Taavo Soodor; art directors, Andrew Stearn, Craig Lathrop; costume designer, Margaret Mohr; sound (Dolby/SDDS), Douglas Ganton; stunt coordinators, John Stoneham Jr., Lau Chi-Ho; assistant director, Jeff Authors; casting, Roger Mussenden. Reviewed at the UA Westwood, L.A., April 20, 1998. MPAA Rating: R. Running time: 91 MIN.

Melvin Smiley Mark Wahlberg
Cisco Lou Diamond Phillips
Pam Shulman Christina Applegate
Paris Avery Brooks
Crunch Bokeem Woodbine
Keiko Nishi China Chow
Vince Antonio Sabato Jr.
Jeanne Shulman Lainie Kazan
Morton Shulman Elliott Gould
Jiro Nishi Sab Shimono
Gump Robin Dunne
Chantel Lela Rochon
Video Store Kid Danny Smith
Lance Joshua Peace
Sergio David Usher

By LEONARD KLADY

Combine the high-energy pyrotechnic choreography of a Hong Kong actioner with the plight of a banal sitcom schnook and you have "The Big Hit." A fleet piece of sock-'em entertainment, its kinetic force plows through

myriad plot holes and inconsistencies with game abandon. But the melange is apt to be shy of a bull's-eye for either the hard-core thrill crowd or a more rarefied group that's gravitated to off-kilter variations on the order of "Grosse Pointe Blank" and "Wild Things." Pic's theatrical results are likely to be disappointing, though it could find a second wind in pay cable rotation and on video.

In genre tradition, the piece opens with a take-no-prisoners slambang contract job. Donning work-

More film reviews, page 8

men's overalls, the crew enters with murder on its mind. Melvin (Mark Wahlberg) is the work horse of the team; Crunch (Bokeem Woodbine) is its iron man; and Cisco (Lou Diamond Phillips) and Vince (Antonio Sabato Jr.) provide just enough backup to ensure their personal safety. For fans of former Crown Colony fare, the outrageous stunts, barrage of firepower and precision mayhem of the opening sequence are like mother's milk. The quartet take on an army of henchmen and knock off the target with dispatch, flying glass and near-nuclear explosive force.

The first weird wrinkle materializes when uber boss Paris (Avery Brooks) does out the dough for the contract, dropping the bonus in Mel's lap. Cisco objects saying the

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Col Tristar finds 'Savior'

By ANREW HINDES

Columbia Tristar Motion Picture Group has acquired all domestic rights to Initial Entertainment Group's war drama "Savior." The company also has picked up distribution rights in several foreign territories, including Australia.

Oliver Stone-Janet Yang/Ixtlan production stars Dennis Quaid, Nastassja Kinski and Stellan Skarsgard. Peter (Gaga) Antonijevic helmed pic, which was scripted by Robert Orr.

Film focuses on an American mercenary hired by the Serbs who finds redemption when he is forced to protect a newborn Croatian baby during the Bosnian conflict.

Film was budgeted at about \$6

million, according to sources, and was fully financed by IEG. It was exec produced by Cindy Cowan, IEG president of production and acquisitions.

Columbia TriStar plans a late fall domestic theatrical release for the picture.

The pickup marks the second recent domestic sale for IEG, which last week closed a deal with Polygram for Peter Berg's "Very Bad Things."

CORRECTION

"Frasier's" low-rated April 14 episode was a rerun. Wednesday's article on the weekly Nielsen ratings incorrectly stated otherwise.

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Number 38

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ON THEIR
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CAA

MANZARI LANDS ON TOP

Landmark ups film buyer to prexy, replacing Gilula

By ANDREW HINDES

Bert Manzari, one of the most influential film buyers in the specialized exhibition world, has been promoted to president of Landmark Theatres, it was announced Wednesday.

The promotion follows the completion Friday of the 143-screen arthouse circuit's sale to Dallas-based Silver Cinemas for approximately \$60 million.

Manzari's duties will expand to include theater development and other corporate matters, while he continues to oversee film buying and marketing. Manzari succeeds outgoing president and CEO Steve Gilula, who announced plans to step down last month (*Daily Variety*, March 12, 1998).

"Bert Manzari's acumen and unique perspective formed by over 20 years of experience working with both studio and specialized film distributors as well as with mainstream and independent filmmakers are an invaluable asset to Landmark," said Steve Holmes, CEO of Silver Cinemas.

At the same time, Silver president Tom Owens reaffirmed the company's multimillion-dollar commitment to upgrading current sites.

Theater-building push

The company also is planning an ambitious theater-building push. On Friday, Landmark will take over operation of the three-screen Maple Theatre in Detroit, bringing the chain's total number of screens in that market to six. In May the com-

pany will open two previously announced six-plexes in Waltham, Mass. and St. Louis.

"I'm extremely encouraged by (Silver Cinemas') level of commitment to Landmark and its business philosophy," said Manzari.

Manzari got his start by opening the Guild Theatre, a revival house in Albuquerque, N.M. He and his partner, Paul Richardson (now senior VP at Landmark), expanded their theater holdings into Movie Inc., a 13-screen repertory circuit that merged with Landmark in 1982.

In 1986 he left Landmark to become president and head film buyer for Seattle-based Seven Gables Theaters, which in 1989 became part of the Landmark group.

WB, UNICEF bow program

By RAY RICHMOND

Building on Time Warner vice chairman Ted Turner's pledge last year of \$1 billion to the United Nations, Warner Bros. on Wednesday announced a multi-pronged promotional partnership with the U.S. Committee for UNICEF (the UN Children's Fund) designed to supply support and raise awareness for the organization.

The union of Warner Bros. and UNICEF coincides with a visit to Los Angeles this week by United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan that's designed to ally the UN with the Hollywood community.

Robert Daly and Terry Semel, chairmen and co-CEOs for Warner Bros., made the joint announcement of the alliance with UNICEF that will kick off May 3 with the world premiere of the studio's animated feature "Quest for Camelot" in Los Angeles, New York and 22 other markets around the United States.

Campaign will include TV and

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'Artemisia' wins R rating on appeal

By BENEDICT CARVER

Miramax Films has won its appeal against an NC-17 rating for "Artemisia," its erotic biopic of the 17th-century Italian painter Artemisia Gentileschi.

After a personal appeal by actress Valentina Cervi to the ratings board last week, the film will now go out as an R through the Miramax Zoe label.

Pic, which is directed by Agnes Merlet, will open May 8 in New York and Los Angeles.

Music censors lose

SACRAMENTO (Reuters) — The entertainment industry survived an attempt by California state lawmakers Wednesday to curb "offensive" music lyrics.

A state Assembly committee voted against the proposed California Family Protection Act, a bill that would have forced state pension funds to dump investments in companies that might promote songs with violent or raunchy lyrics.

The bill would have required the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS), the nation's largest public pension plan, to dump its holdings in music and entertainment companies such as the Walt Disney Co., Sony Corp. and Polygram.

CalPERS estimates that \$2 billion of its \$13 billion fund is invested in such companies.

The bill's author, Southern California Republican Assemblyman Keith Olberg, vowed that his proposal was not dead, even though he was defeated Wednesday.

Olberg said music lyrics can influence criminal acts ranging from drug sales to hate crimes, and that the state should intervene in any way it can.

"I believe there is a government duty to protect the public," he told the Assembly's Public Employees, Retirement and Social Security Committee.

But opponents argued that the public does not need to be protected by bills like Olberg's. Carl London from the Recording Industry Assn. of America said the bill would have set a dangerous

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Fox keeps busy in 'Idle Hands'

By BENEDICT CARVER

Vivica A. Fox has joined the cast of Sony Pictures Entertainment's teen slasher pic "Idle Hands."

In "Hands," the actress — best known for her role as a gun-toting bank robber in the urban thriller "Set It Off" — will play Debi, a Druid priestess.

Debi hunts down evil in a town where a high school student (Devon Sawa) finds that one of his hands is possessed by the devil.

Pic, which is being directed by

Rodman Flender, also stars Seth Green, Elden Henson and Jessica Alba.

It is being produced by Team Todd's Suzanne Todd and Jennifer Todd, and Licht/Mueller Film Corp.'s Andrew Licht and Jeffrey Mueller. Pic began shooting on April 20.

"Hands" is being financed by Columbia Pictures but will be distributed under the TriStar banner, the now-defunct studio where it originated.

Fox's career gained momentum following her role in "Independence Day." Her other credits include "Soul Food" and "Booty Call."

Fox was repped by William Morris Agency's John Fogelman and by Magic Johnson Management's Leita Richardson.



Fox

TELEVISION REVIEW



Sam Neill is Merlin and Paul Curran is King Arthur in NBC's "Merlin" mini.

Merlin

(Miniseries fantasy; NBC, Sun. April 26 and Mon. April 27, 9 p.m.)

Filmed in Wales and outside London by Hallmark Entertainment in association with NBC Entertainment. Executive producer, Robert Ha'imi Sr.; producer, Dyson Lovell; director, Steve Barron; writers, David Stevens, Peter Barnes; camera, Sergei Kozlov; editor, Colin Green; music, Trevor Jones; production designer, Roger Hall; costume designer, Ann Hollowood; visual effects supervising designer, Tim Webber; casting directors, Lynn Kressel, Noel Davis. 4 HOURS.

Merlin.....Sam Neill
Nimue.....Isabella Rossellini
Queen Mab Lady of the Lake.....Miranda Richardson
Frik.....Martin Short
Lord Vortigern.....Rutger Hauer
Morgan Le Fey.....Helena Bonham Carter
King Constant.....Sir John Gielgud
Mountain King.....James Earl Jones
Arthur.....Paul Curran
King Uther.....Mark Jax
Lancelot.....Jeremy Sheffield
Guinevere.....Lena Headey
Young Merlin.....Daniel Brocklebank
Ambrosia.....Billie Whitelaw
With: Thomas Lockyer, Agnieszka Koson, John Turner, Roger Ashton-Griffiths, Rachel Colover, Sebastian Roche, Keith Baxter, Nicholas Clay, Justin Gurdler, Jason Done, Timothy Bateson, Dilya Lane, Emma Lewis, Talula Sheppard, Peter Benson, Peter Woodthorpe, John Tordoff, Robert Addie, Nickolas Grace, Janine Eser, Alice Hamilton, Jeremy Peters, Joseph Mawle, Peter Eyre, Vernon Dobtcheff, Camilla Oultrant, Peter Baylis, Susan Rayner, Charlotte Church.

By RAY RICHMOND

Just when everyone was about ready to give up on the broadcast network miniseries — or whatever it is that they're calling two-night, four-hour movies these days — up pops "Merlin" to awaken the tired genre with a burst of pure magic. It's not just another sweeps event, but rather a swashbuckling, impeccably staged family classic that takes the fairy tale and burnishes it with a vibrant contemporary sheen. Fantasy purists will probably hate it, but pay them no mind. This is very cool stuff.

The Peacock has joined forces with Hallmark Entertainment (the folks behind the masterful "Gulliver's Travels" and the shallow, bloated "The Odyssey") to formulate a smart and exhilarating production that broadens the story of knights and chivalry in charming ways.

What's great about this "Merlin" is that even those who aren't well-schooled in the knighthood legend King Arthur/Camelot thing

will find plenty to love in a David Stevens-Peter Barnes script that bolsters the color of the characters without sacrificing their humanity. And the scads of visual effects from London's Framstore and the Jim Henson Creature Shop are stunningly detailed and genuine. This production boasts the best talking horse since horses began chattering on TV in the 1960s.

The backbone of "Merlin" is a deep, measured performance by Sam Neill as the wizard of the title, framing the story as narrator while taking Merlin from reluctant young magic man through seasoned oldtimer. Neill's Merlin is as tragic as he is heroic, as ambivalent as he is confident.

Serving as the bane of Merlin's existence is the sinister Queen Mab (played with a perfect mix of menace and mockery by Miranda Richardson). Mab, who sounds like a Munchkin with cancer of the larynx, stops at nothing to control Britain and, ultimately, to rule the world. And boy, can that woman scream.

Merlin has a much better relationship with Nimue (Isabella Rossellini), the beautiful love of his life who understands that Merlin doesn't really much like magic — particularly since it's his birthright as dictated by Mab. Nimue tells him of Avalon and the Holy Grail, the sacred cup that will free England of hunger and illness.

And then there is Lord Vortigern (a sniveling Rutger Hauer), a bodacious baddie who kidnaps Nimue and foists a very realistic, fire-breathing dragon onto her (another spectacular effect). The remainder of the first installment interweaves great battles, our introduction to the great unbreakable sword Excalibur and comic relief from the mighty morphing deviant servant Frik (a wickedly over-the-top Martin Short).

Part two finds helmer Steve Barron hitting his stride in stitching together the complex web of deceit that hangs over "Merlin" like a London fog, with particular attention paid to the dawn of Camelot. There's a masterfully mischievous performance from Helena Bonham Carter as the sly Morgan Le Fey, half-sister of the man-who-would-be-king Arthur (Paul Curran). Lancelot (Jeremy Sheffield) and Guinevere (Lena Headey) also make their appearances.

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From its origins as one of
the pioneers of television,
to its current status as a
fixture in our homes,
CBS has played a
significant role
in shaping our culture.

Our warmest
congratulations to CBS
on 50 remarkable years
of broadcasting excellence.



NHL SABRES CUT DEAL

Adelphia chair scores Buffalo team, arena

By JOHN DEMPSEY

NEW YORK — Adelphia Communications, the seventh-largest cable operator in the U.S., has transferred its interest in the Buffalo Sabres National Hockey League team to the chairman of Adelphia, John Rigas, who will end up with majority control.

Rigas will also get majority ownership of the Marine Midland

Arena, where the Sabres play. As part of the deal, Adelphia's programming subsidiary, Empire Sports, got an extension of its deal for cablecast rights to Sabres games. The parties declined to reveal any financial details.

Before this deal, Adelphia and Rigas together owned 50% of the team and the arena, and the Northrop Knox group owned the other 50%. Rigas will buy out

Northrop Knox, who resigned as chairman of the Niagara Frontier Hockey Management Corp. in January after a memorandum of understanding with Rigas.

Adelphia owns cable systems serving about 465,000 subscribers in the Buffalo region, an area where it's experimenting with digital transmission of cable channels, high-speed access to the Internet and various telephone options.

'Titanic' disc sets chart record

By ADAM SANDLER

The soundtrack to "Titanic" has now been at the top of the sales charts longer than any film score in history.

The disc's 15-week run at No. 1 bests the previous industry leader for a soundtrack, "Exodus," and is honing in on the 17 weeks at No. 1 logged by Billy Ray Cyrus' Mercury Records disc "Some Gave All," in 1992.

Though the Sony Classical/Sony Music Soundtrax's "Titanic" logged

an impressive 268,000-copy tally, its sales were off by more than 140,000 copies from the previous week, and the drop reflected a thinning of the Easter weekend sales.

During the holiday weekend, discs — particularly those boasting romantic themes — typically experience sales spikes. But the sales action was off across the board, as fewer than 10 of the chart's top 200 albums posted increases, according to sales data released Wednesday, which covered the survey period ended April 19.

"Business is still good for this time of year," Russ Solomon, CEO of Tower Records and Video, told *Daily Variety*. "A lot of records are selling good numbers, and there's a variety of artists, which is making it a healthy retail environment."

At No. 2 was Celine Dion's 550/Epic Records disc "Let's Talk About Love" with sales of 163,000 copies. Sales of the disc fell by more than 55,000 copies over the previous survey.

The Reprise Records sound-

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Full plate for Food Net

By JOHN DEMPSEY

NEW YORK — The Food Network will produce a record 1,200 half-hours of original episodes in 1998, adding two fresh series in the fall: "Hot Off the Grill With Bobby Flay" and "East Meets West With Ming Tsai."

In addition, the network will more clearly differentiate its daytime and primetime schedules. In daytime, under the umbrella title "Food Network Classics," the bill of fare will be education- and instruction-driven programs such as "Taste," "Pick of the Day," "Chef du Jour" and "Cooking Live."

The primetime strategy, called "Food Network Lite," will focus on personality-generated fare like "Emeril Live," "Ready ... Set ... Cook," "Bill Boggs' Corner Table" and "Mediterranean Mario."

The network also will offer new episodes of "Two Fat Ladies," featuring Jennifer Paterson and Clarissa Dickson Wright, who tool around the British countryside on a motorcycle and sidecar, stopping off here and there to put food on the stove.

Food Network says it's developing a bunch of series pilots, including "This Is Your Fridge," "Food Fight," "On the Road," "Fat Free," "America's Best Home Cooks," "Going Out," "Sweet Treats" and "Kids Can Cook."

FX SLATES NEW SERIES

By CYNTHIA LITTLETON

Fox's FX cabler is committing upwards of \$10 million to bring out two new original series this summer: "Bobcat's Big Ass Show" and a variety hour hosted by magicians Penn & Teller.

FX is looking to capitalize on the ratings and distribution growth

it has enjoyed ever since the cabler added reruns of the hit Fox-produced dramas "NYPD Blue" and "The X-Files" to its primetime lineup last fall. FX is developing a host of other original series, with plans to bring out at least one more new show by the end of this year. The cabler also intends to branch

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Digital pubcast aid sought

By CHRIS STERN

WASHINGTON — Public broadcasters have asked Congress for a \$50 million installment on what they hope will eventually be a \$450 million subsidy to make the transition to digital television.

Testifying Wednesday in front of a House Appropriations subcommittee, Corp. for Public Broadcasting president and CEO Robert Coonrod said the first \$50 million was needed if pubcasters are to meet digital deadlines set by the FCC.

After some preliminary skirmishes, the Republican majority is no longer trying to snuff out pubcasting, but that does not mean a \$450 million request is an easy sell in Congress.

Labor, Health and Human Services and Education subcommittee

chairman John Porter (R-Ill.) asked Coonrod to consider alternatives to the subsidy, including a govern-

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Vibe exec to Blaze new trail

By JENNIFER NIX

NEW YORK — Jesse Washington will serve as editor-in-chief of Blaze, a Vibe magazine spinoff set to launch in August, it was announced Wednesday.

The Brooklyn native is moving to Blaze from Vibe, where he was managing editor.

Targeting males aged 14-24, Blaze will focus exclusively on hip-hop music and culture. The mag

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FILM REVIEW



Surfers Shane Dorian, left, Matt George and Matty Liu search the globe for the biggest wave in TriStar's "In God's Hands."

In God's Hands

(Action)

A Sony Pictures Entertainment release of a TriStar Pictures presentation of a Triumph Films production. Produced by Tom Stern. Executive producers, Zalman King, David Saunders, Aladdin Pojhan. Co-producers, Chris Bongirne, Nicolas Stern, Matt George.

Directed by Zalman King. Screenplay, King, Matt George. Camera (Technicolor; widescreen), John Aronson; editors, James Gavin Bedford, Joe Shugart, music, Paradise; music supervisor, Amanda Scheer-Demme; production designers, Marc Greville-Mason, Paul Holt; art director, Jacqueline R. Masson; set decorator, P.J. Boston; costume designer, Jolie Anna Andreatta; sound (Dolby; SDDS), Adam Joseph; special water photography, Sonny Miller; assistant directors, Melanie Grefe, Paul N. Martin; casting, Cathy Henderson-Martin, Dori Zuckerman. Reviewed at Sony Pictures Studios, Culver City, April 21, 1998. MPAA rating: PG-13. Running time: 96 MIN.

Shane Patrick Shane Dorian
Mickey Matt George
Keoni Matty Liu
Wyatt Shaun Thompson
Serena Maylin Pultar
Philips Bret Michaels
Captain Brion James
Brian Brian L. Keaulana
Darrick Darrick Doerner

By LAEL LOEWENSTEIN

An extended surfing video thinly disguised as an action movie, "In God's Hands" is a disjointed blend of technical su-

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CONCERT REVIEW

Mark Eitzel

(Folk-rock; Largo; 165 capacity; \$10)

Presented inhouse. Reviewed April 21, 1998.

By PHIL GALLO

Just another crummy day in the miserable life of Mark Eitzel and he's spending it, where else, onstage. Nobody travels the dark side of despair and emotional abandonment quite like the former American Music Club front man, but he truly exceeds the saturation point as a solo artist without the added textures of a band.

Song after song, Eitzel reopened wounds and channeled bad memories, taking the tortured road at every turn and resolving conflicts with bitterness and gloom. Previous tours with backing units, in support of his two tremendous Warners discs before the current

Matador album "Caught in a Trap," saw at least a glimmer of hope in the material and a bit of a jovial spirit. No more.

When his off-the-cuff comments aren't going wildly off some philosophical deep end, he lathers up in self-pity and self-deprecation. He seems to be the only pro musician out there who can't keep a guitar in tune (he once busted a malfunctioning ax at the Troubadour) and who treats a bad cord to the amp as a life-and-death issue.

Funny thing is, if he had stopped at the 65-minute mark when he said he'd play just one more, it wouldn't be a stretch to recall the soulfulness of his voice, a deep yet aching blend of Nick Drake and Chet Baker, and the variety of phrasing he displays on the acoustic guitar. But he chose to extend the agonizing set another half-hour, turning what had been an anguished riff into a one-note drone.

Congratulations on

50

great years.



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BUSINESS

UATC BUILDS CAPITAL

Exhib sets debt refinancing for expansion plans

By MARTIN PEERS

United Artists Theater Circuit finalized a \$725 million refinancing of its debt and preferred stock Wednesday, putting the exhib in a stronger position to finance its new building program and stay independent.

Its expansion plans include possible acquisitions. UATC CEO Kurt Hall confirmed Wednesday that the exhib was interested in the 14 theaters being sold in New York by the combined Loews-Cineplex Odeon Corp. over the next few months (*Daily Variety*, April 22.)

UATC said after its sale to Hicks

Muse Tate & Furst collapsed earlier this year that it would proceed with a debt refinancing to replace expensive bonds and preferred stock it had outstanding and to put a new bank line in place.

The exhib said Wednesday it had completed two bond offerings raising a total of \$275 million, and had signed a new \$450 million bank line, including a \$100 million revolving credit line that is currently undrawn.

In addition to retiring UATC's existing \$271 million bank credit facility, the new money will enable the exhib to replace \$125 million of

senior notes outstanding and \$159 million of preferred stock. The preferred stock was originally held by cabler Tele-Communications Inc., although it sold the stock to Lehman Bros. last year.

Additionally, UATC said the new funds would cover \$46 million of mortgage bonds which come due in November.

The refinancing will significantly reduce UATC's borrowing costs and lengthen the repayment date on the debt. UATC's existing bonds carry an interest rate of 11.5%, while preferred stock outstanding carried an interest rate of 14%. The new bonds have an interest rate of a little under 10%.

UATC also has an additional three to five years to repay its lines, as the existing facility had to be completely repaid by 2002. Hall said Wednesday UATC doesn't have to make any significant repayments for at least three years.

"This refinancing... is expected to give us greater financial flexibility to defend and expand our current market positions," Hall said in a statement.

UATC is working on a plan, drawn up last summer, to spend \$175 million in the next couple of years building 450 new screens.

Dutch media giant Endemol posts gain

By MARLENE EDMUNDS

AMSTERDAM — Dutch-based production and distribution company Endemol Entertainment posted net profits of 38.7 million guilders (\$19 million) for the first six months of its 1997-1998 fiscal year, a rise of 15% from figures announced a year ago.

The company, which over the last six months has made significant moves into the U.S., the U.K. and Latin America, reported net turnover of \$222 million, up \$1 million from figures posted in the first half year of its 1996-1997 fiscal year. Endemol's fiscal year runs from Aug. 1 to July 31.

Turnover of television activities ran to \$157 million, a drop of 5% from figures reported a year ago. The decline was put down to a loss of turnover as a result of the complications of the Sport 7 bankruptcy. The niche channel went belly up in December 1996, four months after it had launched. Endemol had been one of principal programmers.

Germany continued to account for more than a quarter of the total turnover of Endemol. At a press conference, John De Mol, president of the executive board of the company, said he expected turnover to reach \$500 million annually by 2000 and that TV activities were still targeted to account for some 90% of that figure.

Turnover in the field of live entertainment rose by 19%, but those gains were attributed entirely to the success of its activities in that division inside Holland. Holiday on Ice figures continued to disappoint, but De Mol forecasts substantial improvements by year end.

Endemol closed a major \$80 million deal with Atlantis Communications in early April, which gave it a strong position in Europe as a distributor as well as a producer. The Atlantis deal also covered the Middle East and Africa.

Projectors fuel Ballantyne

By MARTIN PEERS

Continuing strong demand for new movie projectors fueled a 21% increase in Ballantyne of Omaha's first quarter net profit to \$1.9 million, it said Wednesday, on 17% higher revenues of \$17.2 million.

Ballantyne, which declared a 3-for-2 stock split Wednesday, said the higher revenues were "primarily driven by increased sales of the company's theater products as well as contributions from the company's entertainment lighting division."

"Our customers are modernizing their theaters," said Ballantyne CEO John Wilmers, noting that exhibs "look to us for high-quality products and services for their critical projection needs."

Ballantyne is increasing its international sales effort to take advantage of the growth in foreign markets. The company is adding a sales rep to Europe from May 1 and had relocated a senior sales exec to the Philippines to support its Asian operations, Wilmer said.

Ballantyne stock inched up 6¢ to \$20.87 in mid-afternoon trading Wednesday.

DISTRIB COIN BOOSTS TOHO

By JON HERSKOVITZ

TOKYO — Japanese movie company Toho said Tuesday that it rode the back of distribution revenue from the hit movie "Princess Mononoke" to rack up a record profit for its fiscal year 1997 of 11.44 billion yen (\$87.3 million).

The figure marks a 9.5% increase from the previous business year when profits hit 10.45 billion yen. The fiscal year for movie companies in Japan ends Feb. 28.

Toho was by far the biggest beneficiary of the rebound in Japan's movie industry in 1997. It has the largest distribution circuits in terms of theaters and seats and is one of *Variety's* Global Top 50 largest entertainment firms.

During the previous fiscal year, Toho had to revise up its earnings forecast because of the runaway success of "Princess Mononoke." The film took in \$140 million to beat "E.T.," which ruled the box office top spot in Japan for 15 years.

Odeon stars in Rank's modest first qtr.

LONDON — The Rank Group has posted modest growth for the first quarter of 1998, with operating profit up 5% to \$35.3 million on sales of \$672 million, up 7%.

Pre-tax profit, however, was down from 1997, due to the fact that the entertainment and leisure group's profits benefited from the sell-off of Rank's stake in Rank Xerox last year. A pre-tax profit figure was not given. The company's Odeon cinema

chain, however, was cited by Rank as a star performer. Admissions were up 34% on 1997, in no small part because of "Titanic."

No figures were given for the Hard Rock restaurant chain. Universal Studios Florida was described as "trading strongly as a result of improved admissions" and the group's film processing division had a "good quarter."

— Erich Boehm

SHOWBIZ STOCKS

Trading for April 22, 1998

Dow Jones Industrials: -8.22 to 9176.72
 NYSE Index: +0.82 to 585.62 Volume: 695,390,000
 AMEX Index: +3.88 to 753.67 Volume: 29,430,445
 NASDAQ Index: +13.74 to 1917.61 S&P 500: +3.81 to 1130.48
 Showbiz stock results: 28 up 40 down 13 steady

52 Week		Sales					
High	Low	Exch	(100s)	High	Low	Close	Change
29	17 3/8	AMC Ent.	A	359	19 1/8	19 3/8	-5/8
24 3/8	10	Ackerley Comm.	A	60	21 1/8	20 1/8	-1/8
18 3/8	9 1/8	Activision	O	1695	11 1/8	11 1/8	-1/8
21 1/4	8 1/8	Alliance	O	107	19 1/4	18 3/4	-1/8
12 7/8	8 1/8	Ascent Ent.	O	152	11 1/8	11 1/8	-1/8
43 1/8	14 1/4	Avid Tech.	O	2337	43	42 1/4	+7/32
62 1/8	27 1/4	BET Holdings	N	633	62 1/8	62	...
145 3/8	106 1/4	BHC Comm.	A	5	144 3/8	144 3/8	-1/8
36 1/8	16	CBS	N	17593	35 3/8	34 1/8	-1/8
68 3/4	14 3/8	Cablevision Sys.	A	1833	63 1/8	61 1/8	+1 1/8
47 1/4	34	Carlton Comm.	O	419	38 1/2	37 3/8	...
35 3/8	26 1/8	Carmike Cinemas	O	579	31 1/8	31 1/8	-3/8
60 3/8	37	Chris-Craft	N	150	59 3/8	59 3/8	...
45 3/4	22	Cinar Films	N	188	43 1/8	41 1/2	-1 1/8
2 5/8	1	Cineplex Odeon	N	3703	1 5/8	1 1/8	...
18 1/8	4 1/8	Clear View Cinema	A	148	18 1/8	18 1/8	-1/8
37 1/8	14 1/8	Comcast A	O	7685	36 3/8	35 3/8	-1/8
15 3/8	12	Dick Clark Prods.	O	48	13	13	-5/8
122	73 1/8	Walt Disney	N	12598	122	115 1/8	+5 1/2
3 1/4	1 1/8	Dove Audio	N	198	2 3/32	2 1/8	-1/8
85 1/8	53 3/8	Eastman Kodak	N	12808	73 3/8	71 3/8	+1 1/8
20 1/8	18 1/8	Ent. Prop.	N	489	19 1/8	19 1/8	-1/8
2 1/8	1 1/8	Film Roman	O	11	1 1/2	1 1/2	+1/8
53	38 1/8	GC Cos. Inc.	N	97	50 3/8	48 1/2	-2 1/4
75 1/8	41 1/8	Gannett	N	4511	73 1/8	71 1/8	-1
89 7/8	52 1/8	General Electric	N	32040	86 1/8	85	-1 1/8
13 1/4	8 1/8	Granite B'casting	O	744	11 3/4	11 1/8	-1/8
22 3/8	13 1/8	Harmony Holdings	O	712	13 1/8	13 1/8	-1/8
18	7 1/2	Harvey	O	10	13 3/8	13 3/8	+3/8
25 1/4	8 1/2	Hollywood Ent.	O	710	14 1/8	14 1/8	+1/8
8 1/8	2 3/8	Image Ent.	O	13244	8 1/8	5 1/8	-1 1/4
29	17 1/8	Imax Corp.	O	1145	28 3/4	28 3/8	+1/8
1 1/2	1/2	J2 Comm.	O	55	1 1/2	1 1/2	...
30 1/2	17	King World Prod.	N	992	29 1/2	29 1/8	+1/8
5 1/4	1 3/8	Kushner-Locke	O	1576	3 1/8	3 1/8	+3/8
4 1/4	2 1/8	Lancit Media	N	16	2 1/2	2 1/2	...
24 1/2	17 1/2	MGM	N	54	22 3/8	22 1/4	-1/8

52 Week		Sales					
High	Low	Exch	(100s)	High	Low	Close	Change
3 1/8	1	MagicWorks	A	310	27 1/8	2 1/8	2 1/8
20 3/8	14 1/2	Marcus	O	222	18	17 1/8	17 3/4
211	135 1/8	Matsushita	N	34	168 3/4	167 1/4	168 3/4
4 3/4	2 1/8	Matthews Eq.	O	794	4 1/2	4	4 1/2
52 1/2	29	Media Gen. A	N	372	50 1/8	50	50 3/8
44 7/8	22 1/8	Meredith	N	910	41 3/8	40 1/8	40 3/8
		Moovies	O		No Trades		
8 1/4	2 1/2	Movie Gallery	O	566	7 1/4	7 1/8	7 1/8
12 1/8	1	Musicland	N	4619	12 1/8	11 3/8	11 3/8
		New York Times	A		No Trades		
29 7/8	17	News Corp.	N	4769	28 3/8	28 1/4	28 3/8
38 3/8	14 1/8	Pixar	O	2870	38 3/8	36 1/2	38 3/8
18 3/8	10 3/8	Playboy A	N	55	17 1/2	17 1/4	17 1/4
63 1/2	41 1/8	Polygram	N	129	33 1/2	32 1/2	33 1/2
1 3/8	5/8	Prod. Ent. Gp.	O	608	1 3/8	1 1/2	1 1/2
15 1/4	9 1/8	Frank Org.	O	205	13 1/4	12 1/2	13 1/4
36 1/4	20 3/4	Regal Cinemas	O	6534	30 3/8	30 3/8	30 3/8
10 3/8	2 5/8	Rentrak	O	6781	8 3/8	6 3/8	8 3/8
34 1/8	15 1/8	Scandi. B'cast	O	489	33 1/8	32 1/8	33 1/8
58 1/2	36 3/8	Scripps, E.W. Co.	O	87	58 1/2	58 1/4	58 3/8
41 1/8	30 1/4	Seagram Co.	O	7135	39 1/4	38 1/8	39
3 1/2	1 1/2	Showscan	O	106	3 1/2	3 1/8	3 1/2
62 1/4	22 3/4	Sinclair Broadcast	A	3394	53 7/8	52	52 1/8
103 1/8	71 1/4	Sony Corp.	O	1122	86 1/8	86 1/4	86 1/8
9 7/8	5 1/4	Spelling Ent.	N	184	9 7/8	9 1/8	9 7/8
63 3/4	31 1/4	TCA Cable	O	329	62 1/4	62 1/4	62 1/4
33 3/8	11 1/8	TCI/LibertyA	O	23241	33 3/8	32 3/8	33 3/8
33 1/2	12	TCI/LibertyB	O	12	33 1/2	33	33
42 1/2	23	Telemundo	O	10	42 1/2	42 1/2	42 1/2
40 1/2	22	Televisa	N	4474	39 3/4	39 1/4	39 3/4
31	11 1/8	Ticketmaster	O	7	29 7/8	29 3/8	29 7/8
79	43 1/2	Time Warner	N	6776	77 3/8	77 1/4	77 1/4
12 7/8	7 7/8	Todd-AO Corp.	O	561	11 1/2	11 1/8	11 1/8
72 1/8	41 3/8	Tribune	N	2284	68	67 3/8	67 3/8
7 1/2	3 1/4	Trimark	O	149	3 3/4	3 1/2	3 3/4
29 5/8	11 1/8	USA Networks	O	3373	27	26 1/2	26 1/2
5 3/8	3 3/8	Unapix Ent.	A	96	4 3/8	4 1/8	4 3/8
114	86	United Television	O	7	112	109 3/8	112
9	5 1/8	Unitel Video	A	14	6 1/8	6 1/8	6 1/2
42	16 1/4	Univision	N	804	39 3/8	38 3/8	38 3/8
55 1/2	25 1/4	ViacomA	A	739	55 1/2	53 3/8	54 3/8
56 3/8	25 1/4	ViacomB	A	6160	55 3/8	54 3/8	55 3/8
38	22 1/2	Westwood One	O	670	29 7/8	28 3/4	29 3/4

Exch N=NYSE, A=AMEX, O=OTC.

SOURCE: Bloomberg Business News

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WORLD NEWS



TV WOUNDS VID BIZ

Hungary's popular nets snare auds at home

By JOHN NADLER

BUDAPEST — Hungary's status as an emerging TV market is battering its video industry, and distributors of U.S. cassettes are the hardest hit.

In the wake of the launch of three commercial TV stations last fall, Hungary's video distribution/rental industry is rapidly shrinking.

"According to experts, there is a 60% drop in the video (distribution) market," Gabor Karpati, international trade director for the Budapest-based distributor Flamex, said. "Only hit titles are good sellers. B-movies and cheap action movies are not selling well because you can see these types of films on TV."

Dramatic drop in video rentals is in fact, per most accounts, result of dramatic growth in TV broadcaster sector over the past seven months.

"It's not a big surprise that a new TV station will affect the video industry," Peter Balint, managing director of Budapest-based distributor UIP Dunafilm, added. "The thing that is unique to Hungary, that has not happened anywhere else, is that two terrestrial networks started at the same time. They are competing with each other and they are buying the best programming packages."

Tender giants

Last October, western Euro giants SBS and CLT-Ufa won tenders to launch the TV2 and RTL Klub networks, respectively, over Hungary's national terrestrial TV system.

Shortly after, U.S. media investment company Central European Media Enterprises (CME) bought controlling interest in the TV3 cable network, and announced

plans to turn this regional channel into a national network.

During this competitive start-up period all networks are filling their slates with hot U.S.-produced movies.

"All the networks are highlighting movies," Cecilia Hazai, co-owner of distribution company Twin Media, said. "Ratings show that films are very powerful in Hungarian programming."

Flamex's video distribution arm, Flamex InterStar, says it is now releasing four video titles a month where prior to the launch of the three new Hungarian networks it released as many as 10 titles monthly.

All is not lost. Balint predicts that the rental industry will pick up again sometime this summer after the three networks have aired the hottest blockbusters in their arsenal. "In another six months (the networks) will show all of their A titles," he said, "and won't have any (blockbusters) available to air. Then everything will return to normal," he said hopefully.

U.S. docs clean up awards at Turin Gay/Lesbian fest

By DAVID ROONEY

ROME — Films from the U.S. were cold-shouldered in the feature competition but staged a clean sweep of documentary jury prizes at the 13th Turin Intl. Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, which wrapped Wednesday in the northern Italian burg.

Scoring a double win, Brit director Sean Mathias' screen adaptation of the Martin Sherman play, "Bent," was named best film by the feature competition jury and in the audience awards. The Special Jury Prize was awarded to Carlos Siguion-Reyna's "The Man in Her Life," from the Philippines.

In the documentary competition, the main prize went to "Paul Monette: The Brink of Summer's End," Monte

Bramer's portrait of the late author and activist. Special mentions were given to "The Brandon Teena Story," by Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir, and to Jeff Dupre's Sundance prize-winner, "Out of the Past."

The audience prize for best doc went to German maverick Rosa von Praunheim's "Gay Courage: 100 Years of the Gay Movement."

Norwegian director Frank Mosvold's "A Kiss in the Snow" was voted best short film.

