

blinded war veteran driven to suicide by conflicts with his family on his return home. Its postponement in March was attributed primarily to the timing: The first Vietnam war prisoners and other servicemen were then beginning to return to the U.S.

The abortion episodes of *Maude* ended up with 39 affiliate defections out of a normal line-up of 198, according to CBS sources. The U.S. Catholic Conference, which led a campaign against the reruns on grounds that they advocated abortion (BROADCASTING, Aug. 13, 20), had slightly different figures: It said 36 refused to carry the programs, four delayed them to a late-evening hour and one, although carrying them, offered free time to opponents. The Archdiocese of Detroit said the free-time offer came from WJBK-TV there, which planned to include anti-abortion views in its *Sunday Report* last night (Aug. 26).

CBS-TV made some free time available, too. Robert B. Beusse, the Catholic conference's secretary for communication, was interviewed on the *Maude* issue on *CBS Morning News*, along with Alan Reitman of the American Civil Liberties Union representing a differing viewpoint.

There also was some picketing of CBS stations by antiabortion forces. Right-to-life groups organized Tuesday-night demonstrations against WCAU-TV Philadelphia, WJBK-TV Detroit and WTOP-TV Washington. And the Long Island Coalition for Life got together 300 or so people to picket the corporate headquarters of CBS in New York between 8 and 8:30 p.m. on Aug. 21 (to coincide with the air time of the second *Maude* episode). One of the New York demonstrators carried a placard reading "Babies hide in fear/Here comes Norman Lear" (alluding to the show's producer). Another protestor's sign said, "*Maude* is a sick-uation comedy."

William Devlin, a spokesman for the Long Island Coalition, said he had an appeal in to the FCC asking for rebuttal time to the *Maude* episodes. (The group's formal brief, filed last January, was turned down by the FCC staff in June, so the group went on to make a formal appeal, still pending, which asks the FCC commissioners to review the decision of its staff.)

The appeal claims that, even though it's an entertainment show, *Maude* falls under the FCC's fairness doctrine because the script takes a one-sided, pro-abortion point of view. "It's very insidious," says Mr. Devlin. "Under the guise of situation comedy, *Maude* is disseminating what is essentially propaganda for abortion's being, to quote the script, 'as simple as going to the dentist.'"

CPB funds feminist pilot

The feminist movement stands to gain a regular access forum on public television under a proposed series being developed by noncommercial KERA-TV Dallas.

The program, as yet untitled, would carry a flexible format dealing with is-



Back in the saddle again. "Gene Autry's Melody Ranch Show," a program which was described 25 years ago as a "wholesome, homey blend of folk music, comedy, adventure, drama and simple story telling," is the latest nostalgia offering of American Radio Programs, Hollywood. Original transcriptions of the weekly half-hour show, reproduced on tape for syndication, feature the music of Gene Autry, the Pinafores, the Cass County Boys, guitarist Frankie Marvin and Carly Cotner's Melody Ranch Band. "Ranch hands" Johnny Bond (l) and Pat Buttram (c) join Gene Autry for a comedy segment, a regular part of each show. The programs were aired 1947-1956 on CBS Radio.

sues similar to those appearing in *Ms.*, the monthly contemporary-woman's magazine edited by activist Gloria Steinem. Indeed, the relationship between *Ms.* and the KERA-TV project is more than implicit. *Ms.* Steinem is to serve as reporter-host on a one-hour pilot under production at the station, which is being financed by a \$75,000 grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The pilot, the first of its kind funded by CPB, is scheduled for completion in December with *Ms.* collaborating in its production.

In the long run, if the series is accepted for national distribution by the Public Broadcasting Service, it will feature segments such as "how to do it by women who have done it," covering a variety of issues from how to run for political office to how to start a day-care center. The program will also profile women who have succeeded in breaking traditional female stereotypes and offer a look at changing sex-role patterns.

KERA-TV will be seeking underwriting for the series from undisclosed sources after the pilot is completed.

Kirshner's opener: Stones

Producer Don Kirshner, who kicked off the first installment of ABC-TV's *In Concert* with the first television performance of Alice Cooper, begins his new syndicated TV program, *Rock Concert*, in late September with the first performance by the Rolling Stones on American television in six years. The Stones, who taped the recording of three new songs from their forthcoming *Goat's Head Soup* album in a London studio last month, made the agreement with Mr. Kirshner three weeks ago. Mr. Kirshner reported

that the group was interested in appearing on American TV after viewing the Alice Cooper segment of *In Concert* several months ago (BROADCASTING, May 14).

The *Rock Concert* segment was directed by Michael Linsey Hogg and will be part of the first show which will include filmed as well as taped performances, according to Mr. Kirshner. Viacom Enterprises is the syndicator in 56 markets, to date.

Change of mind for CPI

In a reversal of plans, Columbia Pictures Industries announced that the company would continue to make its headquarters in New York, except for Screen Gems, which will be relocated to Hollywood. CPI previously had revealed that all divisions would move to California. A spokesman said that the new top management of CPI had reconsidered the move and decided to maintain its operating divisions, except for Screen Gems, at 711 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Westen complaint focuses on ID "pauses" used to air ads

When Tracy Westen watches television, he sometimes sees more than meets the eye of the average viewer.

Last year, Mr. Westen, director of the Stern Community Law Firm in Washington, tuned in the *Tonight* show and noticed that NBC-TV had blipped a portion of Johnny Carson's monologue in which the name of a leading sponsor's product was being used in a somewhat humorous manner. His response was to accuse the network of censorship in a complaint to the FCC.

Several weeks ago, Mr. Westen's ire was again provoked in the midst of an Aug. 1 CBS-TV special report on the Watergate affair. The network announced that the Watergate special would return "after station identification," when, in fact, Mr. Westen contends, no station identification was forthcoming. Rather, WTOP-TV, the Washington CBS affiliate, inserted commercials for turkeys, bug spray, and a local department store.

In the next few weeks, the Stern firm staff uncovered several other instances of "continuity" announcements being followed by material that did not conform to the preceding promise. Those incidents were recited in a complaint filed by Mr. Westen last week, on behalf of the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, a Stern client. The complaint, which was addressed to FCC Complaints and Compliance Division Chief William B. Ray, contended that when a station or network tells its audience that a station ID will follow immediately, when in fact the next thing aired is one or more commercials, it is guilty of having "knowingly transmitted . . . false or deceptive signals or communications"—a violation of the Communications Act. The complaint asked that the commission embrace that position and bar the practice outright.