Preliminary box office figures for this year's event show a 15% increase in admissions. In addition to competition sections, sell-out attendances were registered for main retrospective "Homosexuality in Spanish Cinema From Francoism to the Present" and for a spotlight on James Dean as gay icon.

Carlton gives \$48 mil, good will to BSKyB

By ERICH BOEHM

LONDON — Carlton Communications has extended a \$48 million olive branch to satcaster BSKyB in a bid to end a dispute between the two companies.

The payment relates back to an agreement made last year when BSKyB was forced out of its initial partnership with Carlton and Granada Group in British Digital Broadcasting — the digital terrestrial television consortium — due to regulatory concerns.

Both Carlton and Granada agreed to make compensation payments to BSKyB, which will supply programming to BDB's platform of 15 digital terrestrial TV channels, due to launch this fall.

Granada paid up in February. Carlton's payment, however, falls \$5 million short of the original terms.

A Carlton rep said that the company had held back because capacity for two extra TV channels from BSKyB had not been granted by the ITC, the U.K.'s commercial TV regulatory org.

But BSKyB said it was still waiting for a satisfactory explanation from Carlton as to why the money had been withheld.

Warner Village fights Italo pic-space claim

ROME — Responding to recent accusations that Warner Village Cinemas multiplexes gives inadequate space to Italian releases, Antonio Maldonado, CEO of the newly established national exhibition chain, has underlined that his programming policies are in line with the country's overall market breakdown.

In the five months since Warner Village began operating in Italy, Maldonado states that of 171 films released, 24 were Italian features and 30 were European productions from other countries, accounting for 14% and 18%, respectively. This makes a total of 32% Euro pics against 68% U.S. titles.

"These percentages are proportional to the rest of the Italian market," Maldonado said in a statement. "The entire film industry knows that the market moves according to the product that is available and that it is the public that determines its choices and its successes."

The charges regarding Warner Village's perceived lack of attention to homegrown pics were made by Fulvio Lucisano, president of the national producers association ANICA. But the push to put exhibition muscle behind Italian films also is a matter close to the heart of Italy's deputy premier Walter Veltroni.

Anticipating a government directive currently awaiting final approval, Veltroni recently announced that moves are being pushed through to facilitate authorization requirements for the opening of theaters up to a certain size. However, in order to be eligible, the new exhibitors must agree to 30% programming quotas of national product.

— David Rooney

Stilking gets cash boost

By CATHY MEILS

PRAGUE — Dow Jones/Wall Street Journal heiress Elizabeth Goth is dipping her toe in the film business.

The San Diego-based Goth was in Prague April 21 to sign an investment contract with Stilking Films. She acquired a minority stake in the 5-year-old Czech production company for an undisclosed sum, understood to be a few million dollars.

The deal between Goth and Stilking founder Mathew Stillman was brokered by Brian MacNally of N.Y.-based Affiliated Private Investors. Goth and MacNally join

Stillman on the company's board of directors. Other board members are Daniel Bergmann, exec producer for Stilking, and Mick Hawk, co-president of Czech music and media company Bonton.

"The proceeds (of Goth's investment)," Stillman said, "will expand and develop our production base to provide a better international service for our production partners, and will extend our involvement in script development."

Stilking, with production services, commercials and film divisions, also has an office in Warsaw. It will open a Budapest office soon and plans to move into markets outside Europe.

Mexico revises cable auction

By MARY SUTTER

MEXICO CITY — Three of the winners in Mexico's first cable-license auction have failed to come up with a 20% initial payment and have lost their right to these concessions.

Mexico's Federal Telecommunications Commission (Cofetel) awarded a total of 44 MMDS ("wireless cable") licenses on Feb. 23, in the country's first TV frequency auction using a multiround bidding process.

Auction, which reaped pledges totaling \$60 million, had been trumpeted by Cofetel as a success, but industry observers say the winning bids were unrealistically high.

The penalized parties include TV Espectro San Luis, which as the auction's biggest winner had bid a total of \$29 million to capture 24 licenses in cities including Acapulco and Mazatlan.

Also disqualified are Astiazaran, which had won three licenses, and Rojano, which had one. All three bidders will forfeit their deposits.

A Cofetel spokesman said the licenses will be sold in a new auction, but a date has not yet been set.

Esper, TDS Comunicaciones, Ultratel, Arvizu and a group of investors headed by Bazan y Garza Iglesias y Asociados did make their payments, and have until July 7 to pay the remainder.

GEDDES TO PROGRAM AT TORONTO

By TAMSEN TILLSON

TORONTO — Toronto International Film Festival has appointed Colin Geddes as the new programmer for the festival's popular Midnight Madness collection of cult films and cinematic exotica.

Geddes takes over from Noah Cowan, the festival's associate director of programming. Cowan will program a variety of other areas, including the festival's National Cinema Programme (which this year focuses on Japanese filmmakers), Contemporary World Cinema and Discovery, as well as acting as an adviser to Midnight Madness.

Other recent festival appointments are: June Givanni, programmer for Planet Africa; Ana White, director of development; and Nuria Bronfman, director of communications.

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Channel Four increases staff by 10%

LONDON — Channel Four plans to take on 61 extra staff members, a figure representing almost 10% of the terrestrial's total employees.

Of the appointments, 29 will be related to programming commissioning. 21 will be allocated to expansion — areas such as new digital TV services and feature film investment through Film Four.

Michael Jackson, C4's chief exec, said the channel's previous frugality was not suited to an "increasingly competitive environment" in the U.K.

"Over the past five years, the channel's advertising revenue has increased by 60% and our commissioning budget has nearly doubled, yet our core staff has risen by only 25%," Jackson said.

C4 has also announced the return of Jay Kandola to the channel. Kan-

dola joins C4's acquisitions department as a series buyer after an 18-month stint as editor of programming

acquisitions at BBC1. Her immediate responsibility will be acquiring U.S. TV series. — **Erich Boehm**

Behaviour picks 'Four Days'

By **BRENDAN KELLY**

MONTREAL — Behaviour Distribution has picked up world rights to the upcoming Canuck pic "Four Days," the feature directorial debut from Toronto-based musicvideo helmer Curtis Wehrfritz.

The film, to shoot this summer, is a co-production pairing Montreal-based Cite-Amerique with Toronto producer Greg Dummett. It's based on the novel of the same name by

Canadian author John Buell.

Parent company Behaviour Communications acquired global distrib MDP Worldwide last month, and the newly re-named MDP/Behaviour Worldwide will likely handle international sales on the pic, said Pierre Brousseau, senior vice president of Behaviour Distribution.

"Four Days" is a road movie about a teen who is the unwitting accomplice of a hold-up carried out by his father. The script is by Wehrfritz and New York writer Pinckney Benedict.

Atlantis profits rebound

By **TAMSEN TILLSON**

TORONTO — In releasing its fourth quarter and year end results for 1998 earlier this week, Atlantis Communications pronounced itself solidly back in the saddle after a few lean years earlier in the '90s.

Net earnings for the year were C\$5.6 million (US\$3.9 million), a 65% increase over last year's earnings, excluding unusual items, of \$2.4 million. On a per-share basis, earnings for the year were 38¢ per share, a 57% improvement over 1996's earnings per share of 24¢. (The difference in net earnings and earnings per share is due to Atlantis having issued stock in 1997 to pick up the rest of Life Network.)

The "unusual items" were a one-time gain in earnings of \$2.4 million in 1996 arising from the sale of Atlantis' interest in Canadian youth specialty channel YTV. The one-time gain inflates the 1996 earnings figure to \$4.8 million (50¢ per

share). 18% more than in 1997.

Atlantis prexy Lewis Rose said that the comparison doesn't make sense. "It's like comparing apples and oranges," he said.

The year-over-year increase reflects an increased profit margin from the greater number of TV program hours delivered as well as improved margins on pre-existing series, as well as increased contribution from Life Network and from distributing third-party programming.

Total revenue for the year was \$124 million, up from \$96 million in 1996. For the fourth quarter, net earnings excluding unusual items were \$1.7 million, or 16¢ per share, up from \$1 million, or 11¢ per share.

Total revenue for the quarter was \$61.8 million.

Atlantis also announced that it has made a deal with CBS Productions to co-produce "Second Opinion," a one-hour pilot to be aired on CBS.

TV AND CABLE PRODUCTION CHART

PRODUCTION CHART KEY

Abbreviations: SUPR EXP-Supervising executive producer(s); EXP-Executive producer(s); CO EXP-Co-executive producer(s); SUPR PROD-Supervising producer(s); PROD-Producer(s); CO PROD-Co-producer(s); DIR-Director(s); CASTING-Casting director. Affiliated production companies indicated when applicable in parentheses after show title. Anthology titles follow show title. Unless a specific director is noted, show uses various directors. Gray screen indicates new entry this week. The TV Production Chart includes only programs that cast actors in the L.A. area.

ABC PICTURES

(310) 557-7777

DIFFERENT (Lifetime) EXP, Lisa Demberg; PROD, Barbara Kelly; DIR, Paul Wendkos; **CASTING**, Rhonda Young (L.A.), Nelleke Privett (Toronto).

LABOR OF LOVE (Lifetime) EXP, Ken Raskoff; PROD, Ray Sager; DIR, Karen Arthur; **CASTING**, Rhonda Young (L.A.), Nelleke Privett (Toronto).

MRS. HOBSON'S DILEMMA (Lifetime) EXP, Paula Weinstein, Anthea Sylbert; CO-PROD, Marc Dassas; DIR, Claudia Weill; **CASTING**, Rhonda Young (L.A.), Hewitt & Carr Casting (Toronto).

TOM CLANCY'S NET FORCE (ABC) EXP, Tom Clancy, Steve Pieczenik, Gilbert Cates, Dennis Doty; PROD, Dennis Doty; DIR, Ron Lieberman; **CASTING**, Penny Eilers.

STRANGERS IN A SMALL TOWN (Lifetime) EXP, Shanna Tyndall, Greg Gugliotta; PROD, Andrea Baynes; DIR, Alan Matzger; **CASTING**, Rhonda Young (L.A.), Lynn Carow (Calgary).

ABC TELEVISION NETWORK

(310) 557-7777

ALL MY CHILDREN (ABC) EXP, Francesca James; SUPR PROD, Jean D'Adario Burke, Heidi Adam; PROD, Nancy Jacoby; DIR, Henry Kaplan, Conal O'Brien, James Baffico, Robert Scinto; **CASTING**, Judy Wilson.

GENERAL HOSPITAL (ABC) EXP, Wendy Riche; SUPR PROD, Julie Carruthers; PROD, Carol Scott, Hope Smith; DIR, Shelley Curtis, Joe Behar, Bill Ludel, Scott McKinsey, Alan Pultz; **CASTING**, Mark Teschner.

ONE LIFE TO LIVE (ABC) EXP, Jill Faman Phelps; SUPR PROD, Frank Valentini; PROD, Ellen Novack; DIR, Bruce Cooperman, Jim Sayegh, Joe Cotogno, Lenny Price; **CASTING**, Sonia Nikore.

PORT CHARLES (ABC) EXP, Wendy Riche; SUPR PROD, Julie Carruthers; PROD, Nancy Jacoby; DIR, Anthony Morina, Andy Lee, Jill Ackles; **CASTING**, Mark Teschner.

ALIAS PRODS

(213) 549-9300

INN-MATES (in assn w/Communication Arts)

SUPR EXP, Dick Oppenheimer; EXP, Gilbert A. Cabot; PROD, Chris Pflanzler; **CASTING**, Victoria Summers.

ALL AMERICAN TELEVISION

(310) 656-1100

BAYWATCH (synd) (in assn w/Baywatch Production Co.) EXP, Gregory Bonann, Douglas Schwartz, Michael Berk, David Hasselhoff; CO-PROD, David Braff; **CASTING**, Susan Glickman, Fern Orenstein (310) 302-9149.

BAYWATCH NIGHTS (synd) (in assn w/Baywatch Nights Production Co.) EXP, Maurice Hurley, David Hasselhoff, Gregory Bonann; CO-EXP, Don Boyle; **CASTING**, Fern Orenstein, Susan Glickman, (310) 302-9149.

ON THE LINE (ABC) EXP, David Gerber; PROD, Guy Louthan; DIR, Elodie Keene; **CASTING**, Mary Jo Slater (310) 449-3685.

ALLIANCE COMMUNICATIONS

(416) 967-1174

BIG BEAR (synd) EXP, PROD, Claudio Luca, Dorothy Schreiber, Colin Neale, Douglas Cuthand; DIR, Gil Cardinal; **CASTING**, Elite Casting.

BLACKJACK (USA) EXP, John Woo, Terence Chang, Christopher Goidsick, Peter Lance; PROD, John Tyan; DIR, John Woo; **CASTING**, John Buchan, Julia Tait, Gail Carr, Claire Hewitt.

DAVINCI'S INQUEST (synd) EXP, Laszlo Barna, Chris Haddock; PROD, Jonathan Goodwill; **CASTING**, Lynne Carrow.

DUE SOUTH (synd) EXP, Paul Gross; CO-EXP, Bob Carney; SUPR PROD, Peter Bray; PROD, Frank Siracusa; **CASTING**, John Buchan, Julia Tait.

TOTAL RECALL: THE SERIES (synd) EXP, Art Monterastelli; SUPR PROD, Jeff King; **CASTING**, Comerford Casting.

THE ANTI GRAVITY ROOM PRODS. LTD.

(416) 534-1191

THE ANTI GRAVITY ROOM (Sci Fi) EXP, Josh Braun, Ian Murray; CO-EXP, Chris Greaves; PROD, Chris Greaves; DIR, Mark Williams; **CASTING**, Josh Braun (212) 421-4530.

ATLANTIS FILMS

(310) 576-7719

THE ADVENTURES OF SINBAD (synd) (in assn w/All American Television) EXP, Peter Sussman, David Gerber, Ed Naha; PROD, Larry Raskin, Gordon Mark; **CASTING**, Darlene Kaplan.

COLD SQUAD (Synd) EXP, Anne Marie La Traverse, Julie Keatley, Matt MacLeod; PROD, David Shepherd.

FLASH FORWARD (ABC/Disney Channel) EXP, Seaton McLean, Daphne Ballon; PROD, Jan Peter Meyboom.

THE OATH (CBS) EXP, Peter Sussman, Marian

Rees; PROD, Marty Katz; DIR, Sheldon Larry; **CASTING**, Phyliss Huffman (Los Angeles), Marsha Chesley (Canada).

PSI FACTOR: CHRONICLES OF THE PARANORMAL (synd) (in assn w/Eyemark Entertainment) EXP, Seaton McLean, James Nadler, Peter Aykroyd, Chris Chacon; PROD, David Rosen; **CASTING**, Claire Walker.

TRADERS (synd) EXP, Alyson Feltes, Hart Hanson; **CASTING**, Dierdre Bowen.

BABYLONIAN PRODS

(818) 504-3135

BABYLON 5 (synd) EXP, Douglas Netter, J. Michael Straczynski; PROD, John Copeland; **CASTING**, Champion Paladini.

BELL PHILIP TELEVISION PRODS

(213) 852-4138

THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL (CBS) EXP, Bradley Bell; SUPR PROD, John C. Zak; PROD, Deveney Marking Kelly; DIR, Michael Stich, John C. Zak, Deveney Marking Kelly, Nancy Eckels; **CASTING**, Christy Dooley, (213) 852-4501.

BEST FRIEND PRODS

(604) 434-2141

MY VERY BEST FRIEND (CBS) PROD, Richard Davis, Sandy Brice; DIR, Joyce Chopra; **CASTING**, Carol Kelsay.

BIG TICKET TELEVISION

(213) 860-7400

MOESHA (UPN) EXP, Vida Spears, Sara Finney; PROD, Jim Tripp-Haith; DIR, Henry Chan; **CASTING**, Kim Hardin.

BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION

(818) 566-9948

COMIC VIEW (BET) EXP, Boogeyman, Andre Barnwell; SUPR PROD, Lynne Harris-Taylor; PROD, Darryl Littleton, Bob Norris; **CASTING**, Universal Talent Associates (818) 683-7594.

STEVEN BOCHCO PRODS

(310) 369-2400

BROOKLYN SOUTH (CBS) EXP, Steven Bochco, Billy Finkelstein, David Milch, Michael Chernuchin, Michael Watkins; SUPR PROD, Marc Buckland, Bill Clark; **CASTING**, Junie Lowry-Johnson (310) 369-2400.

NYPD BLUE (ABC) EXP, Steven Bochco, David Milch, Mark Tinker; SUPR PROD, Bill Clark; PROD, Paris Barclay; **CASTING**, Junie Lowry-Johnson (310) 369-2400.

BREAKER PRODS., INC

(604) 415-5444

BREAKER HIGH (UPN) EXP, Lance Robbins; SUPR PROD, Victoria Woods; PROD, James Shavlick; CO-PROD, Rosanne Milliken; **CASTING**, Rosanne Milliken, Blair Law (604) 874-4305.

BRILLSTEIN-GREY PRODS

(310) 275-6135

ALRIGHT ALREADY (WBN) EXP, Carol Leifer, Stephen Engel, Brad Grey; PROD, John Ziffren, Rob Schiller; CO-PROD, Bill Kunstler, Michael Rowe; Rob Schiller; **CASTING**, Andrea Cohen.

JUST SHOOT ME (NBC) EXP, Steven Levitan, Brad Grey, Bernie Brillstein; CO-EXP, Eileen Conn, Andrew Gordon, Jack Burditt; SUPR PROD, Marsh McCall; PROD, Erwin More, Brian Medavoy, Gina Rugolo-Judd; **CASTING**, Deb Barylski.

THE LARRY SANDERS SHOW (HBO) EXP, Garry Shandling, Brad Grey; CO-EXP, Jon Vitti, John Riggi; SUPR PROD, Becky Hartman, PROD, Jeff Cesario, John Ziffren; DIR, Todd Holland, Michael Lehmann, Alan Myerson, Michael Lange, John Riggi; **CASTING**, Marc Hirschfeld.

NEWSRADIO (NBC) EXP, Paul Simms, Brad Grey, Bernie Brillstein; SUPR PROD, Joe Furey, Josh Lieb; PROD, Kent Zbornak, Drake Sather; CO-PROD, Brian Kelley, Lew Morton; DIR, Tom Cherones; **CASTING**, Bonnie Zane (213) 993-7364.

THE STEVE HARVEY SHOW (WBN) EXP, Stan Lathan, Winifred Hervey, Brad Grey, Bernie Brillstein; SUPR PROD, Walter Allen-Bennett; PROD, Manny Basanase, Wenda Fong; CO-PROD, Mike Rowe, Mark Seabrooks; PROD, Kent Zbornak; DIR, Stan Lathan; **CASTING**, Monica Swann.

BBC TELEVISION

(44-81) 743-8000

THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL (A&E) (in assn w/A&E Network, ABC Australia) PROD, Julian Murphy; DIR, Patrick Lau.

CARSEY-WERNER PRODS

(818) 760-5598

COSBY (CBS) EXP, Dr. William H. Cosby, Marcy Carsey, Tom Werner, Caryn Mandabach, Peter Torrici, Norman Steinberg, David Landsberg; CO-EXP, Joseph Staretski; SUPR PROD, Adam Balanoff; PROD, Vanessa Middleton, Rob Kurtz, Eric Brand, Joanne Curley; DIR, John Whitesell; **CASTING**, Brett Goldstein.

CYBILL (CBS) EXP, Marcy Carsey, Tom Werner, Caryn Mandabach, Cybill Shepherd, Bob Myer; CO-EXP, Michael Poryes, Alan Ball, Kim Friese; SUPR PROD, John Pardee, Joey Murphy, Linda Wallem, William Lucas Walker; PROD, Henry Lange; DIR, David Trainer, Jonathan Weiss; **CASTING**, Karen Vice, (818) 754-6548.

DAMON (Fox) (in assn w/Nu Systems Prods., Inc.) EXP, Marcy Carsey, Tom Werner, Caryn Mandabach, Damon Wayans, Dick Blasucci; CO-EXP, John Whitesell; SUPR PROD, Devon Shepard, J.J. Paulsen; PROD, Brenda Hanes; CO-PROD, Annice Parker, Brad Kaaya, Tim Hightower; DIR, John Whitesell; **CASTING**, Eileen Mack Knight, Meredith Behrend.

3RD ROCK FROM THE SUN (NBC) EXP, Marcy Carsey, Tom Werner, Caryn Mandabach,

Bonnie Turner, Terry Turner, Bill Martin, Mike Schiff; CO-EXP, David Sacks; PROD, Patrick Kienlen, Bob Kushell, Christine Zander; CO-PROD, Michael Glouberman, Andrew Orenstein, David Israel, Jom O'Doherty, Tim Ryder; DIR, Terry Hughes; **CASTING**, Marc Hirschfeld, Gayle Pillsbury, (818) 754-6481.

CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT

(310) 285-2300

SEINFELD (NBC) EXP, Jerry Seinfeld, Jeff Schaffer, Alec Berg, Howard West, George Shapiro; CO-EXP, Andy Robin, Gregg Kavet, SUPR PROD, Dave Nandel, Spike Feresten; PROD, Suzy Greenberg, Tim Kaiser, Andy Ackerman; CO-PROD, Jennifer Crittenden, Steve Koren; DIR, Andy Ackerman.

CHESLER/PERLMUTTER PRODS

(310) 887-5600

BETAVILLE (USA) (in assn w/Chester/Perlmutter Prod.) EXP, Lewis Chesler, David Perlmutter; PROD, Tab Baird, Jeremy Lipp; **CASTING**, Eve Brandstein.

NIGHTWORLD (UPN) EXP, Lewis Chesler, David Perlmutter, Steve Ujjaki; PROD, Ken Gord; **CASTING**, Hank McCann.

SINS OF THE CITY (USA) (in assn w/Chester/Perlmutter Prods.) EXP, Lewis Chesler, David Perlmutter, Steve Fek; SUPR PROD, Oscar Costo; PROD, Charles Carroll, Damian Harris; **CASTING**, Margaret McSherry, Brad Warshaw (L.A.), Lori Wyman (Miami), Judy Henderson (N.Y.).

STRANGERS (HBO) EXP, Lewis B. Chesler, David M. Perlmutter, Georges Campana, Alain Boudie; **CASTING**, Hank McCann.

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WORKSHOP

(416) 531-9858

THE NEW GHOSTWRITER MYSTERIES (CBS) (in assn w/Ghostwriter I Prods.) EXP, Ned Kandel; SUPR PROD, Paula Smith; PROD, John Delmage; **CASTING**, Susan Forrest.

CBS ENTERTAINMENT PRODS.

(818) 760-5000

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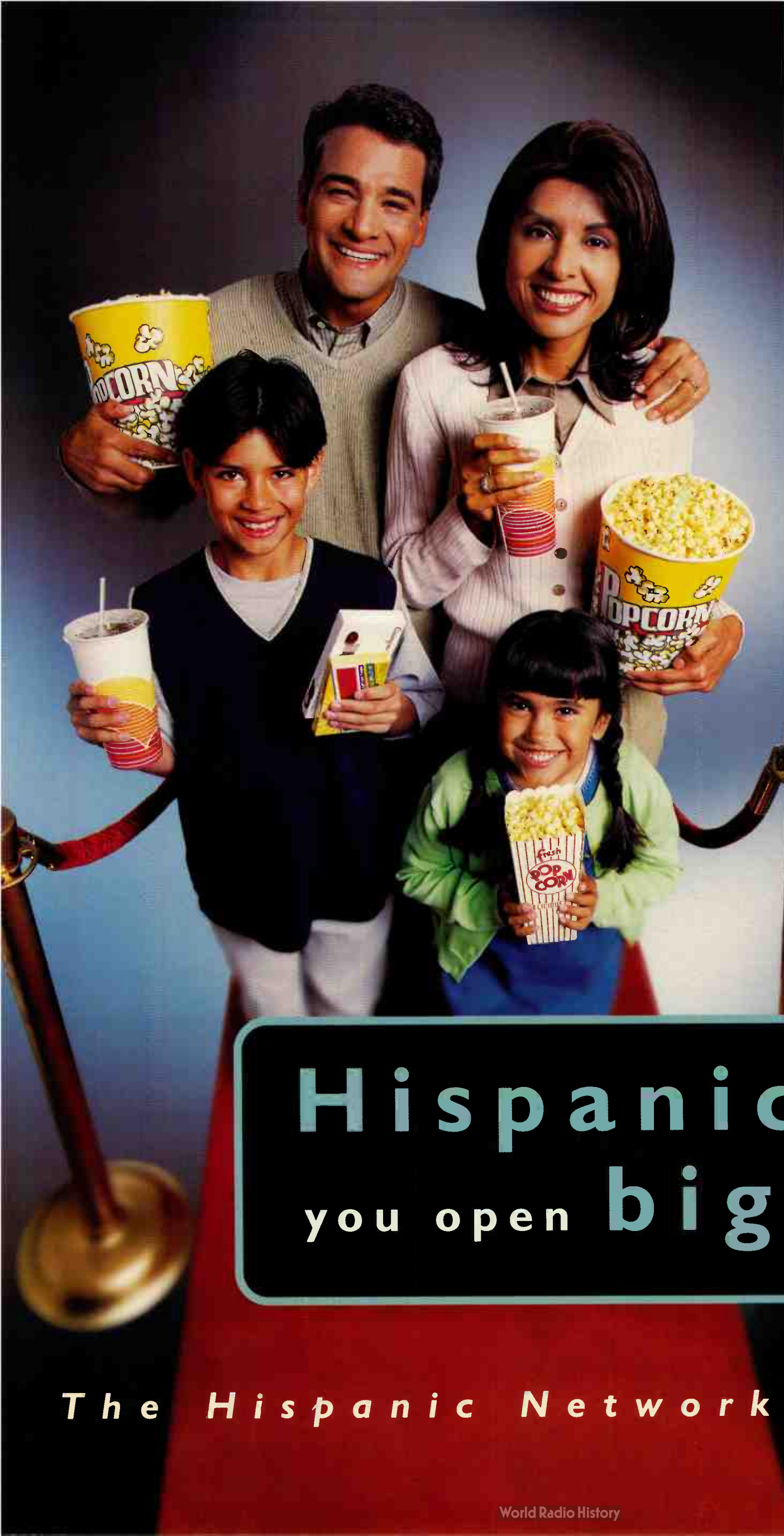
Turn to page 19



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TELEVISION AND CABLE PRODUCTION CHART

Continued from page 19

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MILLENNIUM (Fox) EXP, Chris Carter, James Wong, Glen Morgan; CO-EXP, John P. Kousakis, Ken Horton; PROD, Thomas J. Wright; CO-PROD, Paul Rabwin, Bobby Moresco; CASTING, Nan Dutton, Green Mays.

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THE PRETENDER (NBC) (in assn w/NBC Studios.) EXP, Steven Long Mitchell, Craig W. Van Sickle; CO-EXP, Tommy Thompson, Johanna Persons; SUPR PROD, Fred Keller; PROD, Marianne Canepa; CO-PROD, Jan DeWitt, Carlos Coto; CASTING, Tory Herald.

THE SIMPSONS (Fox) (in assn w/Gracie Films) EXP, Mike Seully, James L. Brooks, Matt Groening, Sam Simon; CO-EXP, George Meyer, David S. Cohen, Richard Appel; PROD, Richard Sakai, Denise Sirkot, Richard Ratnis, Ron Hauge, Dan Greaney, Donick Cary, Mike Mendel, Colin A.B.V. Lewis, Bonnie Pietila; CO-PROD, Brian Scully, Julie Thacker; CASTING, Bonnie Pietila.

SPARKS (UPN) (in assn w/Sparks Prods.) EXP, Ed Weinberger, Bob Moloney; CO-EXP, Rob Dames, Lenny Ripps; PROD, Bruce Johnson; CASTING, Robi Reed-Humes.

TWO GUYS, A GIRL AND A PIZZA PLACE (FOX) EXP, Danny Jacobson, Marjorie Weitzman; CO-EXP, Mark Ganzel; SUPR PROD, Rick Wiener, Kenny Schwartz; PROD, Jan Siegelman; CO-PROD, Vince Calandra; CASTING, Russell Grey (310) 369-2324.

THE X-FILES (Fox) (in assn w/Ten Thirteen Prods.) EXP, Chris Carter; R.W. Goodwin; CO-EXP, Frank Spotnitz; SUPR PROD, Vince Gilligan; PROD, J.P. Finn, Kim Manners, Rob Bowman, Paul Rabwin; CO-PROD, John Shibban, Lori Jo Nemhauser; CASTING, Rick Millikan, Correen Mays.

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XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS (synd) (in assn w/Renaissance Pictures) EXP, Robert Tapert, Sam Raimi; CO-EXP, R.J. Stewart; SUPR PROD, Steven Sears; PROD, Eric Gruendemann; CO-PROD, Liz Friedman; CASTING, Beth Hymson-Ayer.

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ER (NBC) (in assn w/Constant C Prods., Amblin Television) EXP, John Wells, Michael Crichton, Lydia Woodward, Carol Flint; CO-EXP, Christopher Chulack, Walon Green; PROD, Neal Baer, Lance Gentile; CO-PROD, Penny Adams, Wendy Spence Rosato, David Mills, Jack Orman; CASTING, Barbara Miller, John Levey (L.A.) (818) 954-4080.

FAMILY MATTERS (CBS) (in assn w/Miller-Boyettt Prods., Bickley/Warren Prods.) EXP, Thomas L. Miller, Robert L. Boyett, William Bickley, Michael Warren, David W. Duclon; CO-EXP, Gary Menteer, Fred Fox, Jr., Jim Goghan; SUPR PROD, Stephen Langford, Kelly Sandefur; PROD, Rebecca Falk; CO-PROD, Gary Goodrich; CASTING, Barbara Miller, Joanne Koehler.

FRIENDS (NBC) (in assn w/Bright/Kauffman/Crane Prods.) EXP, Kevin S. Bright, Marta Kauffman, David Crane, Michael Borkow; CO-EXP, Adam Chase, Michael Curtis, Greg Malins; PROD, Todd Stevens; CO-PROD, Wil Calhoun, Seth Kurland, Amy Toomin, Jill Condon; CASTING, Barbara Miller, Leslie Litt.

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PREY (ABC) EXP, Charlie Craig, Bill Schmidt; SUPR PROD, Jeremy R. Littman; PROD, Phil Parslow, Don Marcus; CASTING, Barbara Miller, Lorna Johnson, Pamela Basker.

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Inside



TIFFANY WEB SIGHTS

Eyes on the Prize

The network is second in households, fourth in key demos, but the industry sees newly-crowned CEO Leslie Moonves moving the network in the right direction, especially with the much-touted football recovery.

By Richard Katz
A5

Golden Opportunities

May sweeps will offer CBS the chance to celebrate its anniversary by combining its classic sitcoms and dramas with a new generation of programming in a high-profile documentary and promotional campaign.

By Ramin Zahed
A8

30 Years and "60 Minutes"

The infallible newsmagazine has reached its thirtysomething threshold with both an iron grip on newsmakers and a velvet glove for profiles of pop culture heroes.

By Robert Koehler
A45

DISSECTING THE DECADES

Signs of Life (1948-1957)

Taking a cue from his radio empire, William S. Paley builds the Tiffany web on family formats and vaudeville-era talent.

By Cynthia Littleton
A10

Classic Characters (1958-1967)

From "The Twilight Zone," to "The Defenders," CBS romances the Boomers.

By Ray Richmond
A14

War and Remembrances (1968-1977)

Television plays the political game, from "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" to "MASH."

By Robert Koehler
A18

Family Feuds (1978-1987)

Reagan-era spawns spinoffs as the Eye cashes in on successes.

By Larry Leventhal
A22

Mixed Blessings (1988-1997)

"Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman" and "Touched by an Angel" reap retro rewards in a turbulent decade.

By Richard Katz
A26

DIVISIONS & CONQUER

Funny Faces

Over the years, hit CBS series after hit have influenced not only the Eye web's subsequent generations of sitcoms, but those of the other networks as well.

By Tom Gilbert
A31

Newshounds Bite Cable

From Murrow to Cronkite to Rather, a rich news legacy provides key to fending off cable's challengers.

By Ray Richmond
A42

Gridiron Interception

Football's back, and CBS is ready to rumble after a "crippling" loss five years ago.

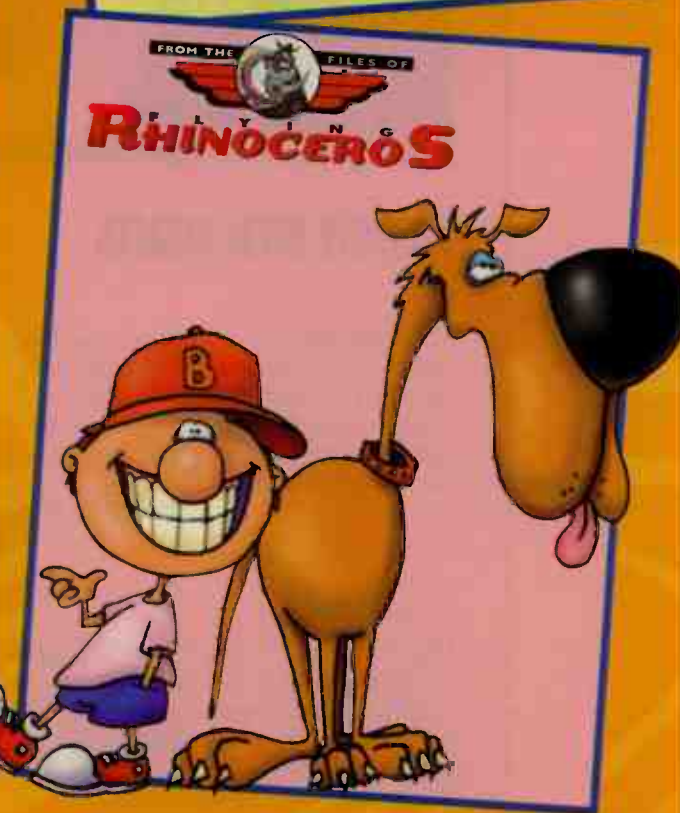
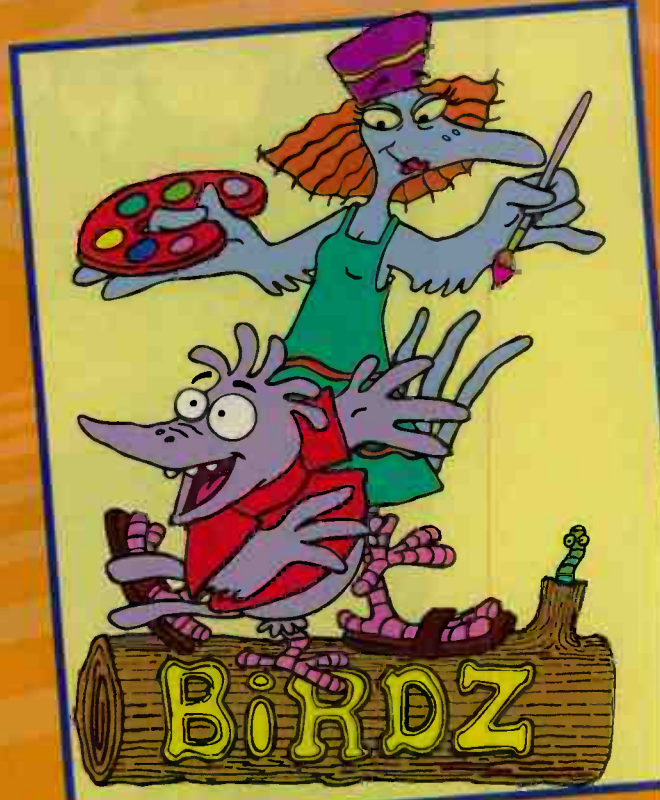
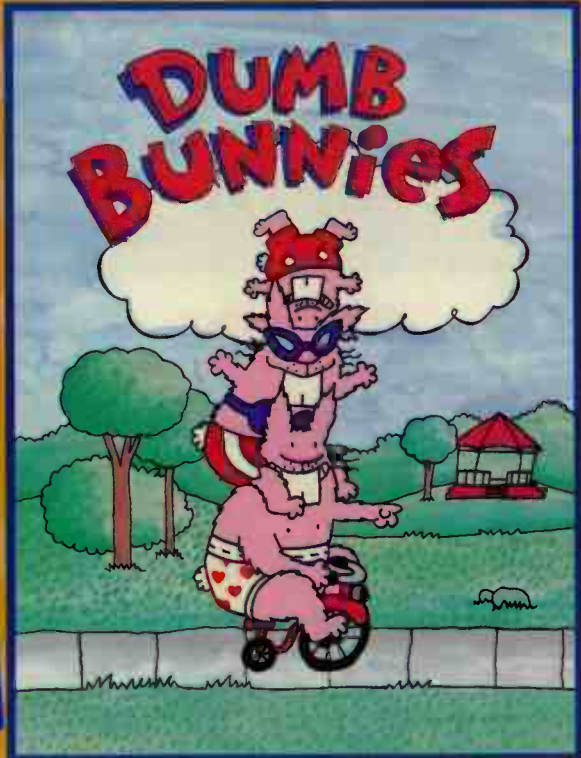
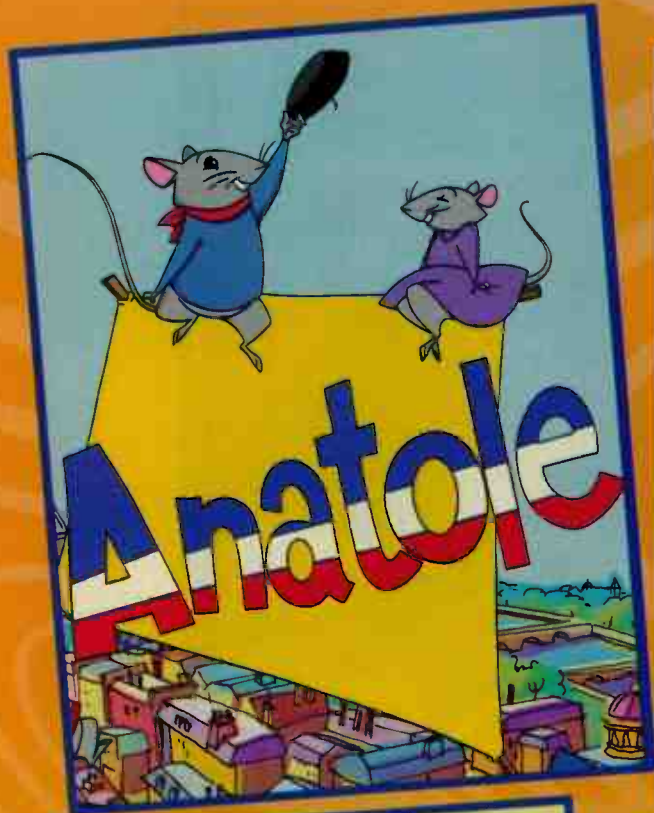
By Chris Pursell
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<p>Managing Editor Steven Gaydos</p> <p>Issue Editors Chris Pursell, Ramin Zahed</p> <p>Graphics Dallas Jackson</p> <p>Production Stuart Levine</p>

NELVANA

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Exex defend older auds in demo derby

By GINA KEATING

The 50-year-old Eye web seems an unlikely aspirant to fill the vacuum in hipsters' TV schedules left by dear, departing "Seinfeld." But CBS, which quietly stands next in line to the throne with the second highest-rated night on American television, wants to shed its also-ran status.

CBS has captured Sunday — the TV Valhalla of families and elders — with a four-hour lineup of solidly performing fare including "60 Minutes" and surprise hit "Touched by an Angel" capped by "The CBS Sunday Movie," a choice that not only holds but expands on audience share.

"We haven't abandoned the idea of broadcasting — casting a wide net and getting as wide an audience as possible," says Kelly Kahl, VP of program planning and scheduling.

CBS targets an audience in the 25-54 age range, while other networks rely on a younger crowd, Kahl says.

Skew's me

There's no dissatisfaction when Kahl describes his audience as "skewing older," and with good reason — 71 million baby boomers will reach retirement age in the next 15 years.

"We're trying to educate Madison Avenue that there is quite a value in that audience," he stresses. "Our baby boomers are very influential and wealthy, yet Madison Avenue prefers younger viewers because they're supposed to be more malleable."

Most boomers would be shocked to know their influence with advertisers has plummeted to nil, Kahl says, because "someone who is 50 has a lot more disposable income than a 20-year-old."

Neither is the old saw about elders' immutable buying patterns holding up.

"We're increasingly finding out that today's 50-year-old is nothing like a 50-year-old from 20 or 30 years ago."

Now CBS wants to shed its also-ran status in the post-"Seinfeld" world, and pegs critics' darling "Everybody Loves Raymond" as its breakout hit for next season.

"I think the potential is there for someone to come in and attack," Kahl says. "We're in an era now where one show can change the face of a network's fortunes."



WINNING TEAM: CBS Chairman Michael Jordan, left, Sean McManus, president of CBS Sports, center, and Mel Karmazin, CEO and proxy of CBS Corp., announce that the network will again broadcast NFL games after a four-year absence with a \$4 billion contract.

EYE OF THE HURRICANE

At 50, the Tiffany net hopes to reassume tube control

BY RICHARD KATZ

If perception was reality, the CBS led by CEO Leslie Moonves would rank as the No. 1 network.

Unfortunately for CBS, reality does have some place in the wacky world of television, so CBS still ranks last among the Big Four networks in the advertiser-coveted 18-49 age group.

But perception does carry weight in the TV business, and often achieving the right perception can lead directly to reality.

When he was hired from Warner Bros. 2½ years ago to rebuild the third-ranked CBS that had been decimated by Larry Tisch's cost cutting, Moonves had a formidable task. Advertisers don't buy a network's total household rating — they buy the demo — but Moonves has helped lift CBS to second place behind NBC in total households this year. CBS is still last in the important young adult demographics, but the industry has the perception that Moonves has the network moving in the right direction.

Good feelings abound

"In our business, perception becomes reality," says Bill Carroll, VP, programming for Katz Television.

"The most important thing that Les brings to the party is the confidence that advertisers, affiliates and the creative community have in him," says Alan Bell, president of Freedom Broadcasting, which owns CBS affiliates. "He creates confidence, comfort and respect. He perception points are very high."

Because Moonves — a sometime professional actor who can charm an audience more effectively than Bill Clinton — has

turned around how people think about CBS, the network now has the opportunity to turn the positive perception into ratings points.

"We feel good about how we're viewed by the public," says Moonves, who was promoted April 7 to CEO when Mel Karmazin



"We feel good about how we're viewed by the public. We no longer hear about "the mired-in-third-place CBS." "

CBS CEO Leslie Moonves

took the reigns of CBS Corp. as president and CEO. "We no longer hear about 'the mired-in-third-place CBS.'"

February's Winter Olympics from Nagano (16.2 rating/26 share, according to Nielsen Media Research) certainly has helped boost CBS to the number two net-

work this season, but it's also a product of some gradual successes in regularly scheduled programming.

Moving "Touched By an Angel" from Saturday to Sunday was a great move, making CBS the dominant network on Sunday night. Taking "Jag" from NBC is also turning out to be a smart move. When the show scored a 9.4/15 on March 31, it became the first regularly scheduled CBS program to win the Tuesday at 8 p.m. timeslot since April 1994.

Gradual is the key word when it comes to describing CBS' growth. On Monday night, "Everybody Loves Raymond" has grown 50% in ratings and demos compared to last year. And though CBS' plan to steal viewers from ABC's Friday "TGIF" kids has failed thus far, two replacements, "Kids Say the Darndest Things" and "Candid Camera," look like permanent solutions for the trouble spot.

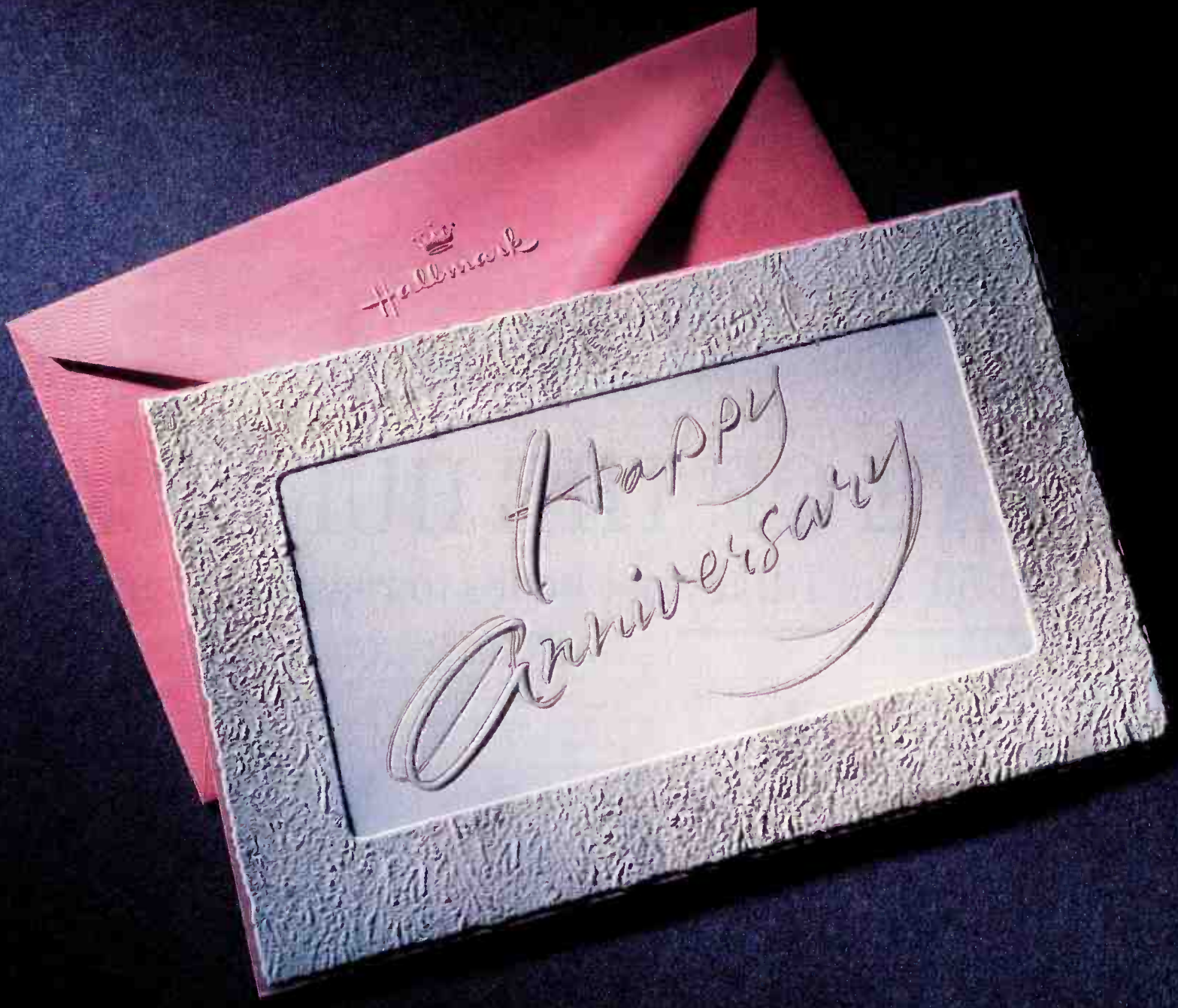
Fridays' swings

"Kids not coming to Friday was our biggest disappointment," said Moonves. "But now we're competitive on Friday in 18-49 for the first time in years."

CBS can also be credited with offering the best counter programming to NBC's juggernaut Thursday night compared with competitors. "Promised Land," "Diagnosis Murder" and "48 Hours" deliver solid — if old — viewership to regularly rank second for the night.

While many things are moving in the right direction for CBS, the network certainly has had its share of missteps this season. Chief among them is failing to take advantage of what was perhaps the best promotional platform CBS will have in years: the Olympics.

Turn to page A8




Hallmark

Happy
Anniversary





TWO GENERATIONS: In tribute to past seasons, CBS is offering computerized teams of past and present network stars, such as Fran Drescher, left, and Lucille Ball, in 30-second spots.

Digital icons and docs mark anni

By RAMIN ZAHED

It was a tough job, but someone had to do it.

Someone had to distill half a century of acclaimed newscasts, landmark sitcoms, dramas and documentaries into a two-hour special for CBS' 50th anniversary. The hardest part of the gig for executive producers Andrew Solt, Frank Martin and Rudy Poe was deciding what to leave on the cutting-room floor.

"We began production in September of last year," recalls Martin, whose credits includes "MGM: When the Lion Roars" and "John Huston: The Man, the Movies, the Maverick." "For the first three months, we were researching and collecting this staggering amount of material, and trying to come up with a viable way of presenting it in a two-hour TV format."

According to Martin, what makes the show unique is the way he and his team have taken the television milestones and presented it in a social and historic context, incorporating CBS news footage and anchor coverage.

"As a team, we must have eyeballed more than 1,000 hours of footage," says executive producer Andrew Solt. "We wanted to make sure we stop and spend time with the important material and to offer viewers a substantial representation of what TV was about in each decade."

To make all the different elements of the special move smoothly, the producers have juxtaposed images from real life with their depiction in dramas or sitcoms.

"The history of the network unfolds with images from the early '50s — shots of Beaver and Opie and Dick Van Dyke," says Martin. "Then, you have the birth of primetime news, and you move on to the Kennedy assassination. We see Walter Cronkite breaking down on the air. We have harrowing images from the Vietnam War and then we cut to moments from 'MASH.'"

Hosts with the most

The task of joining these images fell upon the shoulders of the show's guest hosts, all of them with faces linked with the Eye web's past and present legacy: Ed Bradley, David Letterman, Dan Rather, Carol Burnett, Mary Tyler Moore, Jane Seymour, Angela Lansbury, Fran Drescher, Don Johnson and Ray Romano are some of the stars lending their talents to the project.

So, what are some of the images viewers can look forward to watching again?

"We've uncovered precious home movies from the set of 'The Andy Griffith Show,' in which we can actually see the characters in color," says Martin. "There's a clip with Nixon after the famous Kennedy-Nixon debate where he says, 'Geez, I should have shaved.'"

Also as part of its 50th anniversary celebration, the network is offering computerized spots of the network's classic icons as guest stars on current series during sweeps.

In segments that run no longer than 30 seconds, some crossovers fans can look for include: Lucille Ball on "The Nanny" and "Medical Center's" Chad Everett on "Chicago Hope" (May 13); and Jack Benny on "Cosby," and Edward R. Murrow on "Murphy Brown" (May 18).

One spot that should induce a lot of flashbacks is scheduled on the May 14 episode of "Diagnosis Murder." Fans should pay close attention since Dr. Mark Sloan, played by Dick Van Dyke, runs into a funny guy named Rob Petrie, which, of course, is Van Dyke from the '60s.

"CBS: The First 50 Years" airs 9 p.m. May 20.

Tiffany net reverses its direction

Continued from page A5

"I'm sure they're disappointed they couldn't get more traction for their shows coming out of the Olympics," says Carroll.

Of the two mid-season replacements CBS promoted heavily during the Olympics, one, the Ann-Margaret starrer "Four Corners," was dead on arrival and canceled in less than a month. The other, Tom Selleck's "The Closer," started somewhat strongly with double-digit ratings but has sunk to the 7.0 range.

"Public Eye With Bryant Gumbel" has also been a disappointment so far. With Moonves' promotion to CEO came responsibility for the news division — as well as sports — and it will be interesting to see how much he makes his presence felt. CBS News president Andrew Heyward, who formerly reported directly to CBS chairman Michael Jordan, now reports to Moonves.

Hits and misses

CBS did not launch any break-out hits this year, but then again, neither did the competition. (Fox's "Ally McBeal" is the only bonafide breakthrough and ABC's "Dharma and Greg" and the WB's "Dawson's Creek" come close.)

"We're in an age where the instant hit is gone," explains Moonves.

Gene Jankowski, who was CBS prexy from 1977-1988, says that hits are harder to come by because there aren't enough quality shows to fill this expanding TV universe of 500 channels.

"The demand for creative material has escalated with the increase of channels and there aren't enough writers to keep up with the demand," says Jankowski.

With heated competition from three broadcast networks,



BLESSED RATINGS: CBS claimed Sunday nights after moving "Touched by an Angel," with Roma Downey, right, Della Reese and guest Bill Cosby, from its Saturday night lineup.

two weblets and dozens of legitimate cable networks, CBS is trying to gradually build audiences for its new shows at the same time as it's gradually trying to get younger. The jury's also still out on whether or not CBS can convince advertisers that CBS' older viewers have more disposable money to spend on their products than do younger folks. Logic would seem to favor CBS on this argument, but advertisers have always gotten viewers 55 and up for free. So, why would they suddenly volunteer to pay for them.

Advertising dilemmas

"CBS' argument may be right, but it's falling on deaf ears as far as advertisers are concerned," says Jerry Solomon, a media buyer from SFM Media.

CBS is counting on the NFL — for which it paid \$500 million a year — to bring additional younger (male) viewers beginning this fall. Moonves' new boss Karmazin — and CBS Sports president Sean McManus — claim that the network will at least break even. Even if it does, the NFL's price tag is symptomatic of the broader trend of programming costs crashing

through the roof, causing the networks to become break-even businesses that feed programming to their stations — where the real money is made.

Though the fact that the days of huge profits for the networks are gone might take the bloom off the rose for some executives in the TV business, Moonves says he's as enthusiastic as ever.

Fall preview

Potential new shows for the fall include Sydney Pollack's "Grand Concourse"; Melanie Griffith in "Me and George"; a project starring Brian Benben of HBO's "Dream On" fame; "Better Days," from the team of Michael Moore and Larry Charles; "L.A. Docs," a drama created by film producer Mark Johnson ("Bugsy," "Donnie Brasco"); and a new drama from Tony Fontana and Barry Levinson ("Homicide," HBO's "Oz") call "The Family Brood."

As one can see from this sample, Moonves' development slate this year is heavy on theatrical film talent and lighter on star-driven vehicles. CBS hopes a few of its new faces can catch the fancy of America and — in reality — become hits.

WITNESS: ED ASNER

"CBS always carried an aura because of those two icons, Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite, and the whole news division. I loved being part of CBS and it's nice to be back. In the early years they were always the Cadillac network, the premier one. In the years of 'The Mary Tyler Moore Show' the network was very hands-off. Fred Silverman and Bob Wood realized our quality and our meaning to the network and they protected us. Ethel Winant was a vice president then, and we had these three saints in our camp watching out and letting us work.

"The seven years of that show went by so satisfyingly sweetly. Our lives and our careers were made by it. The biggest clown prince of all, Ted [Knight], is dead and dearly missed. And we all went on to other things. But now it seems as if CBS is working harder and making a real strong attempt to be No. 1 again, and I'm glad they're giving that the full effort."

— Edward Asner, seven-time Emmy Award winner whose CBS series were "Slattery's People" from 1964-65, "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" from 1970-77 and "Lou Grant" from 1977-82. Currently, he's in "The Closer."

CONGRATULATIONS
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50th
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The opening of the Eyelid

By CYNTHIA LITTLETON

The story of CBS television network in its first decade is the story of the vision of one man: William S. Paley.

CBS came late to the network TV game, but it didn't take long for Paley to overtake NBC as the nation's most-watched web.

ABC and the Dumont network were already on the air when the CBS network formally bowed in 1948, but both of them lacked the resources and broadcasting acumen of Paley and his CBS radio empire.

Paley was a born program-



MARTIAL LAW: "The Phil Silvers Show," aka "You'll Never Get Rich," aka "Sgt. Bilko," was one of CBS' top draws in the late '50s.

mer. He had a keen eye for talent and an instinctive sense of who and what would click with the vast national audience. The entrepreneur who had originally followed his father into the cigar business built CBS into the top radio network by putting the accent on star performers,

broad-based entertainment and unrivaled news coverage. In 1948, Paley, then 47, proceeded to do the same thing in the uncharted waters of television.

"He had an enormous appetite for life," recalls Paley's son, William C. Paley. "He had good taste, and he just understood what people wanted."

TV historian Tim Brooks, co-author of "The Complete Directory of Primetime Network and Cable TV Shows 1946-Present," cites the 20-year odyssey of "Gunsmoke" as a prime example of Paley's innate programming skill.

From 1955-67, Marshal Matt Dillon (aka James Arness) maintained law and order in Dodge City on Saturday nights. As the show's ratings faltered in the 1966-67 season, CBS programmers decided it was time to put the horse opera out to pasture. But Paley felt there was life in the old show yet. He had "Gunsmoke" moved to an earlier timeslot on Tuesday and later Monday — where it was enjoyed by a new generation of TV fans for another eight years.

Radio days

Early on, most of CBS' programs and formats were borrowed from radio: Variety showcases, gameshows, anthology dramas, detective shows and crime thrillers, family oriented situation comedies and the like.

Paley not only had an eye for talent, he had an knack for picking hosts with an eye for talent. Ed Sullivan's "Toast of the Town" (renamed "The Ed Sullivan Show" in 1955) held a plum Sunday night spot on CBS' first full-season schedule in 1948-49, where it remained until 1971.



SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE: George Burns and Gracie Allen's switch from radio to TV was a hit until Allen retired from showbiz in 1958.

Arthur Godfrey, who had been a mainstay of CBS radio, also was a fixture on the television network in its first decade. "Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts" was CBS' first show to rank No. 1 for a season, having dislodged NBC's "Texaco Star Theater" with Milton Berle as the headliner of 1951-52.

Paley aggressively courted stars to come to CBS by cultivating friendships in the showbiz community and, most importantly, offering superstar-sized salaries unheard of at the time for TV.

Paley staged an infamous raid on the NBC stable in 1949-50, luring away Jack Benny, Perry Como and others. Benny and his troupe bowed a TV version of his radio sketch comedy series in 1950, and Benny remained on the network through 1964.

"George Burns & Gracie Allen" were added to CBS' TV comedy roster around the same time. The pair played themselves in a sitcom that ran from 1950 until Allen retired from

showbiz in 1958. Vaudevillian Red Skelton had a 17-year run (1953-1970) in a sketch comedy/variety series on CBS after striking out on NBC.

Paley had a reputation as an innovator and a risk-taker. In 1951, he broke with early TV's live tradition by allowing, after some hesitation, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz to produce "I Love Lucy" on film on the West Coast. The gamble, needless to say, paid off as "Lucy" went on to rank among TV's top three series for six consecutive seasons ('51-'52 through '56-'57). When the Lucy-and-Desi TV union broke up for good in 1960, Ball remained woven into the fabric of CBS through "The Lucy Show" and "Here's Lucy" running through 1974.

How sweet it was: Jackie Gleason brought "The Honeymooners" into the CBS fold in 1952 after the Kramdens and the Nortons bowed on the DuMont network as part of Gleason's "Cavalcade of Stars." "The Honeymooners" sketches in Gleason's variety hour were so popular that 39 stand-alone half-hour segs were filmed for the 1955-56 season. The Great One later hosted variety and entertainment series for CBS through 1970.

Quiz shows and anthology series also dotted CBS' schedule during its formative years. Celebrity panel shows like "I've Got a Secret" and "What's My Line" both ran for more than 15 years on the web. "The \$64,000 Question" vaulted to the top of the Nielsen primetime chart in the 1955-56 season, but the big-money quiz shows soon fell victim to the question-fixing scandal that first engulfed NBC's "Twenty-One" in 1958.

The dramatic anthology series, along with star-studded "event" musicals like 1957's "Cinderella" and 1958's "Wonderful Town," were the prestige programs that helped CBS earn its mantle as the Tiffany network. "Playhouse 90" (1956-60) has the most lustrous track record, featuring such acclaimed

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May 1, 1948: AT&T opens first coaxial cable between New York and L.A.

May 3, 1948: CBS News becomes first regularly scheduled TV network news program.

June 20, 1948: Ed Sullivan's "Toast of the Town" begins



SULLIVAN

23-year run.

Nov. 1948: CBS News' first full coverage of presidential election returns.

1950: CBS institutes loyalty oath during McCarthy era.

1951: First TV remote as Gen. MacArthur returns from Korea.

June 25, 1951: CBS televises gala one-hour premiere of color television but only 24 sets in U.S. pick it up.

June 28, 1951: "The Amos and Andy Show" premieres and is first television dramatic series starring an all-black cast.



CRONKITE

September 1951: First network line goes transcontinental.

Oct. 15, 1951: "I Love Lucy" premieres and is first to use three-camera format.

Nov. 18, 1951: "See It Now" premieres and is first live commercial coast-to-coast television broadcast.

1952: Television City, a state-of-the-art production facility, opens in Los Angeles.

June 30, 1952: TV's longest-running sudser, "The Guiding Light," premieres on television.



SKELTON

July 11, 1952: Walter Cronkite is introduced as CBS' new anchor during broadcast of Republican National Convention.

1953: First international broadcast is made during Queen Elizabeth II's coronation.

Feb. 1, 1953: "The Red Skelton Show" premieres on CBS following two-year NBC run.

Nov. 30, 1956: CBS airs first videotaped news broadcast.



HOW SWEET IT IS: Jackie Gleason's 1952 comedy smash "The Honeymooners," with Art Carney, Audrey Meadows and Joyce Randolph, was the first of Gleason's television ventures with CBS.

HAPPY

50th

CONGRATULATIONS TO CBS
FOR 50 OUTSTANDING YEARS.



STRAIGHT SHOOTER: James Arness, right, as Marshal Matt Dillon on "Gunsmoke" captivated Western fans for over two decades.

Early years take ideas, auds from radio dynasty

Continued from page 10

live, 90-minute productions as Rod Serling's "Requiem for a Heavyweight," William Gibson's "The Miracle Worker" and Abby Mann's "Judgment at Nuremberg," among many others.

"Playhouse 90," and the equally acclaimed "Studio One," (1948-58) brought many these legends to the small screen, ranging from Erroll Flynn in his waning years to Charlton Heston, Paul Newman, Robert Redford in their pre-stardom days. James Dean touched down on "Schlitz Playhouse of Stars" (1951-59)



LUMET

shortly before his death in 1955. Directorial talent was also abundant, with John Frankenheimer and Arthur Penn honing their craft on "Playhouse 90," while Sidney Lumet and George Roy Hill were among those who contributed to the hourlong "Studio One."

Viewership growing

As the 1950s wore on, the three major TV networks reached an increasingly national audience. By 1955, the year the DuMont network folded, over half of the nation's homes had a TV set. As a result, national news coverage played an increasingly prominent role in shaping public opinion and influencing public policy.

Never was this more apparent for CBS than in March and April of 1954, when renowned newsman Edward R. Murrow and his public-affairs program "See It Now" (1951-55) dared to challenge the destructive force of Sen. Joseph McCarthy. In a series of three broadcasts, Murrow and his producer, the equally renown

Fred W. Friendly, artfully laid bare the emptiness of McCarthy's hysterical finger-pointing, which had destroyed so many careers in Hollywood and other industries over the previous few years.

As he had in radio, Paley prized and protected his news division. He gave great autonomy to "Murrow's boys," and especially in the network's early years, he fought to strike the right balance between the journalistic mission of CBS News and the financial considerations of the larger company. For example, CBS brass never pressured Murrow and Friendly not to take on McCarthy, publicize those particular "See It Now" telecasts. Murrow and Friendly wound up spending their own money to take out an ad out in the New York Times.

Giddy up, cowpoke

By the mid-1950s, the TV Western craze had begun. CBS boasted two of the best, with "Gunsmoke" (1955-75) and the moody Richard Boone as the wandering gun-for-hire Paladin in "Have Gun Will Travel" (1957-63). On the comedy side, another big hit to emerge on CBS in the second half of the 1950s was "The Phil Silvers Show" (aka "Sergeant Bilko" in syndication, although the show actually bowed as "You'll Never Get Rich").

As CBS began its second decade, the web began nurturing a new generation of prime-time players, including such durable classics as "Perry Mason," "The Twilight Zone" and "Father Knows Best." Paley reigned as chairman of CBS until 1983, but he returned in 1986 at the behest of then-CBS prexy Laurence Tisch and remained a regular presence at the network until his death at age 89 in 1990.

Paley legacy is TV cornerstone

By RICHARD SETLOWE

He is to American broadcasting as Carnegie was to steel, Ford to automobiles, Luce to publishing and Ruth to baseball." That's how the New York Times in 1976 described William S. Paley, founder and at the time chairman and chief executive officer of CBS Inc.

CBS is the house that Paley built, and dominated, throughout his life. And "Mr. Paley's cigar store" led the networks in ratings for commercial television's first 21 years, while CBS News defined the standards by which broadcasting news was judged.

This week marks CBS Television's 50th anniversary.

"That year, 1948, was the true beginning of television as we know it today," Paley notes in his memoirs. "As It Happened." By '48, CBS' television programming had grown to 38 hours a week, produced in makeshift studios and sent to its 28 affiliate stations via cable or through the mail on film.

"When we dedicated the television network with the first broadcast, Bill was not there," recalls Dr. Frank N. Stanton, CBS' president 1946-71 and then vice chairman and chief operating officer from 1971-73. "That was not a priority at that time. He was keeping the entertainment side on radio going."

TV, radio similar

For Paley, the fate and evolution of radio and television were intertwined and inseparable. It is a matter of legend that Paley — then the 26-year-old advertising manager of his father's successful Congress Cigar Co. — discovered radio when he sponsored a variety show, "La Palina Hour," on Philadelphia's WCAU radio. Sales of La Palina stogies soared, and with his family's backing in 1928, he bought the struggling Philadelphia-based United Independent Broadcasters Co. with 16 affiliates, which he renamed the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Small audiences

In 1945, at the end of war, CBS was operating two TV stations — one broadcasting four hours a week in black-and-white, the other operating experimentally in color. A year later, there were still only an estimated 6,000 television sets in the U.S.

"But people were not going to buy television sets unless there were programs to see," Paley recalled in "As It Happens." "That meant we had to invest immense amounts of money to underwrite new programs, which in turn would induce people to buy TV sets, which in turn would attract ad-

vertisers according to the size of the viewing audience. ... We had to make a firm decision to expect losses for a number of years; to hope that by developing the proper ingredients, we would break even, and then become profitable — before we lost our shirts."

NBC then dominated radio with 12 of the 15 top-rated shows. In a series of negotiations that became notorious as



'The challenge is to know what the public is seeking before the public even knows it is looking for something else.'

William S. Paley

in radio and would be the same for television," Paley said.

"Bill was a bold operator and dedicated to building the strongest schedule he could build," Stanton notes. "As he moved into television, he exercised the same influence there as he did in radio."

In 1953 the CBS television network showed its first profit. "But to do that, we had 'invested' — or to put it in a better way, had lost — approximately \$60 million ... financed out of the profits of our radio network," Paley reported.

Planning ahead

For the next 21 years, it remained the leader. "Successful programming, however, does not consist merely of giving the mass audience what it wants at any given moment. The true art is to discern what the public will want or will accept in the years ahead," Paley once said. "The challenge is to know what the public is seeking before the public even knows it is looking for something else."

Paley resigned as CBS chairman in 1983, but remained as chairman of the executive committee until '86 when he was recalled as corporate chairman, the post he held at his death in 1990, at the age of 89.

Ensclosed at the time in the executive suite at Black Rock, Paley mused nostalgically to a reporter, "I used to do everything here. I was the salesman. I made the news decisions. I knew all the correspondents on a first-name basis. I'd call up in the middle of a radio program and get them to change something. I'd go down to Broadway and catch a show, and if I saw someone I liked, I'd sign them up. It isn't fun giving up that authority, not doing the things you once did."

WITNESS: SHERWOOD SCHWARTZ

"Red Skelton detested writers and felt he was the whole show. Well, there was this story of this script that Red didn't like and he asked the writer out to his mansion. The meeting consisted of Red taking out a gun and shooting at the writer's feet.

"Red would react like a 6-year-old. What I told CBS was, 'I have 10 toes and I like each and every one of them.' They begged me to look at the Kinescopes and figure out what was wrong. So, I sat in a viewing room for several hours. It was very obvious to me what was wrong. They didn't care what was wrong, they just wanted to be reassured that it could be fixed.

"I said, 'I'll fix the show and write it, but I don't want to meet with him.' Say anything you want about Red, but he's a brilliant performer; better at pantomime than Marcel Marceau. So, they came back to me and said, 'You never have to meet with him.' So, for seven years I was the head writer of the show and never met with him. That's got to be some sort of record. We once had a cordial hello and talked about the weather."

— Sherwood Schwartz, writer, (and Emmy Award winner, 1960-61). "The Red Skelton Show," 1953-61; creator and executive producer, "Gilligan's Island" from 1964-67, and of ABC's "The Brady Bunch."

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FILLING THE BOOMER SLATE

Skeds start to run the gamut as TV matures

By RAY RICHMOND

CBS was still at the height of its primetime dominance during the decade of 1958-67, and it accomplished this mastery in radically different ways with shows that ran the gamut from "Gilligan's Island" to "The Twilight Zone" — though in hindsight, perhaps those weren't so dissimilar. (We can only imagine how crazy Rod Serling would have driven everyone were he one of the Minnow castaways.)

The end of the '50s marked the era of the adult Western's greatest success — and CBS ruled that roost. It had James Arness' frontier justice in "Gunsmoke" (beginning in 1955); it had Steve McQueen's sawed-off-carbine-toting bounty hunter in "Wanted: Dead or Alive" (1958-61); it had Richard Boone's educated gunslinger in "Have Gun, Will Travel" (1957-63); and it had Clint Eastwood's cattle-drivin' cowhand in "Rawhide" (1959-66).

Duke on the tube

CBS also nearly had John Wayne. The Duke was the original choice to play Marshal Matt Dillon, but he was reluctant to commit to a weekly series at that point in his career and suggested Arness instead. All in all, it wasn't a bad move, as 20-year moves go.

But while "Gunsmoke" was perhaps the most popular and enduring of the CBS Westerns of the era, all of those shows contributed to an environment that

gave the entire Western genre a wholesale makeover, buffing it with a sheen of sophistication that was more easily embraced by grownups than the "Lone Rangers" and "Hopalong Casidys" of the previous era. These new shows were more cinematic in scope, tackling adult subject matter rarely hinted at in its predecessors.

The quality of the shows represented a staggering leap forward, with the Westerns now shot on film and produced by Hollywood studios. They were more violent as well — another significant step in TV's development (some would argue not for the better). By the 1958-59 season, eight of TV's primetime top 10 shows were Westerns (including NBC's "Wagon Train" and ABC's "The Rifleman" and

'The Dick Van Dyke Show' featured the tightest ensemble of players this side of Jerry, George, Elaine and Kramer ... exhibiting a chemistry that never disappointed.

"Maverick").

But pretty soon, CBS was starting to move in decidedly more adventuresome directions. It finally made a hit out of Allen Funt's "Candid Camera" concept, which had been bopping around the networks for a dozen years, catching people "in the act of being themselves" from 1960-67. (Classic gag: Closing the state of Delaware and turning back confused motorists at the state line.)

On the road again

Another memorably unique effort was "Route 66" (1960-64), the road show that found Martin Milner and George Maharis traveling the country looking for a good adventure to capture



STRIKING IT RICH: CBS courted a young baby-boomer crowd with sitcoms such as "The Beverly Hillbillies," starring (clockwise from top) Donna Douglas, Irene Ryan, Max Baer Jr. and Buddy Ebsen.

their fancy. It was kind of a straitlaced, wholesome "Easy Rider," and as such it struck a chord with young America.

"The Defenders" (1961-65) was another CBS gem, likely one of TV's most underappreciated series. Penned and produced by Reginald Rose, it was one of the first shows on TV to address such disturbing, divisive issues as abortion, euthanasia, governmental abuse of power and blacklisting. E.G. Marshall and Robert Reed starred as father-and-son lawyers who clashed and toiled in obscurity, fighting the good fight — riveting stuff that was highly volatile for the time.

CBS also struck paydirt with "Perry Mason" (1957-66), introducing audiences to the most unfailingly successful lawyer ever to have lived. He was uncanny: Perry never lost a case, his cross-examined defendants always broke down on the stand

and his face never changed expression, frozen in a sort of constipated grimace. But hokey as it was, we loved Perry, anyway, along with the actor who gave him life, Raymond Burr.

In the 'Zone'

Then there was "The Twilight Zone" (1959-62 and 1963-65), Serling's wildly imaginative, way-before-its-time anthology of ironic little morality plays in the guise of science fiction that produced some startlingly original work. It offered early platforms for future stars like Robert Redford and Burt Reynolds and old pros like Burgess Meredith and Mickey Rooney. It remains one of the most consistently creative, well-written and imaginatively conceived shows ever to grace the small screen.

Some old comedy favorites also were in their primes on

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Sept. 14, 1957: "Have Gun Will Travel" premieres and is an overnight hit, reaching the top 10 ratings four years in a row.

Sept. 21, 1957: "Perry Mason" premieres.

Jan. 9, 1959: "Rawhide" begins, starring Clint Eastwood.

Oct. 2, 1959: Most popular sci-fi anthology series ever, "The Twilight Zone," bows.

Dec. 8, 1959: James Aubrey becomes president of CBS television.

1960: CBS is the first network to broadcast the Olympics.

Oct. 3, 1960: "The Andy Griffith Show" bows, landing in the top 10 for its entire 8-year run.

1961: CBS carries first combat footage showing Vietnamese troops in action.



GRINCH

Nov. 22, 1963: "As the World Turns" is interrupted with bulletin by Cronkite announcing that President Kennedy has been shot in Dallas.

Sept. 26, 1964: "Gilligan's Island" starring Bob Denver begins three-year run.

Dec. 20, 1964: All three nets broadcast in color simultaneously for the first time.

1965: Half of CBS's regular primetime schedule is broadcast in color.

Dec. 9, 1965: "A Charlie Brown Christmas Special" is first Charles Scultz animated cartoon special to air.



GRAVES

Dec. 17, 1966: "Mission: Impossible" starring Peter Graves premieres.

Dec. 18, 1966: First broadcast of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" runs.



JUSTICE PREVAILED: Richard Boone handled trouble in the West in "Have Gun Will Travel," left, while E.G. Marshall and Robert Reed, with guest star William Shatner, took care of the courtroom in the hard-hitting "The Defenders."



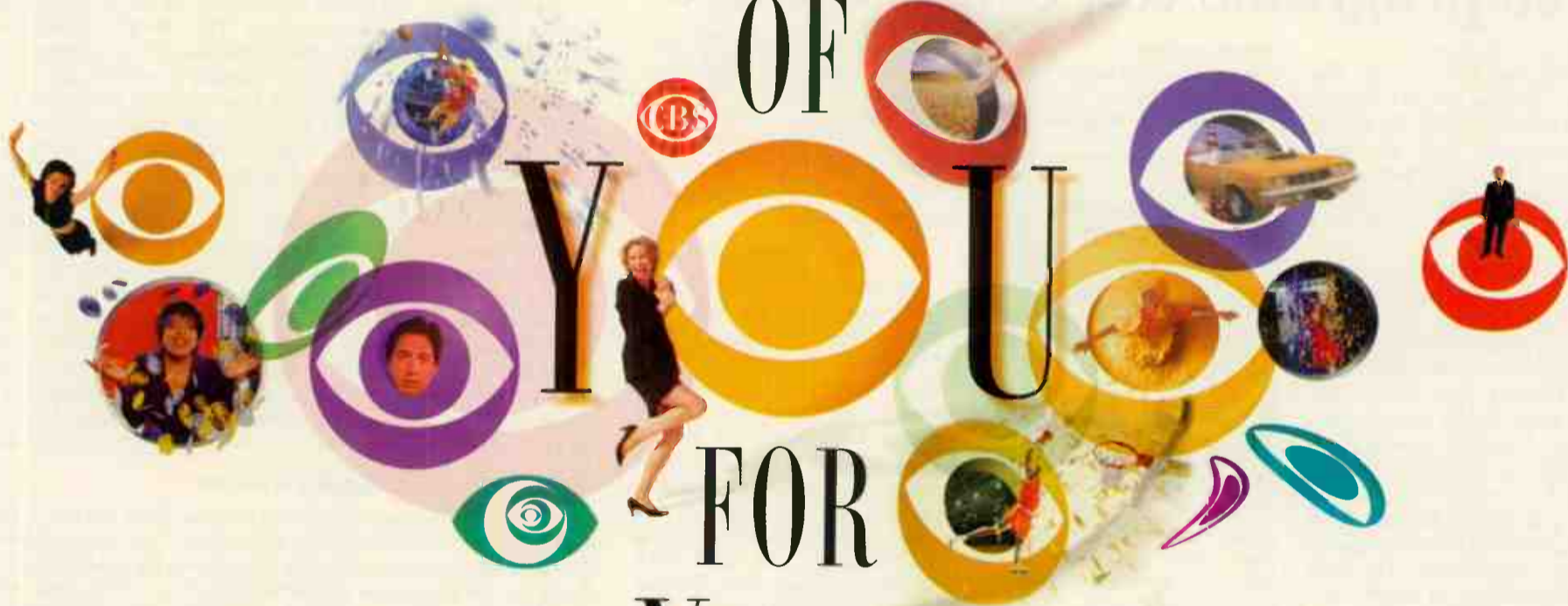
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World Radio History



MAN VS. MACHINE: Jonathon Harris, who starred as the scheming Dr. Smith in "Lost in Space," couldn't foil the Robinson family.

'60s programs tell colorful tales

Continued from page 14

CBS at that time: Folks like Danny Thomas and his "Danny Thomas Show" (1957-65) and, of course, Lucille Ball, who held court as Lucy Carmichael in "The Lucy Show" (1962-68) as the followup to the legendary "I Love Lucy."

"The Andy Griffith Show" was much more than the place where a filmmaker named Ron Howard got his start in the business. Between 1960 and 1968, it was nothing less than CBS' most dependable comedy performer, finishing among TV's top 10 for eight straight seasons.

And, of course, the comedy that singlehandedly kept CBS anchored at the top of the quality comedy charts was "The Dick Van Dyke Show" (1961-66), Carl Reiner's masterful depiction of what life must have been like for him behind-the-scenes writing for "Your Show of Shows."

So much for intellect

But around 1962, things began to go a little screwy at the Eye web. It suddenly went actively, delightfully lowbrow in courting the youthful baby boomers with silly fare like "The Beverly Hillbillies" (1962-71), "Petticoat Junction" (1963-70), "Gomer Pyle" (1964-70), the charming "My Favorite Martian" (1963-66), "The Munsters" (1964-66), "Green Acres" (1965-71), "Gilligan's Island" (1964-67), "Hogan's Heroes" (1965-71) and let's not forget "Lost in Space" (1965-68).

There may not have been a thimbleful of intelligent dialogue in all of the shows combined. But the strategy was effective. "The Beverly Hillbillies" held down the top spot for two straight seasons between 1962 and '64. "Petticoat Junction," "Green Acres," "Hogan's Heroes," "Gomer Pyle" and "My Favorite Martian" all cracked the top 10 at one

time or another.

Arguably, the height of CBS' primetime success throughout its 50 years of life came during



CASTING CALL: The success of "The Dick Van Dyke Show" rested on the talents of Dick Van Dyke, left, Mary Tyler Moore, Morey Amsterdam, Rose Marie and Richard Deacon.

the 1963-64 season, when the network claimed an astounding 14 of Nielsen's top 15 shows (with only a second-place finish for NBC's "Bonanza" preventing a clean sweep).

But the sheer chutzpah that would result in the network greenlighting a comedy featur-

ing bumbling Nazis ("Hogan's Heroes") also led to the stylized mayhem of "Mission: Impossible" (1966-73), which would earn multiple Emmys (two straight for dramatic series) and bring to CBS an injection of verve and dash.

Topical humor

Moreover, no one would again question CBS' sense of daring after it launched "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" (1967-69), an irreverent, sacred-cow-skewering variety series that satirized pretty much all the institutions that Americans hold dear: Religion, politics, the corporate world and, especially, the war raging in Vietnam. Tom and Dick Smothers wore their antiwar, liberal sensibilities on their sleeves, and it perfectly mirrored the tumult dividing society at large.

Coming as it did on the heels of such hayseed, camp gibberish as "Green Acres" and "Petticoat Junction," it was a revelation — short-lived though it may have been — that closed out the 1960s for CBS in style.

WITNESS: CARL REINER

"I spent the best years of my life doing 'The Dick Van Dyke Show' at CBS. I wrote the first 40 shows and 50 or 60 of the total 158 episodes and all of the rewriting. After 'Your Show of Shows' went off the air at NBC, I was offered a lot of situation comedies that my wife and I didn't think were any good.



She said, 'You can write better than this.' So I did.

"CBS has been good to both Rob [Reiner] and I. They really supported 'The Dick Van Dyke Show' and 'All in the Family.' When I saw the pilot to 'All in the Family,' I said, 'They'll never let this on the air.' Well, of course, they did."

— Carl Reiner, the nine-time primetime Emmy Award winner, whose CBS shows included "Eddie Condon's Floor Show" in 1950, "Keep Talking" from 1958-59, "The Celebrity Game" from 1964-65 and "The Dick Van Dyke Show" from 1961-66.

'Zone' scribe explores Twilight of sci-fi series

By RICHARD MATHESON

Early in 1959, my friend Charles Beaumont and I were invited to view the pilot film for a new anthology series to be called "The Twilight Zone." The pilot was created by already legendary writer Rod Serling.

Following the viewing of the pilot, Chuck Beaumont and I were called in separately to "The Twilight Zone" offices at Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer, where we met with Rod Serling and his producer, Buck Houghton. Chuck and I had collaborated on various scripts for television, but chose to approach the possibility of working for "The Twilight Zone" as individual writers.

For my part, it took only a one-sentence pitch to acquire my first assignment, the sentence being, in essence, "A World War I fighter pilot gets lost and, when he lands, finds himself in a modern SAC base."

Previously published

I believe that the reason Chuck Beaumont and I became the initial writers on "The Twilight Zone" (most of the scripts, of course, were prepared by Rod) was that we were already familiar — and somewhat proficient — in this type of story, having had short stories in the genre published in various magazines.

In addition, we were both experienced in script writing and flexible enough to fit ourselves into "The Twilight Zone" mold. This mold was, essentially, quite simple, but it did require an ability to shape a story to fit it, i.e., an opening to intrigue the viewer with the story premise and allow Rod to make his opening remarks; an evolution of the premise (with hopefully, a first-act "cliff-hanger" ending) and a final "zapper" surprise ending that permits Rod to make his closing remarks.

We (Chuck Beaumont and I) and, I dare say, any of the other writers who contributed to the show later on, which included our friend George Clayton Johnson, never had the least notion that we were working on a show destined to be an enduring classic. We knew it was well-done and appreciated the skillful way in which our scripts were presented (scripts were *never* altered once they were completed to everyone's satisfaction). But that the show would still be humming along almost 40 years later? Never. As a matter of fact, it is my recollection that the show struggled for renewal each year. CBS must have left it on the air not because of high ratings but because it was a *success d'estime* they respected.

Quality is forever

Why is "The Twilight Zone" still with us? Why has it not dated itself off the airwaves as so many shows have? My answer is always the same: Because the stories are interesting. By today's film standards, the programs look somewhat primitive — black-and-white, minimal special effects, obviously economical budgets. Nevertheless, they are so well done, with the most talented writers, actors, directors, composers, cinematographers, crews, et al. Thanks to all those who contributed to the show. Thanks to the producers. Thanks to CBS. And mostly, obviously, thanks to a very talented, very generous and very, very nice human being — Rod Serling.

Richard Matheson has written the screenplays for such horror and sci-fi classics as "The Incredible Shrinking Man," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "Duel," "Trilogy of Terror," "The Night Stalker" and "Somewhere in Time." His novel "What Dreams May Come" is being adapted by screenwriter Ron Bass; Robin Williams, Cuba Gooding Jr. and Max Von Sydow will star.



FINAL FRONTIER: A young, pre-"Star Trek" William Shatner confronts gremlins in the classic "The Twilight Zone" episode, "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," penned by Richard Matheson.

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FAMILY TIES: The trend-setting drama "The Waltons," from producer Earl Hamner, paved the way for future drama series and was the second-highest rated show in the country during its nine-year run.

Scribes score a series of hits

Continued from page A18

the now-classic "The Carol Burnett Show."

"In the changeover," Silverman admits, "we put on some of the worst shows, like 'The Interns' and 'Cade's County.' It took us two, three years to fully achieve what we wanted."

This hardly mattered once the 1973-74 season kicked in, when CBS boasted nine of the top 10-rated shows, a record not even NBC in its Brandon Tartikoff heydays ever attained. The list reflected both CBS' rich Saturday night slate — "All in the Family," "MASH," "Mary Tyler Moore," "Bob Newhart" and "Carol Burnett" (with only the latter out of the top 12) — and its diverse slate of shows. Hamner's "Waltons" was number two; "Hawaii Five-O" (which had begun a weak life in 1968 with a 49 rank) was five; Lear's "Maude" (the first in an astonishing series of "All in the Family" spin-offs) was six; cop dramas "Kojak" and "Cannon" were seven and 10, respectively, and "The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour," marking the youth version of the variety

show, was eight.

Above all, this fecund period, says Waldron, "was the golden age of sitcoms. A previous time had standouts like 'The Dick Van Dyke Show,' 'I Love Lucy' and 'The Honeymooners,' but CBS didn't return to this kind of richness until 'All in the Family,' 'Mary Tyler Moore' and 'MASH.' The pattern in the '70s was to let creative producers run with their concepts, and what happened was that the more outrageous you were, the more people embraced it."

Gambles paid off

"The idea," suggests Silverman, "was to take chances. Maude coming on-screen to talk about abortion. That was taking chances, and people tuned in."

"CBS utterly refashioned two primary stalwarts at this time," notes Stark, "the sitcom and the news division, with '60 Minutes,' which wasn't supposed to be a ratings leader at all but finally reached prominence in 1976" when it jumped from a previous 50 rank in its early Sunday slot to an 18 rank with a Sun-

day 7 p.m. slot. In 1977 "60 Minutes" topped ratings king "All in the Family" with a four rank.

But just as "60 Minutes" had the network's deep reporting tradition to rely on, so the sitcoms — "All in the Family," for example, had such veteran Desilu writers as Mel Tolkin and Bob Weiskopf — drew upon CBS' radio comedy tradition. "This is why CBS was able to maintain the sitcom tradition over three decades," says Waldron. "A final key was Bill Paley's style of hiring stars, which wasn't the NBC or ABC way. Even with a 'MASH' or 'All in the Family,' if we didn't know Carroll O'Connor or Alan Alda right away, the shows were soon centered around them."

"Looking back over all my network experiences," says Silverman, "my stay at CBS was the best, because the schedule had character and was as good as it gets."

And after Silverman left, CBS picked up a mid-season replacement show in 1978 by the name of "Dallas." Moving into the late '70s, the network was still making prime-time TV history.

WITNESS: LARRY GELBART

"The 'MASH' experience was a very prideful one for me. You would get some daily flak but always yearly support from CBS. They let us get out the program we wanted to get out. Occasionally some executive would say something nuts. One guy in the second year asked Gene Reynolds and I to lunch. We sat down and he said, 'I'm going to tell you guys why you blew it with "MASH." My mind walked out, but I stayed and had lunch.

"I never had to underline a word or write a stage direction for Alan Alda, and Gary Burghoff is a damn fine actor. They were plea-

sure to write for. We had the usual censorship problems, but when I did TV, the only four-letter word allowed on was 'Lucy.' But we had full support on the mission — attack the wastefulness of war. We never cut back on the message.

"I forget who said this, but the funniest line I ever heard about CBS was about an out-of-town guy who had an appointment at Television City. He stops and asks for directions, and a guy tells him, 'Drive down Fairfax and the first window without a chicken in it is CBS.'"

— Larry Gelbart was creator and co-producer of "MASH," (1972-83); writer of CBS' "The Red Buttons Show" (1952-55) and "Honestly Celeste" (1954) and many other shows, including the classic "Your Show of Shows."



GELBART

Gotham's Black Rock home to net's history

By MICHAEL SPEIER

It may not be as popular as the Carnegie Deli or the Winter Garden Theater, but CBS' Gotham-based headquarters, known industrywide as Black Rock, is as important to Manhattan's infrastructure as any tourist-heavy eatery or Broadway venue.

And now it's official.

Located at 51 W. 52nd St., the Eero Saarinen-designed tower, envisioned by CBS founder William S. Paley and its then-prexy Frank Stanton, was declared a New York City landmark Oct. 21 by the city's Landmark Preservation Committee.

The decision met with great approval from Stanton, whose tenure lasted from 1946-73. "The announcement meant a lot of things to a lot of people," he says. "For me, it was recognition for a project that helped link the city with the network and the employees of CBS."

Design elements

Construction began in 1961 after Saarinen, according to the commission's declaration, decided to build what he called "the simplest (structure) in New York. At the height of the popularity of steel-caged office buildings, Saarinen designed Black Rock as New York's first reinforced concrete skyscraper."

When Saarinen, who also designed Kennedy Airport's TWA terminal, died during the project's early stages, his partners, Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo, oversaw its completion. The building became the net's permanent home in 1965 and since has been the base for such luminary broadcast execs as Fred Silverman and Laurence Tisch.

Color schemes

Known throughout architectural circles as one of the U.S.' great post-World War II structural achievements, Black Rock boasts 38 floors blanketed with dark granite and gray-tinted glass.

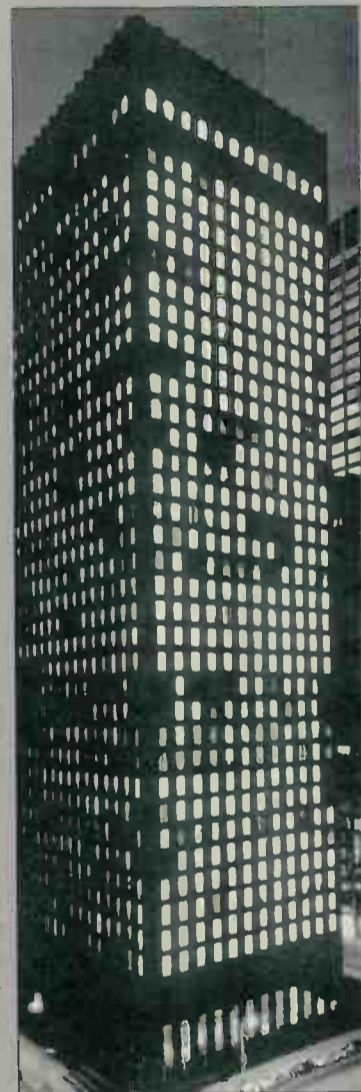
It became home to a burgeoning network that previously had been spread among 26 offices throughout the entire metropolitan area. "We wanted something aesthetically pleasing, but our first goal was to get everyone under one roof," Stanton says. "I'm most proud of how the entire network's operation was consolidated."

The commission's designation also reinforced to business, broadcast and political orgs the relationship between New York and CBS, which began in 1928 when Paley created a radio network of 16 stations. "The company may have gone through radical changes every year," says Stanton, "but it will always be associated with New York City, and this gesture solidifies that sentiment."

Where the elite meet

CBS' production studios and stages are maintained at various locations throughout the city, while Black Rock houses the net's executive offices.

CBS boasts another classic address on its real estate roster: Since 1993, "The Late Show With David Letterman" has broadcast from the old Oscar Hammerstein Theater, which was renamed after legendary TV showman Ed Sullivan in 1967.



TOWER OF POWER: Black Rock, CBS' corporate office, was named a New York City landmark in October.

Thanks for making us feel at home.





OPPOSITE ENDS: While "Lou Grant," left, appealed to urban, older auds, "The Dukes of Hazzard" struck gold with younger, rural viewers.

'DALLAS' LEADS 'ME' DECADE

Winning shows reflect 'greed is good' credo

By LARRY LEVENTHAL

It would be two more years before Ronald Reagan would be elected President, but the CBS primetime schedule was already beginning to reflect a shift in the American consciousness.

"Dallas," the first of the nighttime serials, was finding an audience on Fridays with its feuding characters living the kind of opulent lifestyle many people would openly aspire to in the 1980s.

"Dallas presented the kind of wealthy life every person dreamed about," contends Lee Rich, who was head of Lorimar Productions, which produced the show for the Eye web. "It was what they wanted their life to be like. People took to the characters. The time frame was definitely right."

Magic of the night

Rich's background in daytime serials led him to wonder why the same idea couldn't be presented in primetime. "We first approached CBS with 'Knot's Landing,' but they turned us down. We came back with 'Dallas,' and they ordered five scripts."

Interestingly enough, Rich says that the roles played by Patrick Duffy and Victoria Principal were to be the center of the show. "But Larry Hagman's J.R. became the dominant character. He was the villain everybody loved to hate."

With the success of "Dallas," "Knot's Landing" was given a new lease on life, although it was built around middle-class characters.

"Falcon Crest," set in the California wine country with Jane Wyman as the evil matriarch, was spun off from "Dallas" and also focused on the wealth of its characters.

It was during this period that CBS programmers looked in a decidedly different direction — back to the country.

It had been a number of years since the success of comedy shows like "Beverly Hillbillies," "Green Acres" and "Petticoat Junction" pulled in ratings with deliberate innocence and cornpone humor. Country music was growing in popularity, and the network saw potential in a rural setting for a new show.

'Larry Hagman's J.R. became the dominant character. He was the villain everybody loved to hate.'

Lee Rich,
chairman of Lorimar Productions

But rather than relying just on comedy, "The Dukes of Hazzard" would combine action, and even a bit of off-handed sexual tension in stories narrated by country music legend, Waylon Jennings.

"I was a big jazz fan, so the idea of putting three hillbilly kids in an orange car didn't excite me very much," admits Skip Ward, who was associate producer of the show from 1978 and became producer in 1982 until 1985. "What happened immediately is that we were getting some of the finest stunt people to work with us, and the

car stunts became the thrust of the show. There would always be cars flying through the air."

Ward also credited the music, the broad country humor and the appeal of Catherine Bach as Daisy Dukes in her trademark cut-off shorts.

"In our own way, we were also promoting 'family values' even before the phrase became a favorite of politicians," Ward notes. "In many of the episodes, the Dukes would have a meal with their Uncle Jesse. They would say prayers and then sit and discuss things."

Overall numbers for the "Dukes" were fairly good, although overnight ratings, which focused on the big cities, often came in low.

Suburban fanatics

Clearly, while age demographics skewed favorably young, Ward admits the biggest rating came from non-urban areas. "We received correspondence indicating that the Friday night timeslot was negatively affecting attendance at high school football games in the South," Ward recalls.

On the sitcom front, "All in the Family" was in its final season in 1978-79, but Norman Lear followed up with "Archie Bunker's Place," which centered on the life of America's favorite bigot, who was now a widower.

Another spin-off, "The Jeffersons," focused on Archie's former neighbors, who were living the urban-American dream on the Upper East Side of New York City. Lear also created "One Day at a Time"

Turn to page A24



March 10, 1978: "The Incredible Hulk," starring Bill Bixby, begins a five-year run.



BIXBY

April 2, 1978: "Dallas," the second-longest running primetime one-hour drama in television history (after "Gunsmoke") begins.

Nov. 21, 1980: Ninety million viewers find out "Who Shot J.R.?" on "Dallas."

Dec. 11, 1980: "Magnum P.I." starring Tom Selleck starts an eight-year run.



1981: BARKER

Dan Rather takes over as news anchor.

March 6, 1981: Walter Cronkite "retires" from nightly news.

Feb. 28, 1983: Final episode of "MASH," broadcasting to an audience of 106 million, the largest ever to watch a television program.

Aug. 4, 1983: Over weekend of 7/23, tapes for sudser "Search for Tomorrow" are stolen, so for first time since 1968, it is performed live.

Sept. 30, 1984: "Murder, She Wrote," starring Angela Lansbury, begins its 12-year run as a ratings killer.

Sept. 29, 1986: "Designing Women," starring Dixie Carter, premieres.

March 27, 1987: LANSBURY

"The Price Is Right," with Bob Barker as host, celebrates its 3,112th show, making it the longest-running gameshow ever continually on the same network.

Sept. 11, 1987: Dan Rather walks off the "CBS Evening News" set, leaving dead air for 7 minutes, after learning his program will be delayed by an overrun of the U.S. Open tennis tournament.



WITNESS: LARRY HAGMAN

"CBS has been kind to me and I've been kind to them. Bob Daly was in charge at the time of 'Dallas' and he was a great guy to deal with. The most memorable thing was obviously the 'Who shot J.R.?' episode. Nobody ever even imagined that it would be such a big deal. It took all of us by surprise. That was also the year I held out in contract negotiations, and there was this added thing of maybe the guy will never come back again.

"The 'Dallas' cast and crew was a well-honed unit, like a family. I don't think anyone who was connected in any way with that show had a bad time. [Producer] Leonard Katzman was the captain of the team and he kept things fun, kept people happy, and we all rode on its success."

— Larry Hagman, starred as J.R. Ewing, characterized in Time magazine as "that human oil slick," in "Dallas" from 1978-88.



THE FIRST 50 YEARS



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'80s offer fun, sun, scum

Continued from page A22

about a divorced mother raising her daughters in the city.

"We should have taken one of those MGM-style photographs then of Norman Lear's stable—it was a golden time and a great time to be working for CBS," says Bonnie Franklin, who starred in the show during its run from 1975-84. "At that time on that show, it was terribly important to all of us to make it about a single parent raising kids and dealing with divorce issues. It was a comedy that dealt with loyalty and pain and teen pregnancy and epilepsy and yet the entertainment content was high."

From the MTM stable, "Rhoda" was coming to an end, but "Lou Grant," an hourlong drama set at a Los Angeles newspaper, was picking up steam.

'In our own way, we were also promoting 'family values' even before the phrase became a favorite of politicians.'

Skip Ward, producer "Dukes of Hazzard"

MTM also launched another Bob Newhart sitcom in 1982. According to Barry Kemp, who developed the show and served as its executive producer after a three-year stint with "Taxi," the original idea was to feature Newhart in the same role he played in his first series. Kemp wanted to do something different.

"Bob wanted the character to work at a hotel, so he could interact with different characters," Kemp recalls. "But I couldn't see him working for someone else."

Throwback idea

The idea to have the character move from the city to open an inn "seemed to be a fantasy a lot of people could share," Kemp says. The overall direction for "Newhart," Kemp explains, was "a conscious effort to make the show a throwback to what was being done in sitcoms 10 years before."

While the simpler values of the past might have fueled both "Newhart" and "Dukes of Hazzard," detective shows were moving forward. In 1980, "Magnum P.I.," a character-driven hour starring Tom Selleck, took over the Thursday night timeslot vacated by "Hawaii Five-0." While both were set in the 50th state, the shows had little in common.



GUESTS OF HONOR: MTM launched "Newhart" in 1982, unveiling a surprise ending in the series finale in 1990.

"The original Magnum was not a very flawed guy. He was more James Bond-like, with women all over the place and a Ferrari," Selleck says. "This wasn't the kind of character I wanted to play long term."

Instead, Don Bellasario, the executive producer, agreed with Selleck's instincts and reworked the original scripts. "Don wrote a flawed guy, who didn't even own the Ferrari he drove around in. There was a major change in tone that led to quite a fight with the network."

Despite his lack of leverage

at the time, Selleck, with Bellasario's help, fashioned a character who was a former Navy Seal in Vietnam. Magnum was not a disaffected Vietnam vet, but his military career was an important part of his life.

The occasional flashbacks to Magnum's days in Vietnam did cause some raised eyebrows among CBS execs, Selleck notes, but the show would go on to be cited for its positive portrayal of veterans.

Not your average P.I.

"Magnum" further bent the detective genre in its plotlines. "Magnum often didn't have a case, or even a business card," Selleck explains. "We also wanted to show that as flawed and irresponsible as the character could sometimes be, we didn't want Magnum to make the same mistakes over and over."

This led to a kind of cumulative narrative, which was common in daytime soaps, but not in primetime series," Selleck says. By the final seasons of the show, Selleck's input had become so great that he became producer.

The character-driven, cumulative narrative became an important staple for future detective shows, including "Simon & Simon," which bowed on CBS in 1981.



VETERAN ACTORS: Although CBS was originally wary of incorporating Vietnam storylines into "Magnum P.I.," with Tom Selleck, left, John Hillerman and Robert Forster, the show was later recognized for its positive portrayal of veterans.



DYNAMITE: Norman Lear created "Good Times" from the hit series "Maude," starring Bea Arthur, left, with Ester Rolle.

KING LEAR

Prolific producer recalls groundbreaking shows

We did two 'All in the Family' pilots with ABC in 1968 and 1969 — both with the same scripts and same leads — Carol O'Connor as Archie Bunker and Jean Stapleton as Edith — but with different young people. ABC loved it and laughed at it, but I guess they were afraid of it.

"In 1971, I made a motion picture called 'Cold Turkey,' and as I was finishing it, United Artists was offering me a 3-picture deal to write, produce and direct. At that same moment, Bob Wood, the president of CBS, was determined to change the nature of comedy on the network, which at the time was dominated by shows like 'The Beverly Hillbillies,' 'Green Acres' and 'Petticoat Junction.' He wanted to do something different, and heard about our 3-year-old 'All in the Family' pilot. After seeing it he called me.

"My father was a Jewish Archie Bunker, and he used to call me the laziest white kid he ever met. That was one big reason I just had to do the show. We went on air in January of 1971. Thank God it was a mid-season replacement, because it was doing poorly in the rating. If it had started in the fall, it probably would not have made it past the first season. The ratings started to pick up in repeats because the other two networks were in repeats, so people began turning to 'All in the Family' to see shows that were new to them.

And then there's Maude

"In the sixth or seventh week of the show, we were catching such hell for Archie, we wanted to bring in a character to clobber him verbally. Nobody can clobber you more than a relative you've known for 30 years. We brought in Bea Arthur as Maude, one of Edith Bunker's cousins who was against her marriage to Archie. Fred Silverman, who was head of programming under Wood at the time, saw the episode and decided we had to make a series around the Maude character. He knew he was looking at piece of comic genius.

"Maude" was launched the following season. Maude had a housekeeper called Florida (Esther Rolle). During the second season of Maude, we brought in John Amos as her husband to see how they looked together, and he was great. That begot 'Good Times.'

"During the second season of 'Good Times,' the black press, which so greatly appreciated the show originally, wondered why they were seeing only the poorest of the poor. Why not do a show about an upwardly mobile black family? We had an off-stage character on 'All in the Family' called George Jefferson, who was Archie Bunker's neighbor. We were having fun with him being off camera, but we decided to materialize him and brought in Sherman Helmsley to do a few 'All in the Family' episodes.

We then launched 'The Jeffersons.' Right from the opening song, 'Movin' On Up,' we were showing that our intention was to satisfy those that had a legitimate complaint about the way black families were depicted on television.

— Norman Lear

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1988-1998

Jan 25, 1988: Dan Rather grills then-Vice President George Bush about his role in Iran-Contra; Bush counters by chiding Rather for his walk off CBS set in 1987.



RATHER

Nov. 14, 1988: "Murphy Brown," starring Candice Bergen, premieres.

Feb. 5-8, 1989:

CBS broadcasts the highly acclaimed "Lonesome Dove" miniseries, starring Robert Duvall and Angelica Huston, which won several Emmys.

May 1990: "Newhart" concludes its run with a clever plot twist referring to "The Bob Newhart Show."

1992: "Murphy Brown" nabs the Peabody Award. Murphy also responds to Vice President Dan Quayle's attacks on her as a single mother in the same year.



LETTERMAN

Aug. 30, 1993: "The Late Show With David Letterman" bows as CBS offers him \$42 million to go up against Jay Leno of "The Tonight Show."



MOONVES

December 1993: CBS becomes first network to have an in-house digital compositing animation division.

September 1994: "Touched by an Angel," starring Della Reese and Roma Downey, premieres.

July 1995: Leslie Moonves takes over CBS Entertainment.

November 1995: Westinghouse Electric Corp. acquires CBS.

Jan. 12, 1998: CBS gains rights to broadcast American Football Conference games until 2005.

Feb. 1, 1998: CBS.com is launched; 155 CBS affiliates sign up and prepare to go live with their own URLs in more than 81% of the U.S.

Comedy king in dicey decade

By RICHARD KATZ

On the whole, the last decade has not been a kind one to CBS. The late 1980s were marked by Larry Tisch's infamous cost-cutting campaign that stripped the luster from the former Tiffany Network. Tisch took control of the network in 1986 and proceeded to sell off all its non-broadcasting assets, including its one-third ownership of TriStar, and gutting budgets across the board. The once dominant new division was especially hit hard.

Nonetheless, by the 1991-92 television season, Tisch's strategy appeared to be working. That year, CBS won the ratings race for the first time since 1984-85 with a 13.8 rating/23 share, according to Nielsen Media Research. CBS' reign continued through the 1993 season, when the network earned a 14.0/23 primetime average.

Good times

During these glory years, sitcoms such as "Designing Women" and "Murphy Brown," and the quirky one-hour series "Northern Exposure," hit their rating strides while continuing the CBS tradition of quality, socially relevant fare epitomized by "All in the Family" in the 1970s.

Created by Linda Bloodworth Thomason, who shared executive producing duties with husband Harry Thomason, "Designing Women" revolved around four women who ran an Atlanta decorating business.

The show starred Dixie Carter, Annie Potts, Jean Smart and Delta Burke, with the latter two being replaced in 1991 by Jan Hooks and Julia Duffy. The comedy, in the tradition of "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," presented business women in a positive manner and also portrayed Southerners as open minded, rather than as stereotypical racists.

"Murphy Brown," now finishing up its final season, was an even more obvious heir apparent to "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Starring Candice Bergen as the brash star reporter for a Washington D.C.-based primetime news-magazine, the sitcom's plots and jokes centered around the colorful characters in a TV newsroom. "Murphy Brown," which didn't back away from serious issues such as single motherhood and cancer, was created by Diane English and Joel Shukovsky.

Frozen tundra

Offbeat characters appeared in even more abundance in "Northern Exposure," which depicted the loony daily lives of the residents of a sleepy and culturally diverse Alaskan town. The series, created by Joshua Brand and John Falsey, also featured a fish-out-of-water premise. A neurotic Jewish doctor from New York, played by Rob Morrow, is forced to move his practice to this Alaskan town in the middle of nowhere.

After riding high for a few years, in 1994 things began to unravel for CBS. When Rupert



ALASKAN ENCOUNTER: Rob Morrow starred as a New York doc in Alaska in the CBS drama "Northern Exposure," which featured eccentric characters and a healthy mix of whimsy and drama.



NEWSWORTHY: "Murphy Brown," starring Charles Kimbrough, left, Joe Regalbuto, Candice Bergen, Grant Shaud, Robert Pastorelli and Faith Ford, proved to be one of the most topical and durable sitcoms of the past decade.

Murdoch's upstart Fox network outbid CBS for the rights to NFC pro football, eight powerful New World TV stations defected from CBS to Fox, leaving CBS to scramble for weaker stations in large markets such as Detroit and Atlanta. Industry observers say that CBS is only now beginning to overcome this huge blow to its distribution system.

"They never should have lost the NFL four years ago," said Gene Jankowski, president of CBS from 1977-1989. "That weakened CBS and put Fox on equal footing with the other three networks."

Weaker ratings

Without the NFL and with a weaker affiliate system, CBS' viewership dropped to an 11.1/18 and third place in the network race for the 1994-95 season. By this time, some of the networks' hit shows had past their ratings peak. In the next two years CBS managed only a 9.6/16.

The old skew of CBS' audience also mushroomed into a problem during this period. CBS' audience always had an older average age than the other networks, but combined with a household rating decline, the makeup of CBS' demographics was put under a microscope.

Advertisers prefer the 18-49 audience, followed closely by 25-54. With the fourth place Fox skewing very young, CBS began finishing in fourth place in the young adult demographics.

The well regarded Leslie

Moonves was brought in from Warner Bros.' TV studio to become CBS' entertainment chief, and he tried to fix the age problem by quickly adding young-appeal shows, such as "Central Park West," that wouldn't have been out of place on Fox. The turnabout bombed because it alienated CBS' core older viewers while never fully attracting younger viewers.

'They never should have lost the NFL four years ago. That weakened CBS and put Fox on equal footing with the other three networks.'

Gene Jankowski,
CBS prexy 1977-89

"It was a disaster," says Jerry Solomon, who buys broadcast time for SFM Media.

"Les, like everybody else that's worked for CBS before him, had to learn the CBS brand and the limitations of that brand," says Alan Bell, president of Freedom Broadcasting. "CBS has a very long history of a certain type of programming and that can't be changed abruptly. The brand is very strong with women and middle America. You can't put a Fox-like show on CBS."

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STAR QUALITY: The critically acclaimed "Lonesome Dove" miniseries, with Angelica Huston and Robert Duvall, and the Monday night sitcom "Designing Women," starring Delta Burke, left, Annie Potts, Meshach Taylor, Jean Smart and Dixie Carter, were two of the jewels in the network's crown during the 1980s.

An eye on digital future

By MARY HARDESTY

CBS has a long history of experimenting with new technology: The Eye web was one of the original three partners in the creation of Prodigy, and before that, it was a big leader in teletext. Today, Dean Daniels, VP, general manager CBS New Media, is CBS' eye on the future, an eye currently focused on creating and enhancing the content of CBS.com — the first network web site.

"When we went to design this network on the web, we saw that our competitors were engaged in an uphill battle of creating a brand on the Internet," Daniels said. "We thought it would play much more to our strengths to build on brands that exist already in marketplaces.

"For example, if you ask someone on the street, 'Where can I see '60 Minutes?' they're going to tell you Channel 2, not CBS. While, internally, we like to think that everyone knows CBS because we've been around for 50 years, in reality the consumer doesn't look at it as CBS, but as 'The Evening News' or 'Brooklyn South.'"

In its new media approach, CBS is taking a couple of different pathways, choosing not to rely on any one technology or partner. This philosophy has been a plus for the network: For example, when the World Wide Web started to grow, CBS saw that the net could provide a way to defray the costs of its tremendous investment in digital television.

Hence, the CBS web site asks the consumer for his or her zip code the first time he or she clicks on the site. The web site then remembers the zip code so that every time that consumer signs on the CBS web site, his or her local affiliate is known, and relevant information about that market can be delivered.

In keeping with this philosophy, CBS just finished the "Great Skate Debate" where 200,000 viewers could also participate on-line in the outcome of the television show. "That's five football stadiums full of people," notes Daniels. "What would anybody pay to get their product in front of five football stadiums full of people now?"

According to Daniels the Internet is opening up new marketing possibilities that are changing the economic posture in the United States.

"People are far more likely today than they were 15 years ago to pick up the phone, dial an 800 number and create a transaction," states Daniels. "If you think about it, that's interactivity, and I think there are some advertisers out there who will give that a whirl."

But Daniels feels it's important for CBS not to get too fixated on the Internet and points out that the network's core strategy was designed with an eye down the road to digital television.

"In television's universe, money is made one way," Daniels says. "We sell reach and impressions. In the future of digital television, when we can actually send more than just picture down that information stream into the home, we think it makes sense for advertisers to want to take some of the money they're spending on marketing elsewhere and spend it where reach is guaranteed."

Fifth decade a mix of hits, misses

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In November 1995, Westinghouse agreed to purchase CBS, and the Larry Tisch era finally ended. Realizing that CBS changed too dramatically, the network went back to programs that would have broader appeal.

Sitcoms such as "Cybill" and "The Nanny" were closer to the CBS tradition of sharply-written comedies with strong female leads. With "Cybill," CBS once again successfully revitalized the career of a female movie star in a sitcom as it did with Candice Bergen in "Murphy Brown." Cybill Shepherd plays a 40-something actress with two ex-husbands and a complicated family life. The series, which premiered as a mid-season replacement in January 1995, was created by Chuck Lorre and produced by Marcy Carsey and Tom Werner.

Crass vs. class

Fran Drescher, known for playing pushy, Queens-accented characters, created "The Nanny" with her husband, Peter Marc Jacobson. Launched in the fall of 1993, the series features Drescher as a nanny in a posh Manhattan mansion. The humor derives from the contrast between Drescher's brash old-neighborhood honesty with pretension of her upscale Park Avenue surroundings.

A number of one-hour dramas also began to click for CBS, especially on Saturday night. "Walker, Texas Ranger," which premiered in 1993, stars Chuck Norris as law enforcement officer modeled in the old-fashioned heroes in the West. "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman," which also launched in 1993, turned into a solid performer on Saturday night. Jane Seymour stars as a physician from Boston who faces the challenge of being a female doctor in Colorado Springs in the old West.

Sunday night has developed as CBS' biggest success story.

"Touched by an Angel" tapped into resurgence of interest in religion to become a breakout show for CBS. Produced by CBS Productions in association with Moon Water Productions, the series is now CBS' highest rated drama. "60 Minutes" is as strong as it's ever been at 7 p.m. on Sunday. The 9 p.m. "CBS Sunday Night Movie," which



RATINGS MEDICINE: The launch of "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman," with Jane Seymour, in 1993 helped create a successful Saturday night block.

has rounded out the night nicely for the network, follows "Touched by an Angel."

"The strengths on Saturday and Sunday can become building blocks for the other nights," said Bill Carroll, VP of programming for Katz Television. "Their challenge is with their long-standing shows, like 'Murphy Brown' and 'Cybill,' shows that were the cornerstones of past years but are at the end of their cycle. The challenge is finding the right timeslots so they don't hurt the schedule."

Demographic challenge

Another challenge for CBS is the continuing battle to convince Madison Avenue that its older viewers are just as valuable as the 18-49 group for

which advertisers clamor.

The network is clearly counting on the return of the NFL this fall — CBS agreed to an eight-year, \$500 million per year deal for rights to the AFC — to bring in younger viewers. Once young adults are watching Sunday afternoon pro football, CBS has the chance to bombard them with promos for the rest of its schedule. In addition to providing a ratings and promotional foundation, the return of the NFL has also boosted morale at the rebuilding network.

An embarrassing moment for CBS came the day last May that the network announced its 1997-98 programming lineup during its upfront presentation. Hard-charging CBS vice chairman Mel Karmazin — who joined CBS when the Eye Network purchased Karmazin's Infinity radio group — assumed control of the network's owned television stations, which had reported to network president Peter Lund.

Poor timing

Lund chose the day of the upfront to resign, news of which dominated the conversation at CBS' big upfront party at Tavern on the Green. Soon after, Moonves was promoted to CBS' president of CBS Television, an post equal with Karmazin's position of chairman and CEO, CBS Stations Group.

On April 6, Karmazin rose to president and chief operating officer for CBS Corp., which made him Moonves' boss. Moonves' responsibilities were also expanded. As president and CEO of CBS Television, Moonves added news and sports to his entertainment duties.

Observers applauded these moves.

"CBS is now the greatest opportunity in television," says Bell, who's station group owns several CBS affiliates. "They have a superb management team. Mel's the best kind of executive: He's looking for results."



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LAUGHING ALL THE WAY: Alan Alda, left, Lucille Ball, Andy Griffith and Ray Romano have all participated in building CBS' comedy legacy.

COMICS LEAVE 'EM LAUGHING

Current stars and sitcoms echo of television's Golden Era

By TOM GILBERT

An outgrowth of the network's radio programming and a key to the Tiffany Network's unchallenged ratings dominance from the 1950s until the mid-'70s, the CBS sitcom has had a long and rich legacy. Down the years, hit CBS series after hit CBS series have influenced not only the Eye web's subsequent generations of sitcoms, but those of the



other networks as well.

"The CBS sitcoms are the real gems of TV history," says Diane Robina, senior VP of programming for Nick at Nite and TV Land, two cable networks whose schedules are heavy with off-CBS reruns. "They are talent-driven, creative-driven shows. I think a lot of the credit for that must go to (CBS founder) Bill Paley, both for the nurturing way he treated talent and for the fact that he was a regular viewer of his own network."

At the dawn of the 1950s, after a couple of seasons of scheduling predominantly news, variety and experimental TV programs, CBS began adapting its radio comedies to the by-then-viable new medium, though its first attempt at true situation comedy for TV ended

rather abruptly: The enormously popular "Amos 'n' Andy" radio skoin was successfully transferred to the TV network, but loud protests over the show's depiction of blacks caused the sponsor to pull out after just two seasons. The network then chose to abandon the controversial series entirely, even though it was enjoying healthy ratings.

Around the same time it was making the "Amos 'n' Andy" transfer, CBS approached Lucille Ball about adapting her radio show, "My Favorite Husband," to television. Ball insisted on a format alteration that would allow for her to co-star with her Cuban bandleader husband, Desi Arnaz. What resulted was TV's first runaway hit sitcom, "I Love Lucy," and with it, Desilu Prods. and a way of producing TV comedies using three cameras that still prevails.

Started it all

"I Love Lucy" influenced the sitcoms to come in myriad ways aside from its technical contributions. It centered around a couple — which later grew into a family with the birth of a baby — and their best friends/neighbors. In the strictest sense of comparison, "The Honeymooners," "All in the Family," "Maude" and "The Jeffersons" all followed the married-couple-and-neighbors format; but many other series fashioned around single-parent families also borrowed heavily from "Lucy's" premise.

And while "I Love Lucy" was set primarily in the home, it occasionally ventured out to the workplace, which became an in-

creasingly important setting for the series over the years; consider "The Danny Thomas Show," "The Dick Van Dyke Show," "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," "Alice," "Designing

'I Love Lucy' is the 'Citizen Kane' of TV. It is timeless and still speaks to audiences today.'

Diane Robina, senior VP of programming for Nick at Nite and TV Land

Women," "Major Dad" and "Murphy Brown."

Over the past 50 years the network's ongoing relationships with its key programming suppliers have been its most fruitful sources of hits: CBS mined gold from Desilu in the '50s, Filmways and Sheldon Leonard-Danny Thomas in the '60s, MTM and Norman Lear in the '70s and Harry and Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, Shukovsky/English and Carsey-Werner in the '80s and '90s.

Other sources

Not all of the Eye web's sitcom successes were the result of ongoing relationships and in-house development, however. "The Honeymooners" has its origins on as a sketch on the DuMont web's "Calvacade of Stars" (later "The Jackie Gleason Show") before joining the CBS sked in sitcom form for the

1955-56 season. "The Danny Thomas Show" came to CBS in 1957 after three seasons on ABC, ending its original run on the Eye web in 1964. And "My Three Sons" joined the CBS lineup in 1965 after five seasons on ABC, running until 1972.

In the 1959-60 season, Thomas and "Danny Thomas Show" producer Sheldon Leonard used an episode of the series as a pilot showcase for "The Andy Griffith Show," which became another longrunning CBS hit (1960-68) that in turn spawned the bona fide spinoff success "Gomer Pyle, USMC" (1964-70).

Another Thomas-Leonard enterprise, "The Dick Van Dyke Show," which debuted in 1961 and struggled to find an audi-

ence for its first season, went on to run until 1966 and became one of the Eye web's — and television's — most durable classics.

In step with the times

Plot devices moved away from the traditional nuclear family and toward single parents as the 1950s faded into the '60s. In 1957, CBS blazed the trail with "Bachelor Father," the John Forsythe starrer about a rich, unmarried man who lives with his niece and houseboy. Next came the rural-set "Andy Griffith Show," about a widowed father and his young son. And on "The Lucy Show" (1962-68) Lucille Ball and Vivian Vance returned to series television after the enor-

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WITNESS: DON KNOTTS

"I started at CBS on 'Search for Tomorrow,' the very first year, 1951, and played an in-and-out character for three years. But 'The Andy Griffith Show' was a wonderful experience. I really can't give you all the superlatives it deserves. Andy and I worked almost strictly for CBS even after the show. We did specials, one with Tennessee Ernie Ford, one with Jim Nabors. Then I did a couple of specials on my own for CBS. It was our home base.

"It was just great. Andy was the boss, really. He was so good to work for because he had such a good time that we all had a good time, too. I think that kind of attitude is important.

"I didn't have anybody in mind for Barney Fife. The writers came up with the character, then I built on that, and then they'd build on what I had done, and then I'd try to build on that. It's hard to put your finger on it, but he just came together. I enjoyed practically everything I did for CBS."

— Don Knotts, five-time Emmy Award winner, "The Andy Griffith Show," from 1960-67.





Ratings grabbers owe success to early yukkers

Continued from page A31

mous success of "I Love Lucy" as a widow and divorcee who pooled their families and finances.

Just as it seemed CBS was falling back on the tried-and-true with a retreaded (albeit highly successful) "Lucy" series, it hit a gusher with Filmways' "The Beverly Hillbillies" (1962-71). While decidedly one-note, its characters had an undeniable appeal, and it was an instant hit, triggering the Eye web's long and successful run of broad, bucolic comedies that included "Petticoat Junction" (1963-70) and "Green Acres" (1965-71).

Comical POW's

Another '60s CBS success was "Hogan's Heroes" (1965-71), a "Stalag 17"-like series about a group of prisoners in a Nazi POW camp that is currently enjoying renewed popularity on TV Land. Of course there was also the ultimate combination of ensemble of characters in syndication legend "Gilligan's Island," running from 1964-67.

As social mores changed during a tumultuous decade, the web hit again in 1970 with "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," about the friendships and foibles of a single career woman in her 30s, which ran until 1977. "Mary Tyler Moore," which borrowed the pretty-protagonist-and-homely-sidekick element from "I Love Lucy," in turn set the stage for "Murphy Brown," another huge success for CBS about a single female professional.

Simultaneously, Norman Lear's controversial American adaptation of the British comedy "Till Death Do Us Part" — known as "All in the Family" — was both a breakthrough and a triumph. Centered around a bigoted, outspoken blue-collar patriarch, it dealt with real issues in real, if often shocking, terms, and originals ran on the web under one title or another until 1983. It went on to spawn for CBS the spinoffs "Maude" (1972-78), "Good Times" (1974-79) and "The Jeffersons" (1975-85), as well as an unrelated Lear series, "One Day at a Time" (1975-84).

Movie adaptations served the Eye web well in the 1970s and into the '80s. "MASH" (1972-83), based on the hit 1970 film of the same name, was a wartime-set comedy that was launched amid the backdrop of the Vietnam war and struck a collective nerve with the American public. "Alice" (1976-85), drawn from Martin Scorsese's 1974 film "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore," was a longrunner again centered around a single parent struggling to make her way.

Present-day funnies

Shukovsky/English's series about the travails of a star network news reporter, "Murphy Brown" (1988), became the web's next sitcom mainstay, bringing it into the current era of "The Nanny" (1993), Carsey-Werner's "Cybill" (1995) and "Cosby" (1996), "Everybody Loves Raymond" (1996) and this season's new Tom Selleck starrer, "The Closer."

Aside from the sheer volume of long-running successes, what's most striking about the CBS sitcom legacy is the durability of the individual programs. Thirty-year-old "Hogan's Heroes" is the top-rated program on TV Land, and after more than four decades of endless reruns, "I Love Lucy" still manages to occupy the top ratings spot on Nick at Night.

Tracing the evolution of the sitcom, there are three that many will agree have influenced the genre most — and all of them were generated by the Eye web: "All in the Family," owing to its frankness and relevance; "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," due to its wit and modernity; and, of course, "I Love Lucy," thanks to its sharp writing, precise characterizations and understanding of human nature.

As Nick at Night/TV Land's Robina sums it up: " 'I Love Lucy' is the 'Citizen Kane' of TV. It is timeless and still speaks to audiences today."

Tom Gilbert is a *Variety* senior editor and author of "Desilu: The Story of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz."



LITTLE BUDDY: "Gilligan's Island," with Bob Denver, left, and Alan Hale, became a syndication icon despite just three years on CBS.



NUMBER ONE: Tom Snyder, left, reacts as David Letterman jokes at the press conference announcing Snyder's arrival at CBS. The two personalities will soon be joined by Howard Stern on many CBS stations.

Late shows still courting auds

By RAY RICHMOND

When ruminating on the CBS latenight legacy, it's important to note early on that it's not, in fact, much of a legacy. David Letterman has been pretty much the extent of it, unless you're that rare bird for whom the thought of "Kojak" and "Barnaby Jones" reruns in the middle of the night inspires something resembling awe.



While NBC has grabbed the lion's share of latenight acclaim over the years with Steve Allen, Jack Paar, Johnny Carson, Tom Snyder, Letterman, Jay Leno and the increasingly successful Conan O'Brien, CBS has had ... well, a couple of years of Merv Griffin, a flop centered by a "Wheel of Fortune" refugee named Pat Sajak and, for the past few years, Letterman and Snyder (though after some early ratings victories, both of them have settled into second and often even third place).

No thanks

So it probably should come as no great shock that neither Letterman nor Snyder opted to participate in this article despite its decidedly mild tone, designed as a stroll down memory lane. Both of CBS's late-hours icons of the moment declined interviews.

Perhaps that reluctance speaks louder than any of their words would have.

The CBS latenight story actually began back in June 1951, when the Eye premiered a 15-

minute diversion called "Chronoscope." It was a discussion show that lasted four years and featured newsmakers and news experts elaborating on topics of the day, from politics to finance to the Korean War that was raging at the time. Its moderators included Frank Knight, William Bradford Huie, Edward P. Morgan and the immortal Larry Le Sueur at various times. Not quite legends of the news biz.

Once "Chronoscope" bid farewell in April 1955, that was pretty much it for the CBS latenight picture for better than 14 years, or until CBS lured Merv

son's rock-solid following.

"It was exciting while it lasted, though," Griffin reflects. "At one time back then, there were four talkshows all taking each other on in latenight. And I remember this one night where Jerry Lewis made all four shows. He didn't tell any of us, of course. He'd just pop on, say he could only stay a minute, and managed to make the taping window for all of us. What a great time that was."

Griffin would survive just 2½ frustrating years opposite King Johnny before CBS threw in the towel and sent Merv packing

'At one time back then, there were four talkshows all taking each other on in latenight. And I remember this one night where Jerry Lewis made all four shows.'



Merv Griffin

in 1969 to take his highly successful "Merv Griffin Show" out of syndication and enter the wee-hours war against Carson and his "Tonight Show," which had long since become a cash cow for NBC.

"You have to understand that I didn't really want to do it," Griffin recalls. "I didn't want to leave Westinghouse and syndication. But I like challenges in my life. And CBS had spent millions redoing this theater in New York City to interest me."

'A little different'

At the time, Carson was "doing all of the great celebrity interviews," Griffin recalls. "I wanted to be a little different." Griffin, while lovable, centered a show that was perhaps a touch on the bland side. It forced Joey Bishop off the air at ABC but never could make a dent in Car-

back to the syndication world that had been so good to him. It would ultimately prove even better, with Griffin's show and his creations "Wheel of Fortune" and "Jeopardy!" making him an extremely wealthy man.

Sajak's journey

Finally, a 17-year potpourri experiment with programming has-beens and never-wases gave way in January 1989 to "The Pat Sajak Show," an hour of chat featuring the cherubic and intelligent but ultimately miscast "Wheel of Fortune" host and onetime KNBC weatherman.

Sajak was charming and easygoing but ultimately just another notch in Johnny's triumphant belt. The rap against Sajak was that while everyone liked him, he was notoriously

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1948
A Golden Opportunity



Tube's late shift awaits shock jock

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lazy. There was a time near the end of Sajak's 15-month tenure when someone reportedly suggested in a meeting that they had hit on the secret that would turn everything around: Sweaters. Sajak needed to wear different ones that made him seem more cuddly to the masses.

About six weeks after sweatergate, however, Sajak was told to wear his sweaters elsewhere. Finally, on Aug. 30, 1993, "The Late Show With David Letterman" premiered on CBS, the culmination of a fierce bidding war between CBS and

NBC in the wake of Carson's retirement from "Tonight" and subsequent replacement by Leno. Letterman snared \$14 million annually for



STERN

three years in his original contract, taking his Stupid Pet Tricks and Top 10 List down the street to the historic Ed Sullivan Theater.

Letterman instantly made his mark on CBS in his new surroundings, turning local business geeks like Sirajul Islam and Mujibar Rahman into national celebrities during his frequent tours of the neighborhood. Letterman initially knocked Leno from the top spot in the Nielsens while reveling in the kind of mainstream acceptance he never felt he attracted at 12:35 a.m. on NBC.

Ratings wars

Leno rebounded, however, and now soundly beats Letterman on a regular basis. But Letterman nonetheless was able to use his clout to land Tom Snyder a job in the previously vacant 12:35 a.m. slot in January 1995. Snyder has likewise been unable to knock off the NBC incumbent with whom he goes head-to-head, O'Brien. But that's almost beside the point.

What really matters is that in Letterman and Snyder, CBS at last possesses a couple of stable, home-grown options that don't smell like warmed-over leftovers. Even if the options don't much care to talk about it. Maybe Letterman and Snyder simply don't want to have to answer questions about the next link in the CBS latenight chain, a fella named Howard Stern who invades Saturday nights beginning in August.

Were he alive today, you know that William S. Paley would be awfully proud.



STRINGERS: Ed Sullivan (with Elvis Presley), the Smothers Brothers and Carol Burnett each struck gold with the variety show format.



Vaudio glow dims across decades

By K.D. SHIRKANI

Fiddlers, skits, put-downs, pantomime, jugglers, acrobatic animals, ventriloquists, hoofers, strummers, and standups: The stuff of which hot primetime fare is made.

So went conventional development wisdom in 1948, when variety entertainment was a hit formula, and CBS's sked armed accordingly.

The early variety show essentially was televised vaudeville: A low-tech affair with a plain, straightforward title, self-conscious performance style and sunny, upbeat disposition.

If some critics have been tempted to characterize the genre as simple or naive, most relate its popularity to the tumult and complexities posed by WWII, the Depression and massive technological change. The variety show offered levity, spectacle and a sense of community in its weekly repetition of familiar faces and the same format — much like the big-network system as a whole.

'A big tent'

"Of all genres, the variety show epitomized what network was, a big tent under which were audiences who would appreciate different parts of the same show," says Ron Simon, television curator at the Museum of Television and Radio in New York.

And, for both the variety genre and network system, this display of dominance in the early days has proven a hard act to follow.

"We're in a multi-channel universe today," says Terry Botwick, VP of Primetime Specials at CBS. "One can track the

decline of those shows as occurring with the growth of cable—the remote control is the variety show now."

During the three-decade long heyday of the variety show, CBS's slate regularly scored yearly top-10 ratings on its strength.

Viewer friendly

In the '50s and '60s, "Arthur Godfrey and His Friends" achieved this three times; "Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts," four times; "The Jackie Gleason Show," twice; "The Jack Benny Show," five times; and "The Red Skelton Show," nine times. And, of course, the highly rated, "Toast of the Town," which quickly morphed into "The Ed Sullivan Show," is widely considered the apotheosis of the format.

But, by the end of the Sullivan era, says Simon, there began a "splintering of the mass audience." He sees this shift re-



QUICK DRAW: Sonny and Cher were one of the few variety acts to break through primetime during the '70s.

flected in second-generation variety shows—particularly that of the Smothers Brothers.

"Sullivan was the ultimate variety show," says Tom Smothers reflecting on Sullivan's 23-year tenure as curator of TV's most memorable gallery of genius and clown acts—from Ella and Elvis, to tumbler troupes and Topo Gigio (mouse-puppet extraordinaire).

In contrast, the controversial, but highly rated, "Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" (1967-69) was "different in that it really dealt with what the audience was thinking," says Simon. "The whole idea of the variety show is to aim at a common culture, and the Smothers Brothers reversed that. The idea of creating a variety show for the counter-culture was very interesting."

Satiric flair

The Smothers' irreverence anticipated that which is so common today on late night and "Saturday Night Live." But, unlike any current example, the Smothers' satire had a distinct point of view, an element of "advocacy," as Simon terms it.

If this is what the Smothers Brothers were, it is not necessarily what they had set out to be. "There was a lot of social commentary on the show," says Tom Smothers, "We had no choice at that time." But, even with the politics (visible enough, ultimately, to get the show canceled), Smothers insists, "We were still a variety show."

"I've always loved ice-skaters, and tumblers, and dancers, and jugglers, and bumbler, and hand-balancing acts," he says, "and that's basically what we did, it was just the time we were living in—we were at the scene of the accident."

The Smothers' late-'60s show

truly was a variety show in the tradition of vaudeville-via-Sullivan. The brothers were comedians, writers, and musicians (They sang, Tom played guitar and banjo and Dick, the upright bass.). And, like Sullivan, their

'One can track the decline of those shows as occurring with the growth of cable—the remote control is the variety show now.'

Terry Botwick,
CBS VP of Primetime Specials

selection of acts was eclectic, often inspired and sometimes chancy, as they routinely mixed the likes of Greer Garson with the likes of The Who.

But, if the turbulent decade of the '60s was, as Smothers claims, "a very difficult time to put on a variety show," the times did not change favorably for the format. Although the '70s saw a few serious hits ("The Carol Burnett Show" ran 11 seasons, and Sonny and Cher were abundantly popular), by decade's end, TV variety entertainment virtually had vanished.

And there are those, such as Simon, who say that, since the last variety shows were produced in the '70s, the culture simply has trended away from the format. "Instead of trying to become one homogeneous culture," he says, "today we are trying to diversify." Formerly a beacon in the midst of chaos, the variety show now seems to need a beacon of its own.

1998

A Golden Anniversary



TAKING ACTION: Throughout its history, CBS has delivered many suspenseful series and action-packed dramas, including, from left, "Perry Mason" with Raymond Burr, "Mission Impossible" with Greg Morris and Barbara Bain, and "Hawaii Five-O" with Jack Lord.

INFLUENCE OF 'GOLDEN AGE' ENDURES

By MARK LONDON WILLIAMS

CBS' dramatic legacy of "Playhouse 90" and "Studio One" isn't lost on the current generation of writers and execs.

"I remember growing up, watching 'Playhouse 90,' being so affected by the characters," says Martha Williamson, who has gone on to give CBS memorable characters of her own as executive producer of "Touched by an Angel."



And when Nina Tassler came over from Warner Bros. Television to become senior VP, Drama, for CBS Prods., she "took a look at what made CBS great," noting when you do such homework, "you think about 'Playhouse 90,' about 'Studio One.'"

Both shows spawned the Eye web's dramatic legacy in TV's live-broadcast "golden age," with "Studio One" coming first. The hour-long anthology premiered in 1948, boasting a crop of directors that included George Roy Hill and Sidney Lumet, and even launched CBS' later social-themed legal drama, "The Defenders," when the original version, from writer Reginald Rose, was done as a two-parter in 1957. Ralph Bellamy acted with two young fellas named Steve McQueen and William Shatner.

John Frankenheimer, who'd risen from being Lumet's associate director to helping nearly every live show in the CBS stable at one time or another, di-

rected the very first "Playhouse 90" — the Cold War-ish "Forbidden Area" by Rod Serling — and in 1960, the last "Playhouse," by which time the show was originating from L.A.

Suddenly, Frankenheimer explains, "there was no television as I knew it." The live era was over, but the nation was peppered with sets, and people were

shadow of the network's prime barrister, "Perry Mason," taken from Erle Stanley Gardner's popular novels, and holding forth since 1957 in the guise of Raymond Burr.

The freewheeling impulses of the '60s were felt in unusual fare, like "Route 66." Imagine pitching this now: A show about two guys driving around in a



TOP DOCS: Despite its similarities to NBC's "ER," "Chicago Hope," with Mark Harmon and Christine Lahti, has grabbed the attention of viewers with its offbeat characters and storylines.

hungry for things to watch.

Serling, of course, created the fabled "Twilight Zone." It made a good "spooky" complement to "Alfred Hitchcock Presents," the suspense series that started at CBS, then knocked back and forth between the Eye and NBC. Hitch was leaving again just as "Zone" was hitting its stride.

Terrific casts

Rose had his "Defenders," filmed in New York, now starring E.G. Marshall as part of a father/son lawyering team that embraced such quaint pre-Reaganite notions as defending the poor. Running until 1965, the series' roll call of guest stars included Gene Hackman, Jon Voigt, and Dustin Hoffman.

But they all labored in the

Corvette, searching for meaning. The Kerouac-like questers were Martin Milner and George Maharis, and they did find top-notch weekly drama, filmed on location, usually written by Sterling Silliphant.

Chilly programming

Cold War tensions of the time made spy series popular, too; the Columbia web hit paydirt with "Mission: Impossible," running from '66 through '73. Peter Graves' Jim Phelps was the second, and most popular, leader of the IMF team. Graves stayed till the end, while supporting players like Martin Landau, Barbara Bain and Leonard Nimoy came and went.

But CBS' boldest contribution to TV spy fare came in the

summer of '68 when the net aired "The Prisoner." The existential drama was produced in England by Patrick McGoochan, who'd recently played John Drake in "Secret Agent." In "Prisoner," a Drake-like character tries to resign from intelligence work, only to find himself drugged and reawakened in "The Village," a happy, totalitarian resort which no one is allowed to leave.

In the '70s, it could be argued some of the web's best televised drama were certain episodes from ostensible comedy "MASH." The decade belonged to the sitcom, though the Eye held up its end of the law with crime-busters "Hawaii Five-0," "Manix" and "Barnaby Jones."

The web's most successful drama of the decade was "The Waltons," created by Earl Hamner, drawing on his own Virginia boyhood. Premiering in 1972 after spinning off from a TV movie intended as a one-shot, it ran the rest of the decade, though "Apple's Way," an attempt at a "modern 'Waltons'" about an L.A. professional returning to his Iowa roots, wasn't as successful.

The late '70s saw the premiere of primetime soap "Dallas." It spawned sibling sudser "Knots Landing," while the crime beat was covered by Tom Selleck in "Magnum, P.I." and Angela Lansbury in the long-running franchise, "Murder, She Wrote."

The end of the '80s saw an unlikely surprise in "Beauty and the Beast," reconfigured to fit under the streets of New York, with Linda Hamilton and Ron Perl-

man. The show's thoughtfulness made it a hard sell, but a favorite among women, who were also watching the distaff spin to crime-fighting on "Cagney and Lacey."

Inheriting the mantle of "thoughtful, story-driven drama" is current hit "Touched by an Angel."

"Some of our most successful episodes," says exec producer Williamson, "have been modeled after 'Playhouse 90.'"

Another of the Eye's crown jewels, "Chicago Hope" — arguably its most successful doctor show since the early 70s' staid "Medical Center" — has likewise experi-

mented with real time, single-set episodes. The network "has always been terribly supportive," notes executive producer John Tinker. "When we do stories that are controversial, so far CBS has been great."

Has it been hard maintaining an identity for a schedule that ranges from urban hospitals to rural seraphs? "We're 'broadcasters,'" emphasizes Anita Addison, network VP for drama development.

As for Williamson, she doesn't believe "Angel" could have been as successful on another web: "We would've been pressured to use more gimmicks." All she really wanted was a drama that asks how "we meet the millennium — what shall we take into the next century?"

For producers on the Tiffany network, they'll be taking a rich legacy of some of TV's finest dramatic hours.

In the '70s, it could be argued some of the web's best televised drama were certain episodes from ostensible comedy 'MASH.'

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SURF AND TURF: TV's longest-running soap, "Guiding Light," with Kim Zimmer and Robert Newman, marked its 61st anni this year.

Sudsters bubble up touchy topics

By NATASHA SIZLO

With a spicy formula of corporate takeovers, cloning, teen suicide and a whole lot of sex, CBS' daytime sudsters continue to triumph as the network approaches its 500th straight week atop the daytime Nielsen ratings.

According to network execs, the daytime drama lineup has established both a production and a content standard for serial dramas across the networks and continues to draw millions of viewers both domestically and across the globe.

"It's important for us to reflect the realities and the tensions that women experience

today," says Paul Rauch, executive producer of "Guiding Light." "I think you can tell a much more exciting story about women today than you ever could before. Women are more exciting today



than they have been."

"Guiding Light," the longest-running program in broadcast history, celebrated its 61st anniversary Jan. 25. Rauch explains, "It's consistent with the best of what daytime is and

where it's come from." "Guiding Light," first broadcast on the radio on NBC's Red Network, debuted on Jan. 25, 1937. The program was a 15-minute drama created and written by Irna Phillips. Phillips broadcast one or two stories with half-a-dozen characters, five days a week, every week of the year.

In its long history, "Guiding Light" has surpassed other daytime dramas in exploring socially relevant topics. In 1961 "Guiding Light" tackled the seldom-discussed issue of uterine cancer. While the character recovered from the cancer, she went through a lot of difficulty at the time because she was reluctant to get a Pap smear. This story encouraged women to be alert.

Since then, CBS daytime has approached such issues as breast cancer (with the first mammogram done on camera, Dec. 17, 1991), blindness, rape, teen suicide, eating disorders, substance abuse, postpartum depression and AIDS.

"Guiding Light" made its passage to television when it premiered on CBS June 30, 1952. It is the only radio drama to make the transition to TV that's still on the air today. Nowadays, the writers of "Guiding Light" have at least a dozen stories harmonizing at once, with roughly 35 characters, five times a week, 260 shows a year.

Rauch explains the evolution of the serial drama: "Irna believed in the importance of families. She passed her legacy on to writers Bill Bell and Agnes Dickson, and those two writers went on to be great stalwarts of the daytime business."

"What we did in the '50s no longer applies in the '90s. We were limited with production, sets and stories that were almost totally tied up in family issues. We have much more latitude now," says William J. Bell, who became co-creator, senior head writer and senior executive producer of "The Young & the Restless."

"Y & R" just celebrated its 25th anniversary and has spent 485 consecutive weeks as the most watched daytime program.

When "Y & R" premiered on CBS on March 26, 1973, it revolutionized the daytime genre with its emphasis on the younger generation. William Bell's 25-year tenure as the head writer of "Y & R" is the longest in the history of daytime TV.

"From the onset it was highly received. It was a show that was very different," Bell says. "We dealt mostly with younger people and the sensuality and the sexuality that was prevalent in the early '70s. What it did was reflect what was going on in the world at the time. It wasn't there for shock value. ... It was a serial that caught on like no other before or since."

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J. Walter Thompson



50th Anniversary

BOB BARKER

*Congratulations on half a century
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I'm honored to have been part of the CBS family
for more than half of that time.*

Bob Barker

*From “Simon & Simon” to “Major Dad” to
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I’m delighted to have been so much a part of
CBS’ first 50 years these last 18 years.*

Gerald McRaney



Congratulations CBS on 50 years of television, from your mates at Nine Network Australia.



TOP STORIES: An emotional Walter Cronkite announces the assassination of President Kennedy on the air. Right, Dan Rather provides in-depth coverage of the Vietnam War. CBS' news legacy is often associated with the ability to cover events that have made in impact on American history.



On-air journey of journalism giants

By RAY RICHMOND

As much as CBS' latenight history has largely been restricted to chasing NBC, the opposite was generally true in news throughout the 1950s, '60s and '70s. CBS News carved out a reputation as TV's news leader until the broadcasters were overtaken by an upstart called CNN in the mid-1980s.

The venerated names from CBS News' past are plentiful and legendary, with the dynamic Edward R. Murrow heading a list that includes Eric Sevareid, Walter Cronkite, Fred Friendly, Charles Kuralt, "60 Minutes" executive producer Don Hewitt

and, certainly, Dan Rather.

It was CBS that blazed the earliest TV news trail when the term "electronic campfire" was coined. It was to CBS News that the nation turned for comfort and support during the tumult



and disbelief following the assassination of JFK in 1963, when Sen. Joseph McCarthy was hunting witches in the 1950s, when the civil rights movement and Vietnam were separating the country in the 1960s, when man first set foot on the moon in 1969 and when Watergate was tearing apart the presidency in 1973-74.

But it all begins with Murrow, a man of limitless influence whose name still evokes awe throughout broadcast news circles. Murrow, a radio man who adapted seamlessly to TV, stretched the news boundaries of the medium on interview shows like "See It Now" and "Person to Person" in the 1950s. He was nearly alone in having the guts to take on McCarthy, airing a daring 1954 expose that helped lead to the senator's downfall.

"He was the founding saint of electronic journalism," declares Rather, who reported on the JFK assassination from Dallas, as well as on the movement centered around Martin Luther

King Jr., during his early days at the network. Rather has, of course, anchored the "CBS Evening News" since Cronkite stepped down in 1981.

"Murrow was what we all aspire to today. I hope and believe that he would approve of the way we're handling the hard news outfit that he built, which was the best in the world."

Cronkite, who remains active as a news producer and documentarian after 30 years with CBS News (19 years as "Evening News" anchor), is proud of what CBS News accomplished even in the post-Murrow era. His most indelible memories include being at the center of JFK's killing, the 1969 lunar landing of Apollo 11 and a summary program on the Watergate scandal that returned the issue to the public consciousness at a time when the Washington Post-fueled story was lagging.

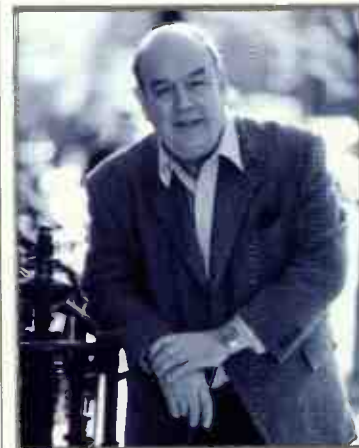
Shedding tears

Perhaps the most unforgettable Uncle Walter moment came when he was the first to tell the nation of JFK's death and had a moment where he briefly cracked with emotion. "I wasn't ashamed of that," Cronkite says. "Some people thought that it was terrible to show emotion, but for heaven's sake, it's perfectly proper to show emotion for things far less important than that."

Hewitt, who has kept "60 Minutes" the preeminent newsmag of the air since its premiere nearly 30 years ago, celebrated his own 50th anniversary at CBS News on March 22. He's been around long enough to have coined the term "anchor" to describe what Cronkite's role would be at a political convention.

There wasn't quite as much money at stake then, and, of

course, not nearly the technological know-how that TV news hounds pretty much take for granted today. Hewitt's first job at the network was as an assistant director on "The CBS Evening News" in 1948. His salary: \$80 a week. He recalls,



ON THE ROAD: Charles Kuralt set new standards of excellence with his documentary dispatches from around the country.

"TV in those days was watched mostly in appliance stores. You could buy the best set in the world for under 500 bucks, and the only face worth looking at was Milton Berle's."

Douglas Edwards was the first CBS news reader on a 15-minute broadcast back in 1948. "We felt fortunate if the picture made it from Studio 41 in Grand Central all the way to an apartment house in the Bronx," Hewitt remembers. "We felt like we were making shows out of Play-Doh. It never dawned on us that things would ever improve."

But improve they did. And when they did, CBS News was at the forefront of the medium's burgeoning early influence. "When we got big, we thought we'd always be on top," Hewitt says. "We were like Ford, GM

and Chrysler, never seeing the Toyotas and Datsuns gaining ground. We were living in a fool's paradise. We couldn't see the CNNs and the ESPNs."

Even so, CBS News hasn't exactly gone out of business, remaining steady (if not No. 1) in the nightly evening news race and continuing to pace the primetime newsmag field with "60 Minutes" and spawning a second primetime success in "48 Hours" 10 years ago.

It would be nice to say that Rather, Cronkite and Hewitt are encouraged by where CBS News and its brethren have taken TV news in the 1990s. Nice, but wrong.

News judgment

"I'm disappointed in the deterioration of news in general, including TV news," Rather admits. "The battle that Murrow recognized in trying to keep entertainment values from overwhelming news values is a fight that we've largely lost. I'm just appalled at some of the sourcing I see in the White House scandal story."

Cronkite concurs, noting, "I'm concerned that with the increased competition from cable, broadcast TV news programs have gone too soft with feature material. But I think the pendulum is beginning to swing in the other direction, and CBS News is leading that effort, I believe."

Despite his misgivings, Rather still likes to believe that CBS News will be a vital force in people's lives when the network celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2048.

"By then, I'll probably be beamed into your living room and will give you the news personally, tailored just for you," Rather figures. "And you know, it would be awfully nice if you'd have a cup of coffee ready for me."



FOUNDING FATHER: The late Edward R. Murrow made a smooth transition from radio to television with "See It Now" and "Person to Person" during the '50s.

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Hearst Entertainment

CBS,

Congratulations on your fifty years.
And thanks for letting us be a part of the last five.

David Letterman
and your friends at the Late Show.



An hour of power that keeps on ticking

By ROBERT KOEHLER

The ruthless laws of prime-time television simply don't permit a serious news program to thrive for 30 years. There is conventional wisdom, and then, there is "60 Minutes," which has reached its thirtysomething threshold with both an iron grip on newsmakers' and viewers' attention and a velvet glove for profiles of pop culture heroes.

"This is what a writer termed 'Low Murrow' and 'High Murrow,'" notes filmmaker Susan Steinberg, who was allowed unprecedented access inside the "60 Minutes" operation to film her upcoming May 20 special for PBS' "American Masters" series, "Don Hewitt: 90 Minutes on '60 Minutes.'" "Low Murrow" was legendary CBS reporter Edward R. Murrow's "Person to Person" interview series with celebrities, while "High Murrow" was Murrow's often explosive investigative series, "See It Now." Don Hewitt, who directed "See It Now" in the early '50s, eventually saw that the combination of investigations and profiles could produce a new TV journalism synergy.

This became "60 Minutes," which was hatched by Hewitt during his career lull at CBS News in the mid-'60s, when he was moved out of the division's glamour spot on the evening news broadcasts to oversee its documentaries.

Drama origins

His inspiration wasn't news, but TV drama. "When I first came into broadcasting," recalls Hewitt. "I was a fan of 'Four Star Playhouse,' in which Ida Lupino, Charles Boyer, David Niven and Dick Powell were a true ensemble company. What if, I thought, we created that kind of company, only with correspondents, each with their particular qualities, telling compelling stories?"

"He fashioned '60 Minutes' as a print magazine," says Steinberg, a past contributor to other news magazine imitators such as "Turning Point," and that is how it runs, more than any other TV show on the air. Hewitt's more like an editor-in-chief than anything like a traditional TV producer."

His star staff began with the late, urbane Harry Reasoner

cast opposite hardball reporter Mike Wallace, who in the course of "60 Minutes" perfected and embodied the style of so-called "gotcha journalism."

"My style and Harry's were so different that it was somehow appealing," notes Wallace. "But Harry wanted an evening news anchor position, and joked that he was waiting for 'Cronkite to get hit by a truck,' so he defected to ABC. We all wondered what we were going to do."

Enter Morley Safer, a sophisticated Canadian-born correspondent who had joined CBS in 1963 along with Wallace and Dan Rather, and whose report

on the U.S. burning of Cam Ne in then-South Vietnam was an early, TV-beamed sign of the tragic Vietnam War.

"There was competition between the two of us, for position, for stories. You bet, it could be fierce sometimes," says Wallace. In retrospect,

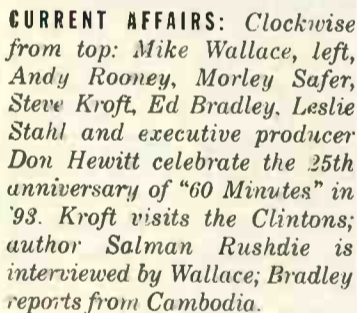
at this point in 1969 and 1970, when the show was finding its identity and near the bottom of the ratings, an ongoing Wallace-Safer skirmish might have been enough to topple Hewitt's experiment.

But the show's stories, especially the investigative pieces, became the talk of the New York-Washington-Los Angeles media circle, particularly when Hewitt added up-and-comer Dan Rather to the mix — expanding coverage and relieving Wallace and Safer of a brutal trans-global schedule which had them doing 35 stories each per year.

Turning points

When asked to name the point at which "60 Minutes" became a mass audience staple, Wallace and Hewitt differ dramatically. Wallace: "It kicked in in 1973, at the time of the Yom Kippur War and the oil embargo, when global news stories hit home, and people stayed home more and turned on TV on Sunday." Hewitt: "I know Mike says that, but I don't buy it. When was the moment we broke out? Fuck if I know. Even I have a hard time dissecting that one."

What's certain is that after years of foundering in the lower rankings, "60 Minutes" moved to its permanent Sunday 7 p.m. slot in 1975, shot up to an 18 ranking in 1976, became the network's ratings leader in 1977 (a first for a news program), and



CURRENT AFFAIRS: Clockwise from top: Mike Wallace, left, Andy Rooney, Morley Safer, Steve Kroft, Ed Bradley, Leslie Stahl and executive producer Don Hewitt celebrate the 25th anniversary of "60 Minutes" in '93. Kroft visits the Clintons; author Salman Rushdie is interviewed by Wallace; Bradley reports from Cambodia.

reached number one in 1979, when Reasoner rejoined Hewitt's ensemble. It reached number one again in 1982.

As "60 Minutes" has moved into the '80s and '90s, younger, more diverse correspondents such as Ed Bradley, Diane Sawyer, Leslie Stahl and Steve Kroft moved into the show, which also found in the wry, acerbic voice of Andy Rooney, a light way of finishing the hour. This expansion, however, has led to the first, still-faint questions of the program's longterm viability and survival.

Huge on many levels

"It remains the all-time great lead-in show," notes media writer Steven D. Stark, author of "Glued to the Set" (Free Press), "if you look what it did for 'All in the Family,' then 'Murder, She Wrote,' and now 'Touched by an Angel.' So it's gold to CBS, and it's still by far

the most respected news magazine show. But it is hit with so much news competition now that it never had before, and it skews demographically to an older audience, and they haven't figured out how to get younger. Wallace and Hewitt will eventually have to be replaced, and they may be indispensable."

Media critics have noted that the old "gotcha" approach faded on a withdrawn (then reinstated) investigative piece on tobacco firms, and most recently, Bradley's interview with Kathleen Willey, who claimed a sexual encounter with Bill Clinton in the Oval Office, but who wasn't asked about subsequently-revealed stories about an allegedly darker side to Willey.

Where were, some asked, the

kind of tough follow-up questions that have characterized the aggressive "60 Minutes" approach?

On his weekly CNN media program, "Reliable Sources," former CBS correspondent Bernard Kalb noted that "the adjectives used to describe Bradley's report were 'respectful' and 'reverential.' It was a sensitive kind of story, but you can't abandon journalistic requirements out of respect for a woman's sensitivities. On the other hand, surrounded by a lot of other shows with empty razzle-dazzle and noise, '60 Minutes' goes along its own methodical way and stays its ground.

"In this day and age of a lot of silly TV news magazines, that is really saying something."

'There was competition between the two of us (Wallace and Safer), for position, for stories. You bet, it could be fierce sometimes.'

Mike Wallace



Sports heritage is key to network branding

By CHRIS PURSELL

In 1993, after an upstart Fox network snagged domestic rights to football's NFC Conference, television analysts declared sports to be all but dead at the Eye network, effectively ending a history that saw professional competition rise from afternoon pastime to national obsession.

Oh, what a difference a couple of years (and a slew of billion-dollar rights packages) makes. For the moment at least, the network seems to be sitting atop the sports world, having pulled off both a moderately successful Winter Olympics, a highly rated NCAA basketball series and a down-to-the-wire Masters golf tournament. And snatching rights to football's AFC games doesn't hurt either.

"Sports broadcasting on CBS has always stood for excellence in coverage and presentation," says Sean McManus, president of CBS Sports. "CBS has helped pioneer the success of a lot of sports out there today and we expect to carry that her-

itage into the next millennium."

After broadcasting both the Golden Gloves boxing championship and horse racing jewel, the Preakness, in 1949, CBS began a programming legacy that helped usher in sports competition as a way of life in the U.S., for better or worse.

"We're the only network with two golf circuits, NCAA football and basketball, the U.S. Open tennis, NASCAR racing, including the Daytona 500, and now the NFL," says McManus. "This is as strong a year-round schedule as you're going to find."

Football as prestige

"It's always been perhaps the most prestigious place you could work," says broadcaster Pat Summerall, who left CBS after 33 years with the company in 1993 for Fox to stay with professional football. "It was (CBS founder William) Paley who brought football into our fold back in 1962 and really put pro football on the map."

Summerall says he feels the day football really became part of the American culture was during the first Super Bowl in

Tube crew prepares to score after intercepting pro football

It took 5 years and \$4 billion, but football's finally back at the Eye. With stiff competition coming from Fox, ESPN and ABC, plans are already well underway to keep viewers tuned in to the new production and pacify affiliates with cost worries.

Pulling out all stops for the National Football League's AFC conference games and the hour-long pre-game show, CBS is teaming up its long-running sports personalities with newly signed broadcasters, such as football greats Phil Simms and Marcus Allen.

"The vision I have is to make the NFL on CBS the best coverage of football on television," says Sean McManus, president of CBS Sports. "I think we'll have the strongest talent on the air and integrating that talent and promoting it is a huge priority of the entire network right now."

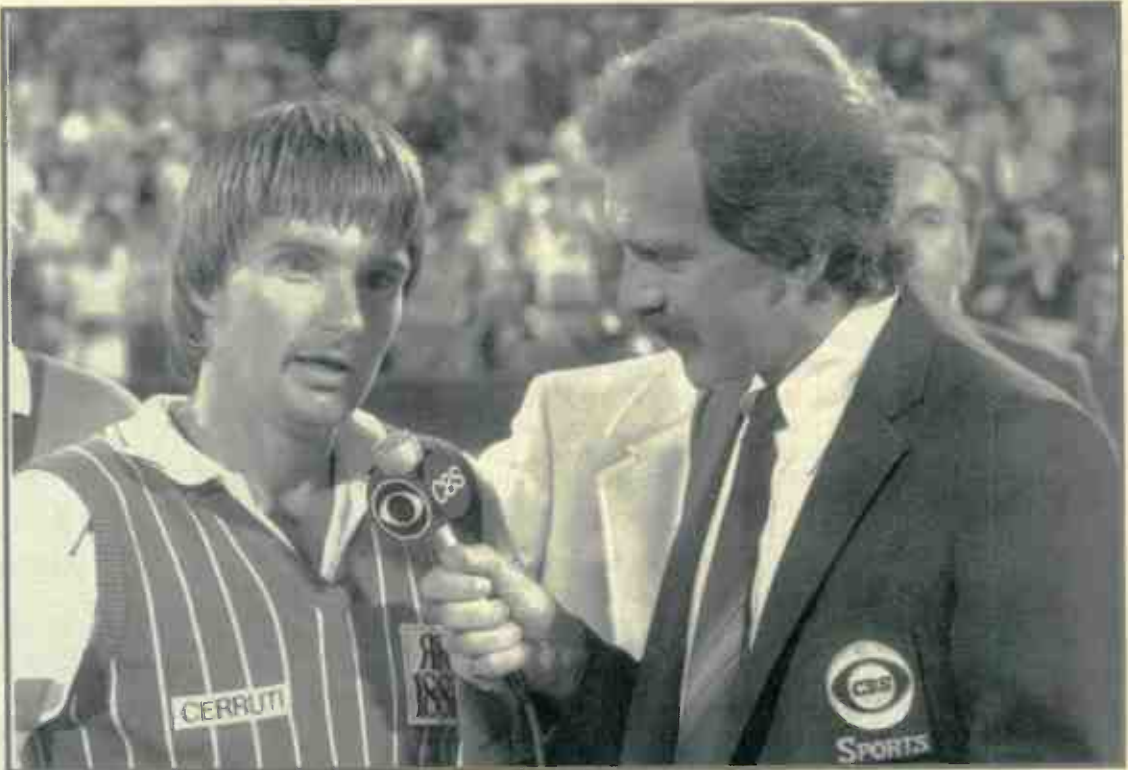
In Dec. 1993, Fox took away both football and popular faces such as John Madden, Pat Summerall and Terry Bradshaw from CBS, updating many of the broadcast features to suit the network's younger, hipper image. Meanwhile, AFC programmer NBC stuck with the more traditional broadcast. Today, CBS is hoping to pick up viewers from both networks with a cutting-edge production package that takes the best from both worlds.

"We're going to shoot for a combination of both Fox and NBC," says Terry Ewert, executive producer for CBS Sports. "We can't out-Hollywood Hollywood. Fox is settled into their own niche, and if we try to imitate their style or copy NBC, it will be obvious to everyone watching."

Instead, CBS will aim for a more news-oriented setup. "We're going to go more along the lines of what ESPN has out there and really concentrate just on football ... and add some pizzazz to it," Ewert says.

Hosting the pre-game show will be the "principal voice of CBS Sports," Jim Nantz, who came to the Tiffany network in 1985. Joining him will be Marcus Allen, Brent Jones and George Seifert.

The top play-by-play team will consist of Greg Gumble and Phil Simms, both of whom move with the NFL from NBC.



SCORING AN ACE: Former CBS broadcaster Pat O'Brien interviews tennis great Jimmy Connors following the 1993 U.S. Open. The tournament is an annual cornerstone of CBS' sports programming.

1967 held in the L.A. Coliseum between the Green Bay Packers and the Kansas City Chiefs.

"The event became a simulcast between both NBC (who had the AFL) and CBS," he says. "People forget that the New York papers were on strike at that time and if you wanted any news about what was going on, you had to use the papers. So people really didn't have a way of knowing a lot about that game, and still it was a tremendous success, both as a live event and as a broadcast event."

Football finally achieved overwhelming national popularity, prompting CBS to broadcast the first-ever nighttime championship game, Super Bowl XII in 1978. The matchup between the Denver Broncos and the Dallas Cowboys became the second-most watched show in television history (after "Roots") at that point.

Too cautious

Still, after overspending to get rights to major league baseball in 1990, the network was hesitant to outbid against an upstart Fox network when the football rights contract came up for renewal in 1993. Afraid of making another mistake, the network bowed out of the sport, only to lose brand recognition and affiliates in the process.

"Losing football was crippling," says Jim Nantz, a CBS sport broadcaster since 1985. "We overpaid for baseball by half a billion dollars, and we were afraid of another disaster if we repeated that mistake. It was very hurtful for everyone to see announcers and producers leaving as a result."

Despite CBS' holding rights to sports staples such as golf, tennis and the NCAA basketball tournament, analysts predicted sports would soon be eliminated altogether from the network.

"Even though our dynamics changed, the network did a pretty good job keeping its head above water and staying in the game," says Nantz. "I know watching Tiger Woods win the Masters in '97 was something that will be replayed over and over again well past our years. It's been very special being able to document that."

"And as it turns out, that was the way to go. NBC (which was outbid by CBS) is going to be on the sidelines for eight years now, while we've already served our time," he says. "I would

1996, he set out to recapture the public's eye with the world's most high-profile events.

"The major events are what bring viewers back to network television," says McManus. "We can use sports such as the Super Bowl or the Olympics to build a network brand and use the ratings to increase the value of our O&O stations and its working."

Nantz says one of the finest moments he's seen during his tenure was during the 1994 Olympic Games in Norway. He cites the broadcast as a monumental stone in broadcast



'I know watching Tiger Woods win the Masters in '97 was something that will be replayed over and over again well past our years.'

Broadcaster Jim Nantz, with Woods

rather go what we went through than be out of it for eight years. We actually got the cheapest rate of all the networks; \$500 million per year is the rose deal of them all, especially since we get Super Bowls and playoffs as well."

Reclaiming football was the icing on the cake for the network. After McManus took over as president of CBS Sports in

sports history.

"The 1994 Winter Olympics were the most-watched event in television history, and it goes past Nancy and Tanya," he says. "There were so many other things going for it, such as Dan Jansen finally ending his haunting story. It was a captivating night and drew off-the-chart numbers. I'll never see anything like it again."

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Adventures in babysitting

By RAMIN ZAHED

Line up the many personalities, pets and animated creatures that have populated CBS' children's entertainment world over the last 50 years, and the result borders on the surreal.

Imagine a party with Captain Kangaroo, Pee-Wee Her-



man, the Muppet Babies, Charlie Brown, Dennis the Menace and Lassie as guests, and you'll get a good idea of the colorful menagerie CBS has paraded in front of its pint-sized audiences for the past five decades.

Obviously, the competitive arena for kids entertainment today is worlds apart from the TV pioneer days in the early 1950s. Back then, all CBS had to do to grab the attention of young viewers and their parents was to televise a show like "Big Top" featuring a variety of circus acts. Conversely, CBS will have to embark on a major branding and promotional campaign this fall to make youngsters aware of its new Saturday morning lineup.

Saturday jousting

"The competition is huge right now," says Lucy Johnson, senior VP of daytime, children's programs and special projects at CBS. "We had a very strong lineup last year with 'The Ghostwriter Mysteries,' 'Wheel of Fortune 2000' and 'Sports Illustrated for Kids,' but we had to change gears, because this is a business, after all, and we need to make money."

A lukewarm reception to last year's shows prompted the net-

work to scratch its Saturday lineup and come up with three hours of new animated series, courtesy of Canuck toon house Nelvana.

"One of our biggest problems was that we're not an automatic destination of kids because we don't have a Monday through Friday kids block to promote our products like Nickelodeon and the WB Network," adds Johnson. "In the fall, we're coming back with more shows based on children's books and a vari-



BARNEY'S GRANDPA: Bob Keeshan's "Captain Kangaroo" has inspired several generations of children's television hosts.

ety of different animation styles, which are more advertiser and kid friendly."

The Eye web hopes to woo young viewers with a new Saturday morning lineup that includes titles such as "Franklin," "Anatole," "Dumb Bunnies," "Mythic Warriors: Guardians of the Legend," "From the Files of the Flying Rhinoceros" and "Birdz."

"What separates us is that we have to put our educational shows required by FCC in one place," Johnson points out. "We see it as an opportunity to provide entertaining shows that still offer 'take away' value for children."

This quest for providing "take away" value without sacrificing mass appeal goes all the way back to 1955, when the network struck gold with Bob Kee-

shan's "Captain Kangaroo." The young baby boomer set quickly embraced the now-familiar format of the kid-friendly host and his roster of homespun regulars. Through the years, "Captain Kangaroo" paved the way for other heavyweight series such as "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" on PBS and even inspired zanier variations on the theme like the network's own "Pee-Wee's Playhouse" in the '80s.

Primetime shows such as "Lassie" and "Dennis the Menace" attracted key family demographics in the '50s and the early '60s. In 1965, Bill Melendez and Lee Mendelson created an instant holiday classic with "A Charlie Brown Christmas," based on the popular comic strip by Charles M. Schultz. The team went on to produce more than 30 animated specials featuring the Peanuts gang for the network.

Spreading the arts

Other CBS children's programs of note were the Emmy-winning "New York Philharmonic's Young People's Concerts With Leonard Bernstein" and "CBS Festival of Lively Arts for Young People." While those shows exposed children to classical music and art at an early age, programs such as "The CBS Afternoon Playhouse" and "The CBS Schoolbreak Special" offered solid dramatic fare addressing issues of interest to young adults.

"Going back historically, I think CBS' children's programs had the right formula down for combining entertainment with education," says Tom O'Neil, author of "The Emmys: Star Wars, Showdowns, and the Supreme Test of TV's Best." "They were often exceptional in their execution, and were surprisingly adventurous in the way they handled sophisticated topics. After all, CBS was the network that offered 'Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts' when most of America was watching 'The Wonderful World of Disney.'"

Family affairs

Among the many family movies commissioned by CBS through the years was "The House Without a Christmas Tree." Helmed by Paul Bogard and starring Jason Robards and Lisa Lucas, the 1972 TV film told the story of a father who forbids holiday celebrations in order to avoid painful memories. The pic garnered much critical attention thanks to its subtle handling of a poignant subject matter.

The '80s witnessed the birth of two influential animated series. The first, the multiple-E Emmy-winning "Jim Henson's



WORKING FOR PEANUTS: In 1965, "A Charlie Brown Christmas" became an instant holiday classic for CBS, spawning more than 30 specials based on characters created by Charles M. Schultz.

Muppet Babies," was an animated spin on the familiar Muppet franchise aimed at a younger target audience. It ran on the web from 1984 to 1992. CBS' other big toon hit of the decade was "Teenage Mutant

gramming in the '80s. "Paul Reubens had a tremendous dedication to detail. I think one of the reasons the show was such a big hit was that he never patronized his audience."

Different dynamics

As fond of the network's past glories as Brockman is, he points out that surviving in today's cluttered climate offers new challenges for both network executives and their creative teams. "We're looking at a very changed marketplace today. There are a great many more avenues of distribution that ever before. It is a far more complex world out there."

However, there are some truths that remain universal. In the words of Bob Keeshan, a.k.a. Captain Kangaroo, who was recently inducted into the National Assn. of Broadcasters' Broadcasting Hall of Fame, "When one is working every day, five and six days a week on a television program, you really don't start to think about what's happening next month or next year. You simply are paying most of your attention to today, tomorrow, next week and next month." And before you know it, 50 years have come and gone in the wink of an eye.

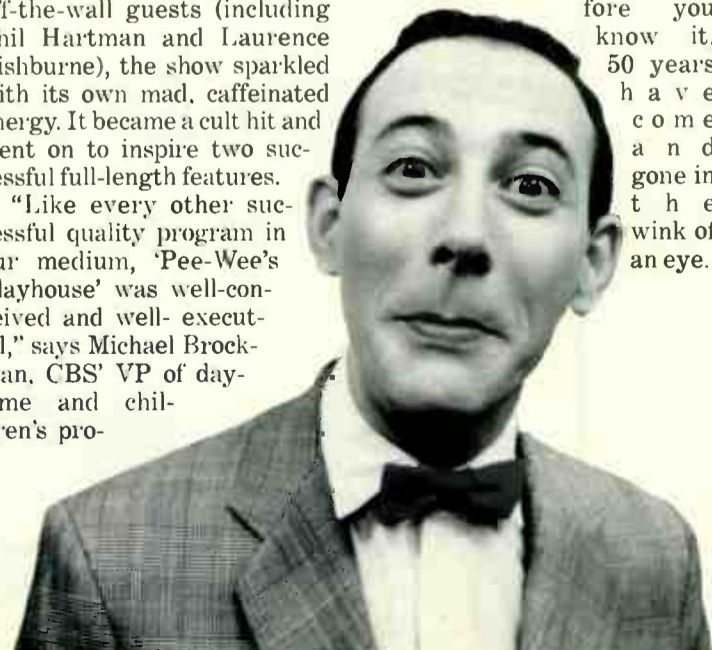
'CBS was the network that offered "Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts" when most of America was watching "The Wonderful World of Disney."'

TV historian Tom O'Neil

Ninja Turtles," which chronicled the adventures of the pizza-loving, reptilian crimefighters.

"Pee-Wee's Playhouse" (1986-1988) was a different beast altogether. With its off-beat, childlike host — the one-of-a-kind actor Paul Reubens — dadaesque decor, collection of talking inanimate objects and off-the-wall guests (including Phil Hartman and Laurence Fishburne), the show sparked with its own mad, caffeinated energy. It became a cult hit and went on to inspire two successful full-length features.

"Like every other successful quality program in our medium, 'Pee-Wee's Playhouse' was well-conceived and well-executed," says Michael Brockman, CBS' VP of daytime and children's pro-



PEE-WEE HERMAN

WITNESS: JUNE LOCKHART

"I have worked for CBS more than any other network. I remember the 25th anniversary TV special hosted by Mary Tyler Moore, when I walked through with the dog [Lassie]. It was the most egoless day — all of those CBS stars were proud to be there.



"I did a lot of guest starring spots for CBS before or while I did the series — 'Have Gun, Will Travel,' 'The U.S. Steel Hour,' 'Gunsmoke,' 'Password' — and CBS had an authority and a backing that they provided you with.

"The scariest moment was when they were shooting a TV Guide cover for 'Lost in Space' and they put Guy [Williams] and me in pelvic harnesses so it would look like we were flying — nine feet above the concrete. Guy's wires broke and he fell and luckily he wasn't hurt. I said, 'Get me down out of this thing right now!' They got the shot — but no reshoots."

— June Lockhart, star, "Lassie," from 1958-64; "Lost in Space, 1965-68, and "Petticoat Junction," 1968-70.

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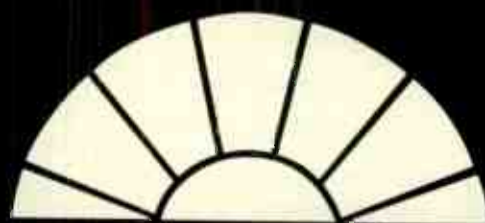
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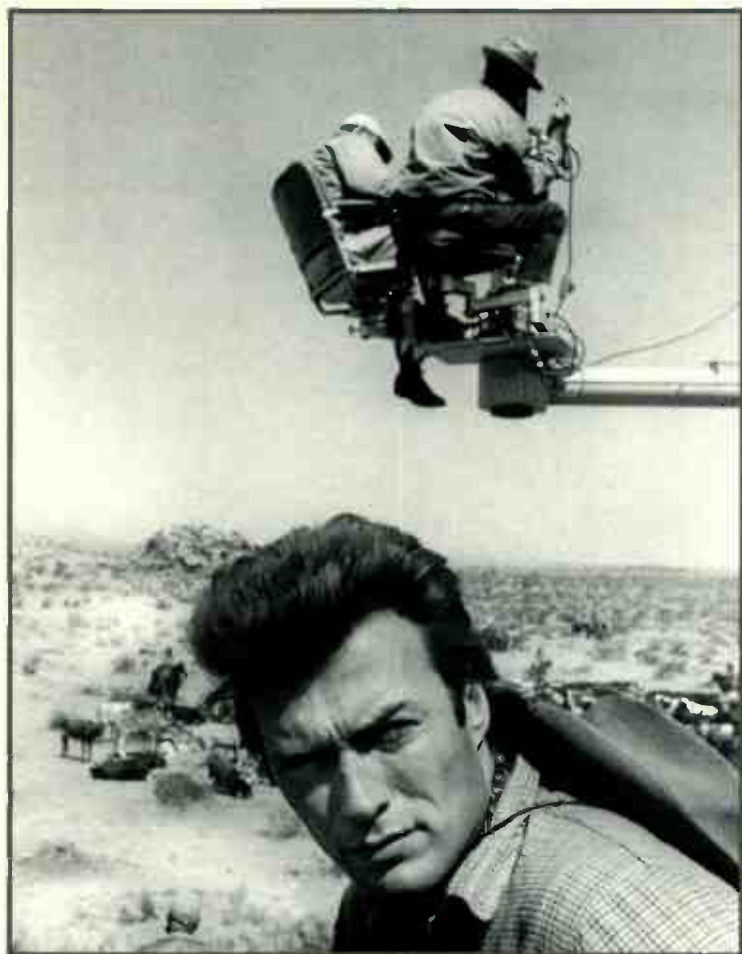
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HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER: Clint Eastwood rode his success as cattleman Rowdy Yates on "Rawhide" and turned it into a series of classic spaghetti westerns films, such as "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly."

From McQueen to 'Quinn,' the net's Westerns shoot to thrill

By RICHARD SETLOWE

The Western — that tumbling tumbleweed of American myth and television programming — is back in the saddle again on CBS.

"The first things I can remember watching on television were all Westerns," recalls John K. Watson, executive producer of one of CBS' current Westerns, "The Magnificent Seven," and writer of the original two-hour back-door pilot story with Pen Densham.

"When I think of television, I think of Westerns," Watson said. "They were very much the staple of television when I was growing up — 'The Lone Ranger,' 'Rawhide,' 'Bonanza,' and the more obscure shows like 'Hopalong Cassidy' and 'Wells Fargo' that people over here don't even seem to remember." Watson is British, and his Western-dominated childhood television memories speak to the international popularity and pervasiveness of the genre.

'Seven' returns

In a programming experiment, CBS has resurrected the MGM classic "Magnificent Seven" as a series, scheduling it on Saturday night as part of a Western block that bridges the creative spectrum from the self-conscious consciousness-raising of "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman" to the Chuck Norris' ass-kicking of "Walker, Texas Ranger."

The CBS Western tradition is long, innovative and historic, going back to that singing son of a gun "The Gene Autry Show," which ran from 1950 to 1956. The original "adult Western" was "Gunsmoke," which ran for 20 seasons on CBS, making it the longest-running dramatic series ever on prime-time television.

In addition to "Gunsmoke," three other CBS Westerns rank among the most popular shows of all time — measured by audience and longevity — "Rawhide," "Have Gun Will Travel," "Wanted Dead or Alive" and "Dick Powell's Zane Grey Theater."

Viewers' choice

"Gunsmoke" — which first aired Sept. 10, 1955, as a half-hour introduced by John Wayne leaning against a corral — changed the course of television. It won the 1957 Emmy for dramatic series, but perhaps, more importantly, dominated the ratings for four years until it was unseated by "Wagon Train." By the third year that "Gunsmoke" ran, there were 31 primetime network Westerns,

including seven of the top 10 series — a popularity never before achieved by one genre.

Historically — since Westerns were all shot on film — the genre was responsible for the production and creative base of television shifting from New York and live, theater-influenced shows to Hollywood and its movie studios, which previously had been avoiding television.

But all that gunplay on TV finally ran out of bullets. The craggy, taciturn trail boss of "Rawhide," Clint Eastwood, rode off to make a new breed of European spaghetti Westerns.



JUST JOSHIN': Steve McQueen first fought crime in "Wanted Dead or Alive," running on CBS from 1958 to 1961.

On CBS there were parodies like "Wild Wild West" — a James Bond during the Grant administration — and sitcoms like "Pistols 'n' Petticoats," but when the gunsmoke finally cleared on all the webs, only Marshal Matt Dillon was left standing.

As for today's "Dr. Quinn," "I never gave it a thought as a Western," insists the show's creator and executive producer, Beth Sullivan. "I'm not interested in the cowboys-and-Indians aspect of the Old West as adven-

ture. I've always thought of 'Dr. Quinn' as a period drama on the frontier, the things that were happening at that point of time in history. It was rampant laissez-faire capitalism with quite a lot of atrocities for the ecosystem — buffaloes, trees, rivers — (as well as) Indians. Things that we are still dealing with today, but on a different scale. It screamed out for parallels to today's world."

Good-guy image

"Walker, Texas Ranger," shot in Dallas, is a modern-day morality tale choreographed with more high karate kicks than shoot-outs, but the introductory image is that of Norris in a black Stetson, duster, cowboy boots and Ranger star cradling a carbine.

"And while 'Walker' has some of the mythic quality of a Western, it is perceived more as an action show, a cop drama," says Adam Gold, VP of research for CBS Television. "It crosses over quite well. The three shows are obviously very different. 'Magnificent Seven' is a straight-ahead traditional Western. 'Quinn' is not perceived as that much of a Western, especially by Western fans. It has a lot of audience that is not the traditional Western fan.

"But there's certainly the potential for a Western block," Gold says. He makes his pitch in terms of audience and advertisers. "Westerns appeal generally to an older demographic. We're going after 35-54. That's where the boomers all are. That's where the money is.

"A night of Westerns," Sullivan bemoans. "If that's what it takes to comprehend it, OK, but that's not what it is. But, yes, they've made it into a night of Westerns, for whatever that's worth."

WITNESS: ROBERT CONRAD

"Michael Garrison, who created 'Wild, Wild West,' was a bright, flamboyant guy. He said to me, 'Bob, you ought to come to a script meeting sometime.' I said, 'OK' and showed up. Michael stands up among the writers and says, 'Today, we'll put Ross Martin in drag, tie Conrad down with his shirt off — and an elephant walks through the set while Boris Karloff sits on a throne.'



That was a script conference for 'Wild West.' People still call it a Western. Well, it was a spoof, we were always kidding.

"CBS canceled the show because of pressure from Washington about too much violence on TV. Kids were the ones watching it, not adults, and the network caved in. They took it from 7:30 p.m. on Friday nights to 10 p.m. on Mondays and they effectively sacrificed it to the congressmen. Still, about 70% of the fan mail I get is about 'Wild West.'"

— Robert Conrad, star, "Wild, Wild West" from 1965-70, "High Mountain Rangers" in 1988, as well as in other series for other networks, including "Hawaiian Eye" and "Baa Baa Black Sheep."



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CBS heritage dials 'S' for suspense

By RICK KISSELL

The current CBS drama "Diagnosis Murder" is a murder mystery for the '90s: Shedding stereotypes of the classic whodunit while incorporating innovative storytelling and casting, the light-hearted drama has buoyed the net's Thursday night lineup and continued its strong tradition in the genre.



According to co-exec producer Lee Goldberg, the light-mystery starring Dick Van Dyke works today primarily because the CBS audience that has over the years embraced "Alfred Hitchcock Presents," "Perry Mason" and "Murder, She Wrote" was ready for "the next wave" of mysteries.

"We're throwing away the formulas and trying to make the mysteries more entertaining,"

says Goldberg. "Nobody wants to see every time a dead body and four suspects, one of whom did it. Those kind of shows were all well-done, but we're taking it to the next step.

CBS has kept its viewers guessing for more than 40 years.

"Alfred Hitchcock Presents" debuted on the Eye web in 1955, with the British film director introducing viewers to 30-minute stories of terror, horror and suspense. The show usually ended with a twist: Hitchcock, in his British accent and deadpan manner, would explain just what mistake or event led to the villain's demise.

Counsel extraordinaire

"Perry Mason," starring Raymond Burr and Barbara Hale, broke onto the CBS schedule in the fall of 1957.

"The hours were extremely long on that show and Raymond was our leader and he was a dear man and he kept us going. We celebrated our 50th anniversary of friendship in Denver the year before he died," Hale says.

"I really think the standard

for mysteries on television was set on CBS at this time," says Jim McKairns, CBS' current director of program planning and scheduling. "With 'Hitchcock' and 'Twilight Zone' and 'Perry Mason,' most of what we touched turned to gold."

The 1970s featured three long-running mystery/detective series on CBS: "Mannix," "Barnaby Jones" and "Cannon."

"Mannix," one of the most violent of the detective shows of its time, starred Mike Connors as Los Angeles-based private detective Joe Mannix.

Longevity counts

"Bob Woods was president when we started, then there were a few more through to Fred Silverman," says Connors. "I used to kid Silverman and CBS that I had been with the network longer than any of their presidents."

In 1984, two mysteries with quite different protagonists joined the CBS schedule. "Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer," and "Murder, She Wrote," which featured widowed mystery writer Jessica



LONG ARM OF THE LAW: The popularity of the unexpected twists of "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" caused the show to expand an hour.

Fletcher, who lived in the quaint town of Cabot Cove and always seemed to be in the vicinity of murder. The series, starring stage actress Angela Lansbury, is one of the few in TV history to feature a middle-aged woman as the sole lead character. According to CBS' McKairns, "Murder, She Wrote" is a good example of the necessary ingredients

coming together to create a major hit.

"In addition to our early history with mysteries, you also have other reasons why mysteries have been successful here," says McKairns. "To begin with, CBS has always skewed toward older audiences, and older audiences tend to be the book-buying audience which enjoys mysteries.

CBS 1998-99 ORDERS AND PILOTS

COMEDIES

PROGRAM	STUDIO	PRODUCTION TEAM	SYNOPSIS
Becker	Paramount	Dave Hackel, Andy Ackerman	Ted Danson is outspoken doctor
Better Days	Columbia	Michael Moore, Larry Charles	Blue-collar workers cope with auto plant closing
The Brian Benben Show	Warner Bros./CBS	Rob Borden, Brian Benben	TV anchor is supplanted by pair of pretty faces
By Ann Nivel	20th Century Fox	Danny Jacobson, Jeffrey Klarik	Fashion designer receives new look on life
Carly	20th Century Fox	Jeffrey Klarik	Modern-day "Working Girl"
John Larroquette project	USA Networks	J. Pillot, J. Peaslee, B. Brillstein, J. Larroquette	American take on the UK hit "Fawlty Towers"
King of Queens	Columbia	Michael Weithorn	Extended family moves in with blue-collar New York couple
Late Bloomer	CBS Prod.	Jonathan Axlerod, Jamie Widdoes	Housewife becomes talkshow host
Local Zeroes	Columbia/CBS	Donald Todd, Robby Benson, Stephen Chao	Dim-witted brothers become contractors
Maggie Winters	CBS/Greenblatt-Janollari	Kari Lizer	Faith Ford returns to old life after divorce
Me & Henry	CBS/Witt-Thomas-Harris	Terry Minsky, Nina Wass	Melanie Griffith is single parent in New York, with mom Betty White
The Miles Family	Big Ticket TV	Warren Bell	Family lives in San Francisco's Pacific Heights
Eric Schaeffer project	CBS Prod.	E. Schaeffer	Ensemble cast about New York cab driver
Stop and Go	Castle Rock TV	Aline Brosh McKenna, Jeff Kahn	Ex-limo driver opens own limo company

DRAMAS

Affairs of the Heart	20th Century Fox	D. Burke, C. Palminteri, A. Spiridakis	Uptown attorneys pair up with salt-of-the-earth gumshoe
Bronx County	Paramount	S. Pollack, J. Sacret Young, T. Carter, B. Schindel	Legal eagles with Bronx accent
Buddy Faro	Spelling Entertainment	Mark Frost, Charlie Haid	Experienced detective helps out green private eyes
Family Brood	Rysher Entertainment	Tom Fontana, Berry Levinson, James Yoshimura	"Backdraft" for television
Glory, Glory	Spelling Entertainment	Judith Paige Mitchell, Bob Butler	Union soldier falls for Southern Belle during Civil War
To Have and to Hold	CBS/Greenblatt-Janollari	Scott Shepherd, Joanne Waters	Romance blooms between a cop and a lawyer
It's True	Paramount	Danny Bilson, Paul DeMeo, Gahan Wilson	TV hosts investigate paranormal phenomena
L.A. Doctors	Col. TriStar/CBS	Mark Johnson, John Lee Hancock, Scott Brazil	Docs quit corporate medicine, start new practice
Matthew	Rysher Entertainment	Mike Pavone, Dave Johnson	Forrest Gump with supernatural powers
The Repair Shop	Col. TriStar/Rysher	Mark Frost, Jane Rosenthal, Robert De Niro	"Fugitive" runs from the government
Second Opinion	Col. TriStar/CBS	Lisa Melamed, Jim Hayman	Father and son medical team
Skip Chasers	20th Century Fox	Glen Morgan, James Wong	It all happens at an action-packed bail bonds business
Texarkana	Paramount	John Sacret Young, Toni Graphia	Ensemble piece set on border of Texas and Arkansas
Turks	USA Networks	Bob Singer, Jim Michaels, Wayne Farlow	Police family drama set in Chicago

Congratulations,
Don Sells



RED HOT: CBS has expanded the success of "48 Hours," with Bill Lagattuta, by creating "48 Hours Later" for the "Eye on People" net.

Cable ventures tap top talent as net expands

By AMY KARPINSKI

Recently born CBS Cable is thriving in the hands of its strong network parent. In less than two years, the Eye web's cable connection has bloomed into a fully developed company housing four cablers with the newest limb securely attached to the vast placenta of programming and production resources of CBS.

In some cases CBS Cable provides direct followups to popular CBS programs. For example, taking its cue from "60 Minutes," cable channel CBS Eye on People created "60 Minutes More."

CBS was the last major network to branch out into cable — ABC controls the ESPN networks, NBC has the MSNBC and CNBC channels and Fox has the Fox News Channel and F/X. Yet CBS' cable networks have grown rapidly over a brief period. When Westinghouse Electric Corp. bought CBS in late 1995, the company made the development of a cable arm a priority, and in just the past year, it has acquired the Spanish-language news channel TeleNoticias, The Nashville Network (TNN) and Country Music Television (CMT), as well as launching its own 24-hour information and entertainment channel, CBS Eye on People.

On the transactions beat

The first CBS cable venture, Miami-based TeleNoticias had aired for three years before CBS bought it last June. Part of an ever-growing Spanish-language market in the U.S. and the world, the channel competes intensely with CNN's Spanish-language service and even borrows from some of CNN's programming formats. When CBS acquired both TNN and CMT in February of last year, the transaction was in keeping with the trend toward consolidation in the cable industry. "(CBS) can use its leverage to help take these country music and country lifestyle networks to an even higher level of visibility," said Edward L. Gaylord, when his company Gaylord Entertainment sold the networks to Westinghouse/CBS.

The deal proved lucrative for CBS: Currently TNN reaches more than 70 million homes and CMT reaches over 38 million, and both networks are expanding in the U.S. and Canada. TNN broadcasts country music, entertainment and "country lifestyle" programming (such as motorsports like NASCAR racing and rodeo events). But nowhere does CBS Cable's personality flourish more than on Eye on People, its home-spun network that cultivates uplifting people-centric stories. "TV viewers want positive stories about what is good in the world today," says Geoffrey Darby, president of CBS' Eye on People. "Our programming celebrates the emotions and experiences of people from all walks of life."

Reaching a massive audience

The channel makes hearty use of the CBS archives and anchors. In addition to the expanded version of "60 Minutes," Dan Rather hosts "48 Hours Later," in which stories covered on CBS News magazine are revisited and updated; John Roberts examines wars as seen through the eyes of those who reported on and participated in them on "Under Fire"; Lesley Stahl anchors "I Remember," in which CBS news correspondents and others recall major historical events; and Harry Shearer follows in the gentle footsteps of the late journalist Charles Kuralt, journeying across America in search of people with stories to tell in "Travels With Harry."

Eye on People currently reaches 10 million homes, and CBS projects that it will be in 17.5 million homes by the end of the year. "We have a startup network, two acquired networks and an international network, and every one is growing rapidly," says Sheryl Daly, spokeswoman for CBS Cable.



GAME ON: In the early 1950s, "What's My Line," hosted by John Daly, became a network staple.

'Price' keeps eyes on the prize

By STUART LEVINE

His gait may be a little slower, his speech more deliberate and his hair whiter than ever, but don't be fooled — Bob Barker, at 74, remains one of the best and most beloved gameshow hosts in the business.

As the emcee of CBS' enormously successful daytime gameshow "The Price Is Right," Barker is a legend in a genre that has an audience as loyal as anything televised during primetime. The show will wrap



its 26th season at the June 2 taping and Barker has been there for every spin of the wheel, every Showcase Showdown and every frantic contestant who dreams of winning a new car.

But while "The Price Is Right" is obviously a jewel in CBS' daytime programming crown, the network has a rich history of gameshows that "Price" has been able to build on.

In the early 1950s, "What's My Line," hosted by John Daly, and "I've Got a Secret," with host Gary Moore, were staples on the Tiffany network. Guests for both shows included celebrity heavyweights at the time: Desi Arnaz, Deborah Kerr and Henry Morgan, who went on to star in another CBS series, "MASH."

There was also the immensely popular "Password," with Allen Ludden, which premiered in 1961. The show, which included celebrity guests such as Jimmy Stewart and Jack Benny, did well both as a daytime and primetime series but eventually left the network when Fred Silverman, head of CBS daytime programming at the time, canceled the gameshow in 1967.

Silverman was content with airing reruns of sitcoms like "I Love Lucy" and "The Andy Griffith Show" in the morning hours until 1972, when Barker got a call from gameshow guru Mark Goodson suggesting they bring back a show called "The Price Is Right" that had aired on NBC from 1956-63, hosted by Bill Cullen. Twenty-six years later, with very few alterations from that first CBS broadcast, the format has become ingrained with viewers.

"No one could have predicted its success," says Barker, who recently taped his 5,000th show in Studio 33, which has been renamed in his honor. "I really thought the show would do well, but neither (Goodson nor I) could have possibly dreamed this would happen."

"The Price Is Right" consistently ranks No. 2 in daytime ratings, right behind CBS' sudser "The Young & the Restless." Lucy Johnson, the network's senior VP of daytime TV, says the gameshow's audience remains a daytime phenomenon.

"It continues to hold its own or has gone up in the ratings, and it holds its own throughout the year, not just on a seasonal pattern," says Johnson, who has been at CBS for nine years.

Bob Boden, now VP of development and production at cabler F/X, was a daytime programming exec from 1985-88 at CBS and is regarded by his peers as a walking encyclopedia

of gameshows. He says the success of "Price" is due to the fact that, unlike most other gameshows, every day brings something different for both the studio and TV audience.

All agree that the major success behind "The Price Is Right" is Barker, who began his network broadcasting career as host of "Truth or Consequences" in 1956.

"I think it's a variety of things that have resulted in the success of the show," Barker says. "The premise is powerful. Everything we do is based on prices. We all buy things every day. Even if you're not watching and just listening at home and hear a price of something described, you say, 'Oh, my gosh, that's way too high.' Whatever she thinks, we have her involved."

So with 5,000 shows in the can and nothing ahead that

seems likely to derail the show's momentum, is Barker prepared to head into the next century as the "Price" ringmaster?

Absolutely. Or, as Barker says, what else is he going to do?

"I still enjoy it, which explains my enthusiasm," Barker says. "If I didn't enjoy it, the show wouldn't be as successful. That camera picks up everything, and it could tell if I was going through the motions."

Adds VP Johnson, who doesn't even want to think about finding a new host: "I hope my contract expires before his does."



'Even if you're not watching and just listening at home and hear a price of something described, you say, "Oh, my gosh, that's way too high."'

Bob Barker, left, with Rod Roddy



Miniseries weapon of choice for net chiefs

By KRISTIEN BRADA

There is a familiar buzz filling the air in TV land. With May sweeps only a few short days away, the dialogue is obvious: Despite the networks' admitted aversion to the sweeps process, all the channels are lining up their heavy hitters to play the Nielsen game. If CBS has anything to say about it, a large portion of the ratings will be drawn by its epic sequel "Mario Puzo's The Last Don II."

With two straight sweeps victories behind them, CBS execs are hopeful, yet also sternly cautious with expectations during this round of sweeps.

CBS VP of miniseries, the architecture of sweeps puts programmers and viewers in a frustrating position. "Viewers are forced to choose between two, sometimes three programs, all of which they'd probably like to see," she explains. "All the networks bring out their biggest guns and shoot them off at the very same time."

Perhaps one of the heaviest hitters in a stacked sweeps lineup, CBS' two-day miniseries brings back helmer Graeme Clifford and much of the original cast to continue the Mafia family saga. The story follows the escalating conflict between rival Mafia families. Stars Kirstie Alley, Danny Aiello, Joe Mantegna and Jason Gedrick all return

to their roles, a move CBS execs hope will draw viewers back for more.

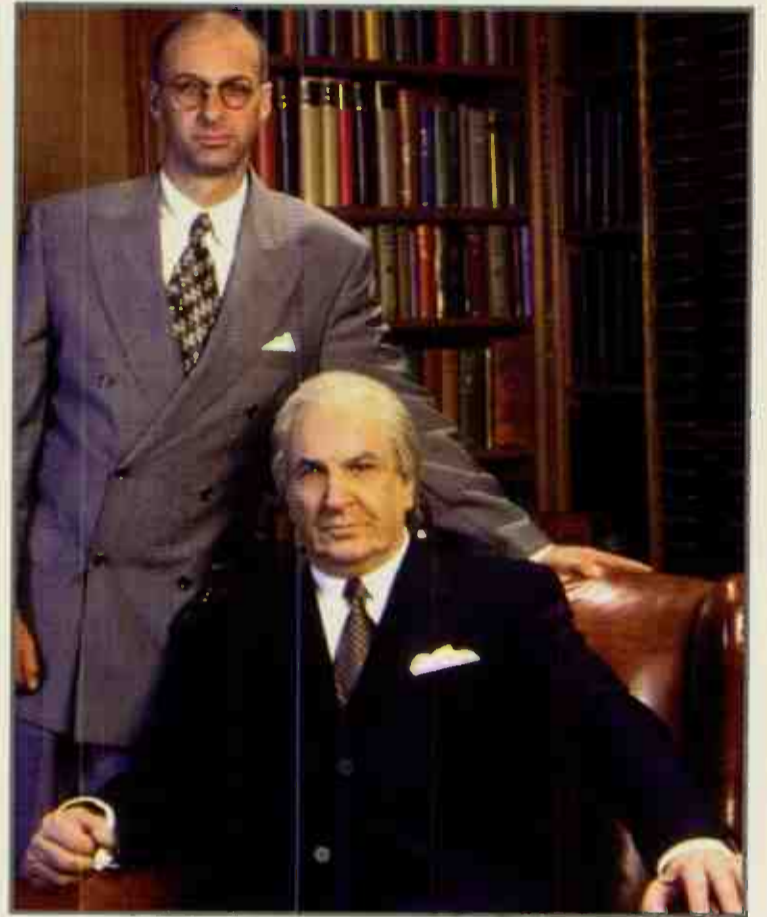
"So many people who saw the first one told me how much they loved it and wished it would keep going," recalls exec producer Frank Konigsberg. "They wanted to know what was going to happen next."

With this in mind, Konigsberg teamed with Larry Sanitsky and scriptwriter Joyce Eliason to produce the sequel. "I think what people want to see in sweeps is something that has real epic quality," he says, "a story that's involved, with real, vivid characters." Theirs, they hope, is a recipe for success — an Emmy Award-nominated cast, powerful story and, more importantly, proven appeal.

Just less than a year ago, the Eye network made biggest year-to-year gains among the networks in adults 18-49, 25-54, and households, and earned a close second-place finish behind NBC in homes. Its airing of "Mario Puzo's The Last Don" provided the ammunition, shooting CBS into resounding wins for each of the mini's three nights.

'I think we've been at the forefront of criticizing the sweeps process. ... Viewers are actually being driven away from network television.'

Kelly Kahl, CBS VP of program planning and scheduling



POWER AND HONOR: David Marciano, left, and Danny Aiello return in "The Last Don II," after hitting ratings gold last year.

Hallmark specials nestle into new 'home' at CBS

By RICK KISSELL

The "Hallmark Hall of Fame" has been a successful television franchise for nearly 50 years, but it has only recently found a truly "welcome" home.

"Hall of Fame," a prestigious series of drama specials that has visited each of the Big 3 networks and PBS since 1952, recently secured a permanent home on CBS through the 2001-02 TV season. And both sides couldn't be happier.

For Hallmark, the pact means it deals with a cooperative partner who understands, among other things, the importance of scheduling and promotion in building audience interest in the specials.

For CBS, it means the network's already-dominant package of high-toned Sunday movies gets the added cachet of four "Hall of Fame" specials a year.

"The Hallmark Hall of Fame has been a vital part of establishing and building the image of Hallmark for nearly five decades," says Brad Moore, president of Hallmark Hall of Fame Productions. "It's part of the very fabric of our company, so we are extremely careful in choosing whom we work with on all aspects of the series."

Sunta Izzicupo, VP for motion pictures for television at CBS, says the Hallmark Hall of Fame movies tap into "our perfect audience."

Tightly woven dramas

"These movies are quality, traditional, female-driven, emotionally based character dramas," says Izzicupo. "They are typical of what we try to accomplish with our Sunday movies."

The fully sponsored "Hall of Fame" productions, which began as an extension of the Kansas City, Mo.-based company's sponsorship of "Hallmark Playhouse" on radio, have ranged from Shakespeare, Shaw and Gilbert & Sullivan to modern adaptations of classic books and plays.

Over the last 46 years, 170 "Hallmark Hall of Fame" productions have garnered 77 Emmy Awards, 22 Christopher Awards, 11 Peabody Awards, nine Golden Globe Awards and four Humanitas Prizes. The 1986 special, "The Promise," which aired on CBS and featured James Garner as a man caring for his mentally ill brother (James Woods), remains the most honored of all the

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Don of a new day

"Obviously, with 'The Last Don II,' we're hoping to recapture some of the popularity and success that it gave us last May," says Kelly Kahl, CBS VP of program planning and scheduling.

This may have been the strategy behind CBS' programming in November. Capitalizing on its achievement in May, Eye execs decided to air "Bella Mafia," another mob-based miniseries, starring Vanessa Redgrave, Jennifer Tilly, Natassja Kinski and Dennis Farina. Producers took a profitable theme and gave it a twist in dealing with the mob's feminine side. When the ratings came in, more than a few people smiled. The mini's two-night 14.3/22 in homes was a sweeps victory for CBS, and ranked it behind just four of the prior season's 15 first-run multi-

parters on the Big Three.

"The miniseries has become a weapon for all the networks," Kahl notes. "We have enjoyed as much success as anybody."

The question now is whether this latest mini sequel will pack enough power to go the distance in May.

CBS execs have been rather vocal in their aversion to the current ratings system. "I think we've been at the forefront of criticizing the sweeps process," Kahl says. He maintains that while sweeps may have originated as a sampling of normal programming, this is clearly not the case anymore. The process has begun to force networks to save their best programming for just a few months out of the year. And with repeats correspondingly heavy in March and April, the

outcome, Kahl believes, is negative. "The effect of this is that viewers are actually being driven away from network television."

But Kahl also realizes that CBS has to stay in the game. The Eye web must participate in sweeps in order to compete. This means positioning a lineup diverse and appealing enough to grab audiences from all demographics. "Certainly, 'The Last Don' was an eye-opener for us," he says in regard to expectations. "It showed that we really have the ability to draw a younger and more urban audience than we normally draw."

As for its sequel, only time will tell how well this Mafia mini fares in its next battle, but CBS is poised and ready.

"Mario Puzo's The Last Don II" airs 9-11 p.m. May 3 and 5.

WITNESS: BOB NEWHART



"MTM was the creative place to be. When we had that Saturday-night lineup in the early '70s — 'All in the Family,' 'MASH,' 'The Mary Tyler Moore Show,' us and 'The Carol Burnett Show' — it changed American viewing habits like in the days of Milton Berle and Lucille Ball. We were part of a golden age. I attribute it mostly to the writing. It's a gut business — a gut feeling that this show or that show is going to work. CBS had the golden gut longer than anybody."

"When Bob Wood took over as president of CBS and ended 'The Red Skelton Show,' 'Green Acres' and some other things and put on 'The Mary Tyler Moore Show' and 'MASH,' it was a dramatic and dangerous gamble that paid off. Bob told me that when he showed the pilot of 'All in the Family' to Bill Paley, he didn't laugh at all. When the lights came up, Bob said, 'Did you like the show?' And Paley said, 'Well, it's your network.' But it turned out to be an epochal time in TV history."

— Bob Newhart, co-host of "The Entertainers" (1964-65) and star of "The Bob Newhart Show" (1972-78) and "Newhart" (1982-90).



HEAR NO EVIL: Judith Ivey and Tom Skerritt starred in November's "What the Deaf Man Heard," the season's most watched telepic.

Hallmarks' the spot for net's sweeps successes

Continued from previous page
specials, with five Emmys — including best made-for-television movie.

The series aired exclusively on NBC for many years, but scheduling disagreements and a dip in ratings led the network and Hallmark to mutually part ways in 1979. ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS each presented the "Hall of Fame" in subsequent years, but — especially in the late 1980s and early '90s — CBS viewers embraced the movies in considerably greater numbers. To illustrate this point, consider that while NBC has aired the most "Hall of Fame" specials, the franchise's 10 highest-rated movies have all appeared on CBS.

'Heard' seen by many

Last November's "What the Deaf Man Heard," starring Matthew Modine, ranks as the television season's most-watched movie and currently ranks third all-time among "Hallmark Hall of Fame" movies, trailing only "Aunt Mary" (1979) and "Sarah, Plain and Tall" (1991).

Other recent successes for the series on CBS include "Harvest of Fire" (1996), "Rose Hill" (1997), "William Faulkner's Old Man" (1997), "Ellen Foster" (1997) and "The Love Letter" (1998). Each of these movies dominated their time period and have helped the "CBS Sunday Movie" move into the top 10 in ratings among all programs on television.

Next up for the company will be "Only Love," airing in May, based on a romance novel by Erich Segal ("Love Story"). "Only Love" stars Oscar winner Tomei, Rob Morrow and Matilda May. The drama is about a

couple kept apart by time and distance.

"I think it's truly an old-fashioned love story, and I believe Erich Segal will have an enormous appeal. It is also an international story," says executive producer Gerrit van der Meer. "That sweep — no pun intended — the grandness of the whole story, will give it definite appeal."

Dick Welsh, who has been the executive producer of the "Hall of Fame" for the last 12 years, believes the key to the series' success is that the movies are about relationships.

Real-life stories

"We spend a lot of time in making sure the relationships ring true and having people talk to each other the way they might really want to but might not actually do in real life," he says. "We believe we can tackle any subject if it's handled properly, and the audience seems to respond to these personal stories."

Hallmark's Moore credits CBS' Moonves with taking a personal interest in seeing the franchise and partnership succeed. Five years ago when he was at Lorimar, Moonves produced the highly popular "Hall of Fame" entry "Oh, Pioneers!," starring Jessica Lange.

In the year 2002, the "Hallmark Hall of Fame" will be celebrating its own Golden Anniversary. Moore said the duration of the deal CBS and Hallmark inked last year — extending what had been a three-year exclusive deal into a seven-year pact — was done in part to guarantee that the 50th anniversary presentations would air on the network.

Kristien Brada contributed to this report.

'Welcome home' awakens Eye

By ERIC J. OLSON

While NBC continues to strut its peacock and the WB hops around with Michigan J. Frog, CBS is focusing on its own icon, the Eye.

At a time when advertisers are paying record amounts for a shrinking network audience, the networks are placing more emphasis than ever on their in-house promo ads.

CBS will stick with its "The Address Is CBS: Welcome Home" marketing and on-air promotion next season.

What began as "Welcome Home" for the 1996 season evolved into "The Address Is CBS: Welcome Home" for 1997. For fall 1998, CBS will take "The Address Is CBS" up another level in its marketing and on-air promotional campaign.

"Football is going to be a big part of it," says George Schweitzer, executive VP of marketing and communications at CBS. Having reacquired football for the fall season, CBS plans to welcome football fans home and intertwine the games with the rest of its entertainment programming.

"Football pumps up the energy and gives the campaign an aggressive momentum," Schweitzer says.

Often criticized by Madison Avenue for having the oldest demographic of all the networks — CBS has a huge 50-plus audience — the Eye web has retaliated with a hipper, livelier, more energetic campaign. "It's all about the execution and style, which has more of an edge and a

contemporary feel to it," Schweitzer says. "The new campaign is a progression and evolution of where we are now."

According to CBS execs, the current promos are designed to hold on to CBS' core 25-54 age bracket audience while attempting to pull in younger viewers closer to the 25 mark. The change, however, won't be radical; CBS tried that unsuccessfully once before.

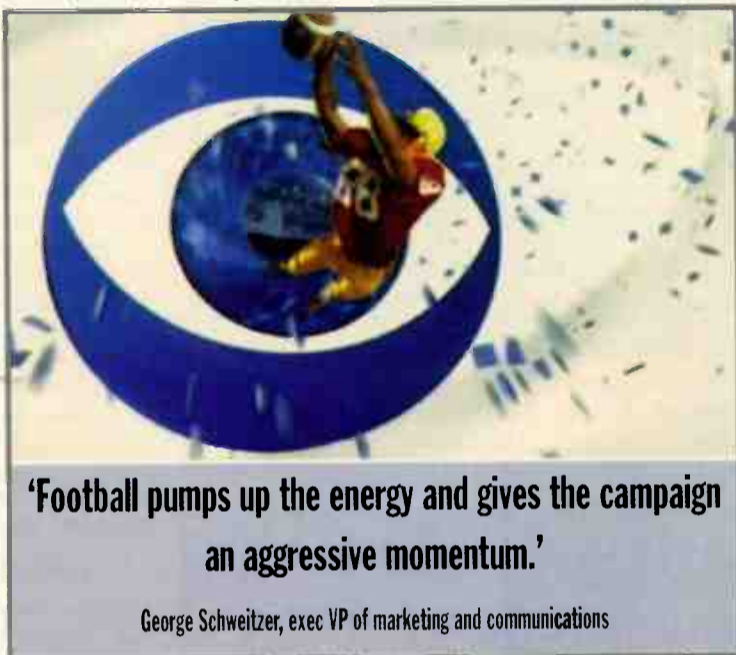
But out of folly can arise enlightenment and success. CBS hit upon the "Welcome Home"

vealed until after May 21, viewers can expect new variations on graphics, music, and lyrics. The network's eye logo may have a slightly updated look as well, although it will continue to play a central role as the company's widely identifiable icon.

Just how effective is "The Address Is CBS" theme? Schweitzer says the campaign has created the most brand awareness CBS has ever had. "It creates a sense of place that resonates emotionally with viewers," he says. "It's a destination theme.

Where's the best comedy on Mondays? The address is CBS. You'll have a good visit when you watch CBS."

It's difficult to assess the wisdom of continuing with the evolution of the destination-themed "Welcome Home" campaign. Paul Schulman, president of the Paul Schulman Co.,



'Football pumps up the energy and gives the campaign an aggressive momentum.'

George Schweitzer, exec VP of marketing and communications

theme for the following season to win back the viewers who fled. The message was that it was OK to come back now. The warm and cozy welcoming told viewers CBS was once again a friendly place for great television. The campaign worked and ratings rose.

For 1998, CBS also will continue its ongoing strategy of marketing its shows individually, each one being treated as a separate "brand" tailored to its particular target audience. As in last year's campaign, big stars will be featured in promo spots. CBS feels it's the stars who make the audience connect to the network.

Though the details of CBS' new campaign won't be re-

which buys network ad time, finds the message fuzzy. "It's like when people come back to TV — Bill Cosby, Bob Newhart, Tom Selleck — but the 'welcome home' people who've come back have not made that big of a dent," he says. "It may be welcoming stars or welcoming viewers. I'm not sure. It wouldn't be bad to change the message, because the new 'welcome home' shows haven't reached the levels expected for them."

However, Schweitzer says the campaign is "extremely popular with the audience. We don't try to fix something if it's not broken. Continuity in this business is very important for the viewer."

WITNESS: JOHN FORSYTHE



"Worthington 'Toby' Miner was the head of what was then the TV arm of CBS and he started 'Studio One' and brought in many good directors and writers who later became giants in motion pictures. 'Climax!' was an immensely popular show, but we did a lot of those first shows in radio studios where they had knocked out the walls and cables piled on top of each other. It was live, so you would have actors running from one end to the other with wardrobe people redressing them on the fly.

"Once, I had to go from a dinner jacket to a baseball uniform in one minute, throwing clothes off as I ran. It was an extraordinary school for everyone, the writers, directors and actors. Then on 'Bachelor Father' we used to alternate with 'The Jack Benny Show' in the days when American Tobacco was a huge sponsor and had a great deal of sway over the network."

— John Forsythe, starred in dozens of "Studio One" and "Climax!" dramas, and the series "Bachelor Father" from 1957-62, the first two seasons of which were on CBS.

Eyewitness quotes compiled by Jerry Roberts

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World Radio History

FILM REVIEWS

Bongwater

(Comedy-drama)

An Alliance Independent Films presentation. Produced by Alessandro Uzielli, Laura Bickford. Co-producers, Kathryn Riccio, Mat Lundberg.

Directed by Richard Sears. Screenplay, Nora Maccoby, Eric Weiss, based on the book by Michael Hornburg. Camera (color), Richard Crudo; editor, Lauren Zuckerman; music, Mark Mothersbaugh, Josh Mancell; music supervisor, Billy Gottlieb; production designer, Gideon Ponte; costume designer, Nancy Steiner; sound, John Brasher; casting, John Papsidera. Reviewed at L.A. Independent Film Festival, April 19, 1998. Running time: 98 MIN.

David	.....	Luke Wilson
Serena	.....	Alicia Witt
Jennifer	.....	Amy Locane
Mary	.....	Brittany Murphy
Devlin	.....	Jack Black
Tony	.....	Andy Dick
Robert	.....	Jeremy Sisto
Tommy	.....	Jamie Kennedy
Bobby	.....	Scott Caan
Mom	.....	Patricia Wettig

By LAEL LOEWENSTEIN

The latest entry in the growing field of indie youth ensemble films, "Bongwater" is an uneven, intermittently likable movie about a group of Portland residents for whom getting high is a way of life. While its fresh-faced but largely unknown cast members frequently rise above the material, pic isn't distinctive enough to suggest it will yield more than a limited run in specialized markets.

The story opens with a bang *in medias res*. An unidentified young man dashes out of a house. Doors

slam. A woman, carrying suitcases, leaves soon after. In the chaos, a smoldering bong topples over, igniting the adjacent curtains. Remainder of the sequence cross-cuts between the fire, as flames consume the house, and the young man drinking shots at a strip club, ignorant of the devastation that awaits him at home.

With that forceful opening, helmer Richard Sears successfully piques one's curiosity, though the rest of the movie never quite attains the same dynamic energy level. A temporal shift then takes the action back three weeks as David (Luke Wilson, of "Bottle Rocket"), an aspiring artist and successful pot dealer, metes out his stash to friends and associates.

Suddenly, a fiery redhead, Serena (Alicia Witt), bursts into his house. She demands to know why her friend Jennifer (Amy Locane) is unconscious, blaming David for Jennifer's condition.

Despite their inauspicious start, Serena and David become friends, roommates and nearly lovers. Introducing him to her well-connected but irritatingly perky friend Mary (Brittany Murphy), Serena tries to help David gain a foothold in the art scene. But wires get crossed and signals misunderstood, and when Serena thinks David has more than a friendly interest in Mary, she takes off with heroin-addicted musician Tommy (Jamie Kennedy), who's bound for New York.



Alicia Witt plays Serena in "Bongwater," directed by Richard Sears.

That 30-minute backstory explains the argument with David that precipitated Serena's rapid departure from his house and the ensuing fire. What it doesn't explain is why the kindhearted David continues to pine for her even after her bitter exit. With her mouth fixed in a perpetual pout, Serena is selfish, manipulative and irrationally possessive. Her purported chemistry with David is not visible onscreen.

Here the plot more or less dismantles. Sears spends much time depicting the disconsolate David and his pot-smoking gay friends Tony (Andy Dick) and Robert (Jeremy Sisto). An endless succession of scenes portray the trio getting high and indulging in the pseudo-profundities of a cannabis-enhanced state. Occasionally, someone gets off a good one-liner, but for the most part, those scenes are stock and predictable.

A brief diversion takes David and Mary out of the city and on a pot-retrieving expedition deep in the Oregon woods. Other than providing footage of people dancing stoned through a redwood forest, the tediously slow sequence sets up an LSD-induced hallucination of David's mother (Patricia Wettig), which adds little.

Meanwhile, having overdosed on New York, Serena forsakes the city to return to Portland — and presumably David. But because she's hardly evolved as a character, there's precious little to root for in their reunion. In fact, it's pretty hard to like anyone in this movie except for David, as Wilson gives the only sympathetic performance.

Its 98 minutes feeling more like two hours, "Bongwater" could have benefited from some liberal editing that might have picked up the pace and moved the action along.

Starf*cker

(Comedy)

A Persistent Pictures presentation in association with Bandeira Entertainment of a King/Flynn/Simchowicz and Dan Stone production. Produced by Jonathan King, Beau Flynn, Stefan Simchowicz. Executive producers, Dan Stone, Henry M. Shea.

Directed, written by John Enbom. Camera (Foto-Kem color), Patrick Loungway; editor, J. Kathleen Gibson; music, Christophe Beck; production designer, Andrew Cahn; costume designer, Genevieve Tyrrell; sound (Dolby), Daniel D. Monahan; assistant director, Richard Fox; casting, Sheila Jaffe, Georgianne Walken. Reviewed at L.A. Independent Film Festival, April 19, 1998. Running time: 91 MIN.

George Flynn	.....	Jamie Kennedy
Kyle Carey	.....	Loren Dean
Jerry Wallace	.....	Clarence Williams III
Sandra	.....	Bridgette Wilson
Philip Fox	.....	Spencer Garrett
Iona Shirley	.....	Carmen Electra
Manny	.....	Bruce Ramsay
Tracey Beck	.....	Amy Smart
Saul Spengler	.....	Paul Herman
William	.....	Matt Malloy
Linda Phaeffle	.....	Marlo Thomas



Jamie Kennedy, left, and Loren Dean in helmer John Enbom's "Starf*cker."

By LEONARD KLADY

Climbing the Hollywood ladder has become a staple topic of the American indie scene. An acerbic look at the needy and aspiring, "Starf*cker" gets in a

few good licks and observations, but the film relies too heavily on oft-used situations. Not quite up to the rigors of the theatrical marketplace, this debut feature by writer-director John Enbom is nonetheless amusing and well

cast, and could easily score as a cable premiere with modest spin-off on videocassette.

Pic's dynamic of a wannabe be-friending a star has been employed countless times in both dramatic and comic contexts. In this incarnation, George (Jamie Kennedy) works as an ad writer until one of a half-dozen of his completed scripts is discovered and produced.

Talent aside, George is trapped in a vicious circle. Because he's a marginal, he hangs out with a crowd of "not-quites" that includes high school friends from Arizona and a rich kid who produced a grade-Z exploitation movie in the Philippines and is looking to step up to something more ambitious.

Something like fate interrupts the cycle. At one of the numerous low-rent, no-profile parties where George and friends network, he

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In God's Hands

Continued from page 8

jerry-built storyline is just an excuse for numerous shots of luscious scenery and towering waves that play like a video from the Indonesian Tourist Authority.

Equally distracting, the cast is made of professional surfers who perform with grace and courage in the jaws of a powerful wave, but whose reading of dialogue comes off as stilted and unnatural — so much so that some lines elicit unintentional laughs. As such, the film

does little to dispel prevalent stereotypes of surfers as essentially shallow wave worshipers.

Helmer King specializes in what might best be described as the sensual blur — that is, lush images rapidly edited together whose significance as a whole is difficult to divine. For instance, the opening sequence, in which the surfers, clad only in swim trunks, must escape from prison (why they're jailed is not fully clear), plays like a vaguely erotic musicvideo, replete with close-ups of rippled abdomens and shining pecs.

While there's refreshingly little

sex here for a King movie, there are enough shots lingering over male bodies to fuel viewers' imaginations. Much more impressive is the water imagery. Obviously, shooting surfers curled inside 40-foot waves presented enormous technical challenges, and lensers John Aronson and special water d.p. Sonny Miller do a commendable job, using the widescreen to its full advantage. Moreover, King and crew present the surfing shots in fluid takes rather than spliced-together sequences that would have diminished their potency. Undeni-

ably beautiful, by turns majestic and menacing, waves are pic's most powerful force. Still, by the 40th shot of a gargantuan wave curling like an angry dragon's tail, all but die-hard fans might well tire of the imagery.

Adding to the amplitude of the surfing scenes, the sound plays an integral role. Clearly not meant for the faint-hearted, the SDDS system is so forceful and loud that the thunderous roar accompanying every giant wave sounds astonishingly like the gut-splitting rumble of a 7.0 earthquake.

The Big Hit

Continued from page 4

victim wasn't quite dead and he had to apply the finishing touches. Mel doesn't argue or pull out a gun; he just shrugs and hands over the wad.

The conceit of "The Big Hit" is that the killer simply can't say no. He's a big-hearted lug who wants to be liked and have a normal family life once he arrives home from "the office." It's a funny, skewed perspective that proves difficult to sustain beyond skit format.

Mel's compulsion to please has landed him in all manner of domestic trouble. He's been financially bled dry by girlfriend Chantel (Lela Rochon), who knows which soft spots to push, while his fiancée, Pam (Christina Applegate) — a too obvious incarnation of a Jewish American princess — takes what's left.

Strapped to keep up payments on his suburban tract, Mel reluctantly agrees to do a moonlighting job for Cisco. It's a snatch-and-grab of Japanese-American Jiro Nishi's (Sab Shimono) teenage daughter, Keiko (China Chow), with a cool \$1 million ransom attached. But Cisco is lax in planning the operation, failing to discover that Nishi just went bankrupt financing a vanity film and that Keiko just happens to be the goddaughter of his boss, Paris.

Summoned to the crime czar's lair, Cisco is assigned to find the kidnapers and eliminate them. He quickly figures out a way to cover his tracks and implicate Melvin as the ringleader. But finishing him off is going to be a little complicated, as the hit team runs smack into non-Jew Melvin's Passover seder for his future in-laws (Lainie Kazan, Elliott Gould), and the ever-vulnerable target develops an unexpected human shield when an emotional bond ensues with his smart, compassionate hostage.

Vet Hong Kong director Che-Kirk Wong — making his U.S. debut — approaches the offbeat material with the kind of boldness and blindness the Cisco character exhibits. There's a herky-jerky quality to the narrative in which plot lapses are glossed over with elaborate set pieces and bizarre asides. One running gag involves a pint-size tyrant video store employee who harasses Melvin over the phone about his late return of "King Kong Returns." Even as all hell breaks loose, the gunman clutches the tape and risks life and limb to get the unmemorable sequel back on the shelf.

Despite the thinness of the amusing material, the cast manages to elevate the piece several notches. Wahlberg's hand-dog look and pained expression is perfectly employed for wry comic effect. His character's inkling of self-awareness makes him the type of existential hero who's unusual for the genre. Phillips glories in Cisco's flamboyance, with a clothing ensemble in desperate need of volume control. Chow makes an impressive debut, and only the overstated roles of Applegate and Kazan prove cacophonous in the piece.

"The Big Hit" is unquestionably a slick piece of goods. The training and experience of Wong and his crew — culled largely from such action series as "La Femme Nikita" and "Once a Thief" — keep the film lively and vivid.

Mizrahi's model film idea

Continued from page 1

DreamWorks co-founder Steven Spielberg and production heads Laurie MacDonald and Walter Parkes read the comics over the weekend and met with Mizrahi on Monday, moving quickly to sew up the deal.

"The world of fashion is one we've been interested in developing a comedy about, but we've never had a strong enough way," said MacDonald. "The comics give us a witty and original viewpoint on that world, as well as some terrific characters."

MacDonald said the studio

hopes to get a writer on the project right away and quickly develop a script.

DreamWorks is also considering the possibility of a primetime animated series based on the books.

This is not the first time Mizrahi has tried his hand at writing. He also penned the spec script "Wild About Harry," which made the studio rounds earlier this year.

Mizrahi has also done duty on the other side of the camera, play-

ing fashion designer Julian Russell in Barry Sonnenfeld's "For Love or Money." And Douglas Keeve's acclaimed 1995 documentary "Unzipped" followed the frenzied creation of a Mizrahi fashion show.

Mizrahi cut his teeth working under such legendary designers as Perry Ellis, Jeffrey Banks and Calvin Klein before striking out on his own in 1987.

He was repped in the deal by CAA.

LIONS ROPES DEMME'S PIC

Continued from page 3

Ian Hart, Famke Janssen, Colm Meaney and Martin Sheen.

Pic was written by Mike Armstrong and exec produced by Nicolas Clermont and Elie Samaha.

Several years in the making, the Charlestown story was a collaboration between Leary and Jim Sarpico's Apostle production company and Demme and Joel Stillerman's Spanky Pictures.

Labor of love

"On every level this film is an extraordinary labor of love and we are committed to matching the filmmaker's dedication and serving it well," said Mark Urman, president of Lions Gate Releasing.

Release schedule

In addition to "Affliction" and the untitled Demme film, Lions Gate's release schedule includes Vincent Gallo's "Buffalo 66," Noah Baumbach's romantic comedy "Mr. Jealousy," Bill Plympton's adult animated feature "I Married a Strange Person," Tony Gatlif's French-language film "Gadjo Dilo" and Joe Carnahan's low-budget thriller "Blood, Guts, Bullets & Octane."

Farrow, Root top 'Soon'

Continued from page 3

Vermont to Manhattan after a divorce. Root plays her daughter. Stream, who is exposed to the world of teen sex when she enters an elite Upper East Side prep school.

Colette Burson is directing the film from a script she co-wrote with Kate Robin.

"Coming" is produced by Keven Duffy and Bandeira's Beau Flynn and Stefan Simchowicz. Exec producers are Key Entertainment's Matthias Emcke and Thomas Augsberger.

Farrow stars with Sam Waterston and Justin Whalin in Davis Entertainment's telefilm "Miracle at Midnight," a two-hour "The Won-

derful World of Disney" telepic for ABC that airs in May. She has a Larry Charles-created sitcom in development at CBS.

Black sheep

Root recently completed the pilot "Trinity," directed by Michael Caton-Jones and exec produced by John Wells. In it she plays Amanda, the black sheep of a strict Irish-Catholic family.

Farrow was repped in the deal by her manager Judy Hofflund; Root was repped by Mitch Geller and Chris Schmidt of Writers & Artists Agency, and manager Gail Abbot.

WB, UNICEF debut program

Continued from page 6

radio public service announcements linking "Quest for Camelot" and the UNICEF organization, through heralds announcing the film premiere and UNICEF partnership in local libraries and bookstores and a "Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF" fundraising campaign through the 150 Warner Bros. Studio Stores throughout the U.S.

Important messages

Daly and Semel said in a joint statement, "We at Warner Bros. would like to bring UNICEF's im-

portant messages to our own moviegoing audiences in the hopes that they will become more aware of this organization's work and how they can support it."

The 51-year-old UNICEF uses its funds to provide medicine, vaccines, food, education, clean water and sanitation and emergency relief to women and children in more than 160 countries and territories.

Turner's \$1 billion donation to the United Nations is being doled out over 10 years, to be used in whatever manner the UN sees fit.

FILM REVIEW

Starf*cker

Continued from page 82

stumbles upon former young-hunk sitcom and movie actor Kyle Carey (Loren Dean) snorting cocaine in the bathroom. It's as if he were struck dumb, and when Kyle suggests George drive him to a party at Faye Dunaway's, the young man loses all perspective.

It's obvious to everyone but George that Kyle is strung-out, out of control and delusional. George fails to sense that anything is amiss when Faye's not at home; all he can grasp is that someone who's made it is close enough to touch.

George vainly believes that he and Kyle have bonded and will soon be making the rounds together on the scene. But weeks pass before he gets

a call from Kyle — who, not surprisingly, is in trouble. He has been romancing the underage daughter of a studio exec and can't remember in which hotel room he's left her tied up while he went to a drug store.

Told in bookended form, the opening section — with George behind bars for some crime against Kyle — is a tantalizing intro that regrettably turns into little more than a structural device. The dilemma that "Starf*cker" can't seem to avoid is keeping the material light and free of the ghoulish, predatory qualities that traditionally come with this territory. Focusing on users and abusers, pic lacks sufficient humor and humanity in its central characters, leaving the audience without a rooting interest, and the story's resolution is more cynical than satisfying.

Kennedy's character — though well observed — grates on one's nerves. He's never specifically outed, but his theatricality and fawning behavior provide a closeted sexual leitmotif that intrudes in rather unpleasant fashion. Dean, who also nails his role with precision, is much too self-consumed in his perf to shoulder the focus of the piece. Supporting players are effective, if briefly drawn, though Clarence Williams III, as George's public defender, manages an appropriately droll posture that leavens the picture.

Enbom is very much a talent in the raw; he can pull off inspired flashes but is not yet able to tie up all the threads into a cohesive whole. Pic's presentable tech credits neither elevate nor undo the narrative.

Brooks to keynote IFP scribe confab

By LEONARD KLADY

Oscar-winning filmmaker James L. Brooks will give the keynote address Saturday for the Independent Feature Project/West's annual Screenwriting Conference. Brooks will focus on the creative process and how inspiration is translated into story telling.

This year's two-day program will be held at the Writers Guild and has scribes John Milius, Steve Oedekerk, Caroline Thompson and Ed Solomon lined up as panelists and seminar leaders. Production case studies will focus on "Boogie Nights" and "Donnie Brasco" with the pictures' respective writers Paul Thomas Anderson and Paul Attanasio leading the sessions, with other key members of the productions providing details on the development from page to screen.

This year's major panels will dis-

cuss comedy writing for the bigscreen and the transition from screenwriting to feature film direction. In addition to Oedekerk ("Ace Ventura") and Solomon ("Men in Black"), the comedy session will feature Noah Baumbach ("Kicking and Screaming"). The trio of scribes turned helmers comprises Thompson ("Buddy") and Dan Rosen and Don Roos, whose respective directing debuts, "Dead Man's Curve" and "The Opposite of Sex," will premiere theatrically later this year.

Other sessions include writing period pieces with Milius, "Character Transformation" with writing/directing coach Joan Scheckel and "The Business of Writing" led by literary agent Adam Shulman.

Further information on the program and advance registration is available by calling the IFP West at: (310) 475-4379, ext. 52.

FX sets new summer fare

Continued from page 8

out into the made-for-TV movie arena next year.

"We feel these new shows are on target with our focus on comedy and on the 18-49 audience with a skew toward men," says Mark Sonnenberg, exec VP of FX Networks. "Our strong primetime lineup gives us a tremendous platform to rollout original programming and enhance the value of FX."

FX has given the greenlight to production of 65 half-hour episodes of "Bobcat's Big Ass Show" (*Daily Variety*, Feb. 3), hosted by comedian Bobcat Goldthwait, to run Monday-Friday at 10:30 p.m. beginning June 1. The show, from Stone Stanley Prods., is described as a gameshow where wild stunts performed by contestants are judged by Goldthwait and the audience.

FX has ordered 16 segs of the variety hour to be emceed by Penn Jillette and his silent partner Teller. "The Penn & Teller Show," from

Buccieri and Weiss Prods. and Pearson All American TV, will be based in Las Vegas. FX is targeting a summer premiere but no date has been set.

"Bobcat's Big Ass Show" was packaged by Ray Solley of the William Morris Agency, while the Penn & Teller series was put together by Solley and WMA's Mark Itkin.

Other projects in the development pipeline at FX include:

- A series showcasing the Los Angeles-based comedy troupe The Groundlings from In-Finn-ity Prods.

- "Fast Food Films," from Gold Coast Prods. and Fox Television Studios, in which the plots of feature-length films are condensed to 3- to 6-minute bites.

- "Inside Jokes," from Victoria Prods. and Fox TV Studios, focusing on up-and-coming standup comics.

- "Rude Awakening," from the Gurin Company, in which the studio audience takes part in an off-beat popularity contest.

TELEVISION REVIEW

Merlin

Continued from page 6

The vast, lush countryside of England and Wales blend spectacularly with Ann Hollowood's exquisite costumes to perfectly complement the action. Neill is more than up to the task of carrying a highly detailed production on his firm shoulders. And those effects — it's difficult to

recall a more captivating use of them in a largescale TV production.

If there is a downside to "Merlin," it's that there are so many little twists and turns and scenarios going down at once that you're not always sure what's going on. But the acting and the emotionally charged script (complete with an oh-so-'90s makeover of the title character) more than compensate. Tech credits sparkle.



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DISNEY: PARKS UP, TV FLAT

Continued from page 1

timing of the sales of KCAL and its publishing assets, Disney's operating income was up 3% and the net profit growth was the higher figure of 22%.

Lower interest costs also helped Disney turn comparatively flat operating income into higher net profit. Disney said interest costs fell 18% to \$150 million in the quarter, reflecting lower debt.

The stagnant operating income was due to the "creative content" division — which includes the film studio and the merchandising division — and the broadcasting division, which includes the ABC network and station group and Disney's cable webs like ESPN.

Creative content operating earnings fell 4%, adjusted for asset sales, to \$339 million on 3% lower revenues of \$2.4 billion. Disney said the creative content results "reflected the domestic theatrical success" of Miramax's "Good Will Hunting" and increased results in the domestic homevid market of "The Little Mermaid," "Peter Pan" and "Hercules."

Homevid off

Disney Stores also increased their results. Disney noted that international theatrical and homevid results were down from the year-ago quarter, when earnings were driven by "101 Dalmatians," "Ransom" and "Toy Story."

Operating income at broadcasting was flat at \$239 million on 4% higher revenue of \$1.58 billion. The result reflected a decline in advertising revenues at ABC, because of its lower ratings, as well as the impact of the Winter Olympics.

Broadcasting earnings were helped by higher revenues at the cable networks, both from higher advertising revenues and subscriber growth.

At a presentation with analysts in Orlando, Disney execs downplayed the impact of ABC's primetime ratings problems by pointing out how small the network's contribution is to broadcasting earnings overall.

Disney said the net contributed less than 10% of the broadcasting division's operating income, compared with 25% for the station group and



— Photo by Joe Skipper REUTERS

Disney unleashes Animal Kingdom

Judson Green, president of Walt Disney Attractions, presents noted chimpanzee expert Jane Goodall a trophy after she was named an "eco-hero" during the dedication of Conservation Station at Disney's new Animal Kingdom. The park, which features Kilimanjaro safaris with elephants, wildebeests and other African wildlife, opened Wednesday near Orlando, Fla., to a sellout crowd paying \$42 for adults and \$34 for children. A handful of animal rights activists picketed outside over two dozen animals that died at the park or en route, but government officials concluded that Disney was not guilty of mistreatment or neglect.

25% for ESPN, 10% from the Disney Channel and 5% from Disney's interests in A&E and Lifetime. Radio, international operations and Buena Vista TV account for the rest.

Disney execs also noted that while the station group is affected by the network's performance, primetime only contributes about one-third of operating income for local stations.

Upbeat theme

Much of the presentation focused on prospects for the theme park division, which had a strong quarter with 15% higher operating income of \$271 million on 3% higher revenue of \$1.2 billion.

Disney said the better result "reflected higher guest spending and increased occupied room nights" at the Walt Disney World resort, partially offset by startup costs at the Disney

Cruise Line and Animal Kingdom, Disney's new resort.

Disney said DisneyWorld's overall attendance was down, in the wake of last year's heavily promoted 25th anniversary for the resort.

"Our theme parks and resorts division continued to lead the company forward during the second quarter," Eisner said in a statement.

Execs gave analysts details about the profit growth expected to come from the new Animal Kingdom gate at DisneyWorld, the new Disney Cruise Line division and a second gate to be opened at Disneyland.

Before it can implement the stock split, Disney will have to get authorization from stockholders to increase the amount of stock authorized to be issued. Disney said it would mail out materials to stockholders for a vote on the authorization within days.

Euro Disney revs up

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

PARIS — Euro Disney, parent company of the Disneyland Paris theme park, managed to grow revenues faster than its increasing lease and financial charges in the first half of its fiscal year (Oct. 1 to March 31).

Euro Disney announced on Wednesday that operating revenues increased 11.1% to 2.3 billion francs (\$377 million) compared to \$344 million in the first half of fiscal 1997. At the same time, lease and financial charges were up \$13.1 million to \$71.4 million.

Lease and financial charges grew as part of the 1994 restructuring package for the theme park. That package also saw the Walt Disney Co. waive royalty and management fees as part of the bailout plan.

With costs and expenses at the Disneyland Paris resort running at

\$352 million, Euro Disney posted a net loss of \$33 million, a 2.4% improvement on 1997.

The company said that revenues from the theme park had risen 9.3% to \$188 million because of increases in attendance and slightly higher entry prices.

Hotel occupancy was also up, helping to push hotel and Disney Village revenues up 14.8% to \$170 million.

Despite the first half results, Euro Disney isn't out of the woods yet. The ongoing reduction of interest forgiveness means that for the year, net and financial charges will increase by \$19.1 million. Added to that, lease charges will be up by \$5 million because of the first principal repayments of the financing companies' debt.

Analysts continue to speculate whether Euro Disney can continue to grow revenues fast enough in order to meet the rising financial costs.

Di Bonaventura goes solo

Continued from page 3

whites," said Di Bonaventura. "You're already dealing with a situation where there are no certainties, so it's easier if there's only one opinion."

In the long run, Warner brass hopes the moves will bring some stability to the studio, which has suffered one of its worst years. Box office flops include "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," "Father's Day," "The Postman," "Sphere" and "Mad City."

Though the studio is run cooperatively by Daly and Semel, the joint approach faltered with Gerber and Di Bonaventura.

Sources said the two execs frequently clashed. Gerber also reportedly had difficulties with some producers and execs on the lot.

Daly and Semel, quoted in the

official announcement, did not comment on the failed partnership, but lauded Di Bonaventura as their new production chief.

"Lorenzo is an exceptionally talented executive, excelling in both the creative and business aspects of filmmaking," said the pair. "He has great creative instincts and relationships, a well-rounded, multifaceted understanding of the process, and is an extraordinary problem-solver and resourceful thinker."

Di Bonaventura joined WB in 1989 as a production exec and worked his way up the corporate production ladder as a VP, a senior VP, an exec VP, and finally, prexy with Gerber.

Regarding his former colleague's new deal, Di Bonaventura predicted Gerber will become one of WB's "most important producers."

Chitown battle for 'Jerry'

Continued from page 3

even though the distrib was put into a precarious situation by WMAQ's about-face.

Ironically, wherever he lands, "Springer" will not be moving too far from WMAQ because the show is taped in the same NBC Tower complex that houses WMAQ.

WMAQ issued a short statement acknowledging its decision to seek the contractual release from Studios USA, but station reps would not comment further. Reps for Studios USA would not elaborate beyond their own statement: "After listening to the concerns of WMAQ and because of strong interest in the show from multiple Chicago stations, we are considering relieving WMAQ of its contractual obligation."

WMAQ's decision to bounce the highly rated talkshow — which towered over the competition in its 2 p.m. timeslot during the February

sweep — was prompted in part by a rising tide of criticism aimed at the NBC-owned station from churches and community groups. A demonstration had been expected to take place outside WMAQ in downtown Chicago today.

"Hopefully, if (WMAQ) has gotten out of the contract by then, we can be there to thank them," said one of the demonstration organizers, Pastor Michael Pfleger of the Community of St. Sabina church.

However, Pfleger said the protest will not end if "Springer" is snapped up by another station. "We'll just move our tent down the street," he said, adding.

"Springer's" departure from WMAQ follows a change in management at the station, which last May weathered a storm of controversy after news anchor Carol Marin quit to protest Springer's short-lived stint as a news commentator for the station.

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UTA TAPS 5 FIRM PARTNERS

Continued from page 1

Harbert, who runs the TV department with Sures, began his career in the mailroom of ICM before joining Leading Artists Agency as an agent in 1988. He was upped to co-head in 1996.

Leshner runs the motion picture lit department along with Aloni. He began his career as an agent trainee at Bauer-Benedek in 1988, was promoted to agent the following year and remained with the agency through its transformation to UTA.

Shelton-Droke, a talent agent who began her career in the William Morris Agency mailroom, joined Bauer-Benedek in 1989 as an agent. She and Harris are the only female partners at a major Hollywood agency.

And Sures, co-head of the TV department, also began his career as a trainee at Bauer-Benedek in 1989 and was promoted to agent in 1991. He and Harbert began running the TV department two years ago.

Long time coming

While the announcement of the agents' promotions has been a long time coming — negotiations began last fall — their deals were finalized only last week. Viewed as a reward for a group of young agents at the forefront of UTA's revenue-generators, the new partners' addition bring to 12 the number of principals in the company — the largest number of partners in the agency's history.

They also represent the first substantive change in UTA's management structure since former president and co-chairman Marty Bauer announced his departure last October.

Blending old and new

Since its inception, UTA has struggled with how to blend the founders' disparate corporate cultures into a cohesive unit while fashioning an effective management structure — with numerous leadership mutations over the years.

Prior to January 1995, the percentery had 10 equal partners running the shop, but that month the management restructured, forming a committee of six, comprising Bauer (who retained his prexy title), Berkus, Cosay, Benedek, Stevens and Zimmer. The remaining five partners were Harris,



United Talent Agency has upped five agents to partner: From left, Jay Sures, John Leshner, Cynthia Shelton-Droke, Dan Aloni and Chris Harbert.

Schiff, Gavin Polone, Judy Hofflund and Robert Stein. The latter three have since left the agency.

A year later Bauer stepped down from his president post and became part of a newly installed seven-member management committee. Six months later, Bauer was restored to prexy of the tenpercentery and was named co-chairman along with Berkus.

Then, last fall, Bauer stepped down from his management roles, and Berkus assumed the sole chairmanship position. Bauer left altogether last month to open his

eponymous management firm.

Following its latest corporate retreat last weekend, Berkus said the agency has left behind many of the problems that plagued it over the years.

"People are working together in a more harmonious way," he told *Daily Variety*. "And the unity and optimism has never been better."

However, the goodwill surrounding the announcement came on the same day actress Renee Zellweger fired the agency. She is understood to be meeting with several other percenteries.

WB netlet adds 3 veeps

Continued from page 3

well as for the network itself.

MacEachern, in his new post, will oversee production, editing and distribution of all on-air promo spots, as well as the dubbing facility, vault library and material acquisition.

He was formerly vice president of production for America's Health Network, a cable network he helped launch. He also was executive producer of the "Products for Healthier Living," and he was coordinating and line producer for the 1994 U.S. Olympic Festival.

In the newly created post of VP of graphics production, Kurath, a former graphics producer for the WB, will execute on-air graphics for primetime and Kids' WB!, and he'll coordinate that look with print advertising and promotions. He'll also help create show logos.

Prior to joining the WB, he was manager of production technology at Hanna-Barbera WB Animation. He also worked as a technical director/producer/ animator for Paramount Pictures.

As director of affiliate marketing, Vaturi will help affiliates promote the WB lineup. Previously, she was manager of broadcast services at ABC, and she worked for Grey Entertainment in New York.

CPB requests digital TV aid

Continued from page 8

ment loan or even a private bank.

Porter also suggested that publicists may want to consider selling a limited number of advertisements in order to finance the transition as former House Telecommunications subcommittee chairman Jack Fields (R-Texas) suggested two years ago. Coonrod replied that selling advertising or even excess digital spectrum would not raise enough revenue for publicists.

Another proposal, floated by Rep. George Nethercutt (R-Wash.), would relax deadlines imposed by the FCC on broadcasters. Nethercutt suggested that a two-year extension for publicists would save them millions because digital equipment prices would inevitably fall as the market developed.

Under the current deadline, publicists have until 2003 to launch a digital signal.

Bidders may drive price of Pulitzer TV to \$1.8 bil

Continued from page 1

\$1.5 billion could be raised to \$2 billion with an equity infusion, thus qualifying the company financially.

Geographically, there are no debilitating overlaps between the station portfolios of Pulitzer and Hearst-Argyle. In fact, Pulitzer's Orlando station is considered especially complementary to Hearst-Argyle's WCVB in Boston, which currently accounts for 30% of the would-be buyers' broadcast cash flow.

Hicks Muse, the Dallas-based leveraged buyout firm, has expanded aggressively in broadcasting in the past couple of years and is expected to be just as aggressive in this auction.

Several possible partners

It has several possible entities it could make its offer through, including its partnership with NBC. While the Peacock web is not thought to be involved with Hicks Muse's offer currently, several of the stations are NBC affiliates and some Wall Streeters say NBC could

get involved through the partnership.

Hicks Muse could also use Lin Television Corp., which it acquired last week, or its radio giant Chancellor Media Corp., Wall Streeters say. After Chancellor CEO Scott Ginsburg quit last week, Chancellor chairman Tom Hicks said he planned to diversify the company into television. Hicks Muse declined comment Wednesday.

On the other hand, Gannett and Clear Channel are likely to be more cautious.

Gannett, which declined to comment on its involvement, has a disciplined approach to acquisitions that is expected to keep it from going the distance.

The anticipated sale price, estimated to be between \$1.7 billion and \$1.8 billion, would be a "reach" for Clear Channel, which is also preoccupied with other acquisitions such as its bid for U.K. outdoor advertising concern Moore Group, Wall Streeters said.

'TITANIC' DISC STILL NO. 1

Continued from page 8

track to "City of Angels" jumped four slots to No. 3 on sales action of 152,000 copies, a 44,000-unit uptick from the previous week. The boost, which was no doubt aided by the pic's No. 1 status at the box office, made the disc the lone ascender among the top 10.

Savage Garden rose one slot to No. 4 on sales of 128,000 copies of its eponymous Columbia Records bow. The disc, which has been on the charts for more than a year, continues to be fueled by the single "Truly, Madly, Deeply," which was the second-most played track last week behind Dion's "My Heart Will Go On," from her album and "Titanic."

The self-titled Jive Records bow from the Backstreet Boys dropped a notch to No. 5 with its 120,000 unit tally — a nearly 40,000 unit drop from the previous week.

At No. 6 was the No Limit/Priority Records soundtrack to "I Got the Hook Up" from Master P, which dropped three posts on sales action of 114,000 units. The disc's tally fell by more than 68,000 copies, but the significant unit drop is not uncommon for the second week of an urban soundtrack, and the pic has yet to bow in theaters.

'Love,' 'Ray' shine

K-Ci & Jo Jo's MCA Records disc "Love Always" rose a chart berth to No. 7 by logging north of 89,000 copies and slightly outpaced Madonna's Maverick Records offering "Ray of Light," which rose a notch to No. 8 on sales of 81,000 units. Her seven-week residence in the top 10 bests the record set by her "Evita" disc.

At No. 9 was Shania Twain's latest Mercury disc, "Come on Over," which rose eight chart berths on sales of 78,000 copies. The songstress has nabbed a lot of web and cable TV time lately, including last week's VH1 spec "Divas Live."

Newcomer and Australian TV star Natalie Imbruglia held steady at No. 10 for the second week on sales of 78,000 copies of her RCA Records bow "Left of the Middle." Her first single, "Torn," has become a Top 40 and adult contemporary radio staple, and the music vid for the tune is widely played by cablers.

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HIP EDITOR HOPS TO NEW BLAZE MAG

Continued from page 8

will debut with a circulation of 200,000 copies and plans to publish nine issues during 1999.

Aims 'younger'

During its five-year existence, Vibe has competed head on with the Source for hip-hop readers, but Blaze execs say they are "aiming younger" than Vibe and will focus on more "grass-roots aspects," like the four original elements of hip-hop: MC's, DJ's, graffiti and break-dancing, according to editorial director Danyel Smith.

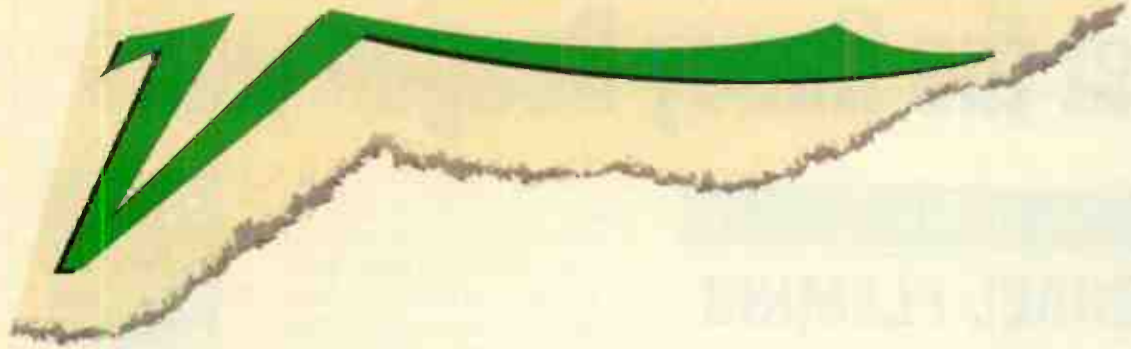
It will be published by Vibe

Ventures, a partnership among Quincy Jones, Robert Miller, David Salzman, Keith Clinkscales, John Rollins and Gilbert Rogin.

The company has also upped Len Burnett to the newly created associate publisher post, overseeing both Blaze and Vibe.

Vibe Ventures acquired Spin magazine in June 1997; late-night TV talker "Vibe" is produced by Vibe TV, in association with Columbia TriStar Television Distribution.

Industry insiders said Vibe/Spin Ventures could provide a serious competitor to Wenner Media's Rolling Stone.



CROISSETTE SIDESHOW

Slamdance bringing Dig It fest to Cannes

By MONICA ROMAN

The organizers of Slamdance, the alternative film fest held concurrently with Sundance in Park City, Utah, are trading in their skis for beach towels.

They have unveiled plans for the first "Cannes You Dig It" film festival, to be held from May 13-24 during the Cannes Film Festival.

Modest lineup

So far, "Dig It" has a modest lineup of four films, including "South Park" co-creator Trey Parker's "Cannibal ... the Musical," which was a favorite at this year's Slamdance, and James Boyd's "The New Gods," which was a South by Southwest selection.

The shorts on board for "Dig It" are Glasgow Phillips' phallic-ninja comedy "The Sound of One Hand Clapping" and Todd Downing's surreal "Dirty Baby Does Fire Island."

Lloyd Kaufman's Troma Enter-



The first "Cannes You Dig It" fest will include Trey Parker's "Cannibal ... the Musical."

tainment which owns the rights to "Cannibal," is providing screening space, promotional booths and marketing supplies for the event.

"By rejecting traditional screening venues and ideas, we're helping to create another opportunity to help showcase new talent," said Slamdance exec director Peter Baxter. "This time you will also be able to bring your sand bucket and shovel."

New exposure

Slamdance founder and festival director Jason McHugh said he and his fellow organizers want to "barnacle onto the Cannes juggernaut by providing new exposure. We also want to have some fun in the process."

Despite the humble beginnings of "Dig It," the fest's organizers have already agreed to be part of a feature-length documentary that Stephen Walker is directing for the BBC.

"When the BBC got involved, 'Cannes You Dig It' really gathered steam," said "New Gods" helmer Boyd. "Now, it feels like I'm plotting the Normandy invasion."



Geoffrey Rush, left, Bille August, Uma Thurman, Claire Danes and Liam Neeson

'Les Miz' on B'way bigscreen

There was a new "Les Miz" on Broadway Monday night — Columbia Pictures' and Mandalay Entertainment's latest release, "Les Miserables." The companies premiered the pic at Sony Lincoln Square, some twenty-five blocks up Broadway from the long-running tuner's home at the Imperial theater.

Director Bille August, producers Sarah Radclyffe and James Gorman, scribe Rafael Yglesias and composer Basil Poledouris were all on hand at the screening and dessert reception following at Coco Opera. The film's stars, Liam Neeson, Geoffrey Rush, Claire Danes and a very pregnant Uma Thurman also joined in the celebration, as did Columbia TriStar Motion Picture Group

Photos by Dave Allocca/DMI



Lauren Bacall Mark Wahlberg



Gareth Wigan, left, Adam Platnick and Jeff Blake

vice chairman Gareth Wigan, Mandalay topper Adam Platnick and Sony Pictures Releasing prexy Jeff Blake.

Also spotted among the crowd: Lauren Bacall, Mark Wahlberg and his mother, Alma, a camera-shy Winona Ryder, Dominick Dunne, domestic doyenne Martha Stewart, Deborah Gibson, Ismail Merchant, and Natasha Richardson, wife of Liam Neeson and star of Broadway critics' darling, "Cabaret." — Carol Diuguid

American Theatre Wing fetes femme scribes

NEW YORK — The American Theatre Wing saluted a quartet of the country's femme playwrights at a gala luncheon Monday that benefited the org's educational programs. Playwright Christopher Durang was the master of ceremonies, and introduced colleagues' tributes to honorees Beth Henley, Tina Howe, Wendy Wasserstein and Jean Kerr.

Feting Henley were Holly Hunter and Mary Beth Hurt, both vets of the playwright's "Crimes of the Heart." Ex-NEA chief Jane Alexander shared memories of Howe, who charmed the assembled with the tale of her only previous visit to the Plaza's Grand Ballroom, for her coming out party, most of which she spent — happily — avoiding the hoopla in the ladies' room.

Joan Allen and Peter Friedman toasted Wasserstein, in whose

"The Heidi Chronicles" they both appeared, while writer (and former actress) Patricia Bosworth and actress Peggy Cass paid warm tribute to Kerr, author of Broadway's "Mary, Mary," among other plays, and wife of the late theater critic Walter Kerr.

Among those in attendance were actors Eli Wallach, Blythe Danner, Lynn Thigpen, Robert Klein and Patricia Neal, event co-chairs Howard Stringer and Marlene Hess, artist Al Hirschfeld, director Nicholas Hytner, and the cast and creative team of "Ragtime" (sans Livent topper Garth Drabinsky).

Isabelle Stevenson, president of the American Theatre Wing, also took the opportunity to announce the creation of a Brendan Gill scholarship award in honor of the writer's service to the org.

— Charles Isherwood



Clockwise from top left, Wendy Wasserstein, American Theatre Wing president Isabelle Stevenson, Beth Henley, Jean Kerr and Tina Howe



Durang



Bosworth



Holly Hunter and Eli Wallach



Allyson Tucker, top left, and Brian Stokes Mitchell, Joan Allen and Peter Friedman



Alexander



Hirschfeld

Photos by Steve and Anita Shevett

ABC mini to dissect the Nancy Reagan years

Continued from page 1

ican president, but what will become evident here is that we've already had her," said Meron.

The duo is producing the mini through Columbia/TriStar and has a nearly finished script, based on source material culled from "First Ladies," a book by First Family expert Carl Anthony.

Anthony, a former speechwriter for Nancy Reagan, is a co-producer and consultant on the project. They have not sought input from the Reagans.

"This will be a miniseries about Republicans done by registered Democrats," said Zadan. "It's unauthorized but it will be truthful and pull no punches."

Aside from the Whitney Houston-Brandy-starrer "Cinderella," the duo's recent TV efforts include the Bette Midler-starrer "Gypsy," and the Glenn Close-Judy Davis pic "Serving in Silence."

Though they've not yet sworn in their Nancy and Ronald Reagan, they expect similar star wattage as they begin the casting process. The mini, they said, will begin production shortly and air during a sweeps period next year.

The mini will start with Nancy Davis' rise from a broken home to her attempts to become a Hollywood star. She met her future husband while he was president of the Screen Actors Guild and turned to him for help in clearing up charges she was a communist when she was

DISH

MICHAEL FLEMING

mistaken for another actress with the same name.

The mini moves through their rise in politics to the White House as they struggled to run the country while dealing with a dysfunctional family.

"The economy was booming, but there was a rise in homelessness and drug use and the proliferation of AIDS, a word which President Reagan would never even mention," said Meron. "It's a unique perspective on the decade, looking at the '80s through the Reagan White House years, but it's also a story of incredible love that Nancy has had for her husband. She has always stood by her man."

The project was hatched by Col/TriStar exec veep Helen Verno and ABC exec Maura Dunbar under Susan Lyne, exec veepee of movies and miniseries at ABC.

The network declined comment and Nancy Reagan didn't return calls.

CARPENTER'S FRANCO FANS: Move over, Jerry Lewis — the French are almost as nuts about director John Carpenter. While Largo Entertainment is still in the process of securing a domestic dis-

tributor, the studio took a gamble and opened "John Carpenter's Vampires" in Paris, mainly to show the pic could sink its teeth into the marketplace.

The result, its producers hope, will help hasten a domestic deal. The film opened to acclaim, and a much larger per-screen average than "U.S. Marshals," which did brisk business opening the same day. The film was helped by a Cinematheque Francais tribute that includes a fortnight of screenings of every Carpenter film.

Sources said that Fox and Columbia are bidding for those domestic rights, a derby that should be wrapped up soon.

DISHINGS: The Dish column's characterization April 21 that Helena Bonham Carter wouldn't test for David Fincher's "The Fight Club" was disputed by the actress.

According to a spokeswoman, Bonham Carter wasn't asked to test but would have, gladly. She's waiting to see if she gets the female lead alongside Brad Pitt and Edward Norton in the Fox 2000 film.



Carpenter



Bonham Carter

COUNTRY HATS OFF TO MCGRAW

By ADAM SANDLER

Tim McGraw was the big winner Wednesday night at the 33rd annual Academy of Country Music Awards with four wins, including the coveted song of the year trophy for "It's Your Love," the ballad performed by McGraw and Faith Hill.

The tune, from McGraw's Curb Records disc "Everywhere," also won top single, video and vocal event trophies. The vocal event trophy was the evening's first award, and set the stage for McGraw's multiple wins. He was up for seven trophies, which are dubbed "Hats" by the 3,000 member ACM.

MCA Records Nashville country stalwart George Strait nabbed a top male vocalist Hat for a second consecutive year, and his disc "Carrying Your Love With Me," which bowed at the top of the pop charts when it was released last year, won the album of the year trophy, also a second consecutive win in that category.

Strait bested McGraw, who had been widely expected to nab the album category, and Garth Brooks' Capitol Nashville disc "Sevens," for the honor.

MCA Records' artist Trisha Yearwood picked up top female vocalist honors. It was her lone win, despite being nominated in four categories.

Arista Records duo Brooks & Dunn won the top duo or group award, marking their seventh consecutive honor. Ronnie Dunn and Kix Brooks, who are currently touring with Reba McEntire, performed "If You See Her/If You See Him," later in the broadcast.

"We were certainly never taking it for granted," Brooks said backstage. "We never expected to win."

Top new artist award winner, BNA Records crooner Kenny Chesney, remarked backstage that he's been making records for more than five years. Decca/MCA artists Lee Ann Womack wore the Hat for top new female vocalist.

The festive atmosphere was temporarily put on hold while artists paid tribute to members of the country music community who died recently, including Tammy Wynette, Carl Perkins and John Denver.

Garth Brooks won the entertainer of the year award — his fifth win in the listing — as well as the academy's Special Achievement Award. In the latter, Brooks was feted for his efforts in enhancing the profile of the genre, including his Central Park concert in Gotham in August.

Brooks, the industry's biggest selling solo artist, was asked backstage what unfulfilled dreams he has, and said, "I'd love to bring honor to the music like George Strait and Reba McEntire have over the years."

Charlie Daniels, who earned videotaped praise from former presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford, was given the ACM's Pioneer Award, a nod voted on by the ACM's board of directors.

The three-hour spec, airing for the first time on CBS-TV after decades on ABC, was produced by Dick Clark Prods., and directed by Gene Weed.

List of winners follows:

Entertainer: Garth Brooks

Album: "Carrying Your Love With Me,"

George Strait

Single: "It's Your Love," Tim McGraw with Faith Hill

Song: "It's Your Love," Tim McGraw with Faith Hill

Female Vocalist: Trisha Yearwood

Male Vocalist: George Strait

Vocal Duo Or Group: Brooks & Dunn

Vocal Event: "It's Your Love," Tim McGraw with Faith Hill

New Female Vocalist: Lee Ann Womack

New Male Vocalist: Kenny Chesney

New Group or Duo: The Kinleys

Video: "It's Your Love," Tim McGraw with Faith Hill

Pioneer Award: Charlie Daniels

Special Achievement Award: Garth Brooks

Whitworth sr. VP at CNN

By JENNIFER NIX

NEW YORK — CNN has upped "Larry King Live" exec producer Wendy Walker Whitworth to senior VP.

The move is seen as a vote of approval for Whitworth's efforts leading CNN's top-rated show.

"(Wendy) is a proven leader with enormous creative energy, and has made a significant impact on the success of CNN during all her years with the network," said CNN News Group topper Tom Johnson.

Whitworth has been with CNN

since its debut in 1980, spending 10 years as the cabler's White House producer before taking the helm at "Larry King Live."

During first-quarter 1998, the talker had an average rating of 1.8 and 1.3 million households — its highest ratings since the days of the O.J. Simpson trials, when the show grabbed a 1.9 and had 1.2 million homes.

For the week ending April 19, "Larry King" scored a 1.5 rating and 1.1 million homes, easily beating CNBC's 9 p.m. offering "Rivera Live," with 1.0 and 620,000 homes.

Music censors lose

Continued from page 6

precedent. "There's no getting around that this bill asks government to use its power to determine good music from bad music," he told the committee.

Opponents said even golden oldies like "Mack the Knife" could be branded as forbidden songs under the bill.

But Republican committee member and former police officer Larry Bowler said the violent themes contained in much of today's music was different.

"None of those old songs dealt with 'Hey, going to kill me a cop and I'm going to ask you people listening to this record to do the same thing,'" Bowler said. "That's atrocious that we allow the state of California to invest in that kind of opinion."

Stanford University professor Donald Roberts, who recently co-authored a book about how pop music affects adolescents, told the panel that heavy metal music about violence or suicide can serve as a kind

of "anthem" for disaffected youth.

But Roberts also said that barring the music by parental authority or with legislation was unacceptable.

"On First Amendment grounds, I have a problem with that," Roberts said. "I'm very troubled by this whole throw-the-baby-out-with-the-bathwater idea."

CalPERS has been a fervent opponent of attempts by the legislature to tell it how to do business. A CalPERS spokesman told the panel Wednesday that lawmakers were taking a big risk by trying to dictate how the retirement fund invests.

"When you start playing politics with CalPERS, it could be damaging to the growth of the fund and the financial future of our members," retirement fund spokesman Brad Pacheco told the panel.

An attempt to force the Texas legislature to pull out of its music investments failed earlier this month, but similar proposals are pending in Wisconsin and Virginia.

ARTISAN AXES INT'L ARM

Continued from page 3

to the future of president of international distribution Ann Dubinet, who remains a full-time Artisan employee for the time being.

Given that Summit's Patrick Wachsberger is now in charge of international distribution of both Artisan and Summit titles, there appears to be little room for another sales chief, however.

Tensions between Dubinet and Artisan's management trio of Amir Malin, Bill Block and Mark Curcio

have been high since the Summit announcement. "They haven't even spoken to Ann," said one source.

Artisan Intl. — formerly known as Live Intl. — was formed about four years ago.

Artisan's deal with Summit calls for Summit to handle all international distribution of its titles and library. Artisan has also acquired an undisclosed stake in Summit, with a view to purchasing the entire company within 18 months.

Television's Big Night.

Road to the EMMYS



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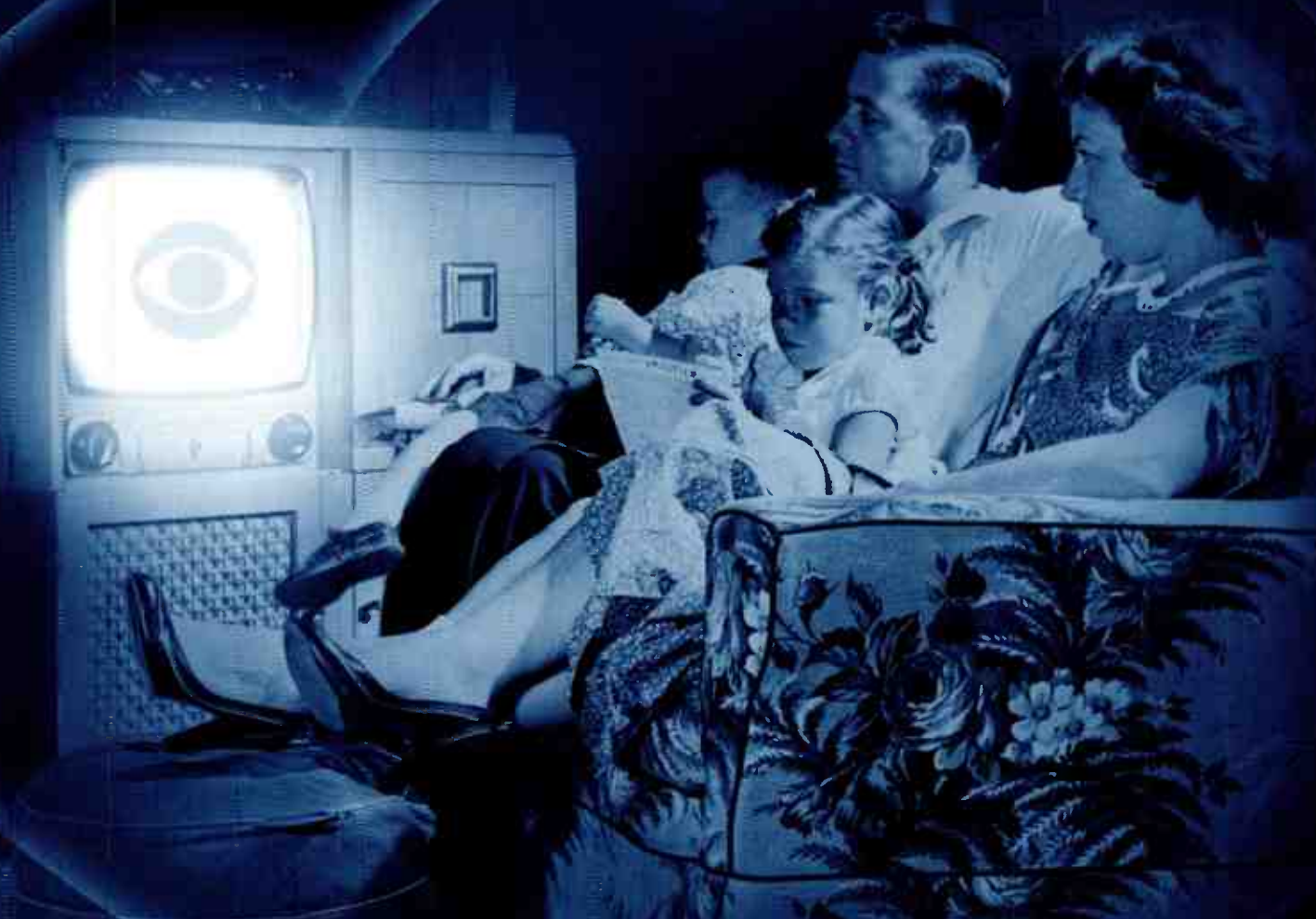
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