

**Capital Cities/ABC Inc.** reported **first-quarter results**, which showed operating income of \$56.8 million, **up only 2%, despite four-fold increase in revenue**, as result of consolidation of ABC results. Earnings of \$1,970,000, down from previous year's \$27.7 million, were before extraordinary gain of \$282 million from asset sales that were required to effect Jan. 3 merger. Broadcasting operations showed revenue of \$682.1 million and operating income of \$42.2 million. Publishing had revenue of \$230.2 million and operating income of \$37.4 million. Company said first-quarter results were "adversely affected by the relatively weak demand for network advertising and the decline in audience shares of the ABC Television Network. All other operations met or exceeded expectations."

**Phoebe Cowles**, descendant of William Hutchinson Cowles, founder of Cowles Publishing Co., **has hired investment banker to help her get better return on her 12½% ownership.** Spokane, Wash.-based Cowles owns co-located KHQ-TV and KLSN(AM)-KISC(FM), *Spokane Chronicle* and *The Spokesman-Review*, downtown real estate, timberland and other investments. Informed source gives wide range of company's worth, \$500-to-\$700 million. Dissident **Cowles is trying to get more information about company affairs, as well as getting some of her ownership out of stock trust.** Matter is just about to head to courts. Control of company reportedly resides with two of founder's grandsons: James Cowles and William Cowles III. Latter was just last week elected to executive committee of American Newspaper Publishers Association.

**AGB Television Research** said last week it has **developed method for measuring VCR recording and viewing that will detect any fast forwarding** by viewers, as well as who is watching. Company said technology will be incorporated in its **people meter test** in September of 1987. Device AGB has developed to monitor VCR viewing is about size of pack of cigarettes and would attach to VCR when installed. Monitor, company said, uses "electronic fingerprinting technique" which automatically records date, channel and time programs are recorded and "decodes" that information when pro-



**Good as gold.** At a White House reception for the board of directors of The Advertising Council, Ad Council Chairman James H. Rosenfield, president, JHR Productions, presented President Reagan with the council's first-ever Gold Bell award, honoring him as a "master communicator," and for his "time and 'considerable talent' in videotaping many personal appeals in support of a number of council public service campaigns." Reagan, in turn, thanked the council for "doing so much to make the United States healthier, safer and a more giving nation."

grams are played back. AGB President Joseph Philport said technology is similar to universal product code technology used on packaged goods, "with a clock." Difference, he said, is AGB control inputting of codes, not program producers. "The m itself will be putting the codes in the [VCR's] to identify the tion, date and running time," said Philport. "The technology is dependent on the cooperation of the broadcaster." In September 1987, AGB is rolling out its people meter measurement service to 2,000 homes. Company is currently testing service in Boston market. Philport said new VCR meter will also be tested in Boston 10 or 20 households next fall.

**Federal Court for Southern District of New York** last Thursday (4/24) **denied United States Football League motion for summary judgment that would have upheld antitrust claims** of USFL in its **\$1 billion National Football League lawsuit** before trial begins May 1987. USFL argued that NFL's three-network contracts are preventing it from securing network television rights for fall 1986 season. USFL claims NFL's pooled rights television contracts are "unlawful" while NFL says it has "specific exemption" from antitrust laws under Sports Broadcasting Act of 1961—to enter into television contracts with more than one network. Court said jury would have to decide whether NFL's three-network contracts exclude competing league, such as USFL, from selling its television rights. "This court's determination that the fact of the three-NFL-network contracts does not, by itself, constitute a violation of the antitrust laws," wrote U.S. District Judge Peter K. Leisure in 18-page opinion.

Co-owned **Showtime and Movie Channel** have concluded multi-year **exclusive pay television release agreement with Walt Disney Studios for latter's Touchstone Films product.** Agreement begins May 1987 and runs through 1990. Deal grants Disney Channel, studio's pay cable service, access to some non-R-rated Touchstone features. About nine Touchstone films are expected to be released annually during course of agreement. Another three or four titles from other Disney divisions are not covered by agreement. Showtime and Movie Channel currently count about 8.6 million subscribers.

**NBC's American Almanac**, which has not aired since last fall, will **reappear June 10 (Tuesday)** at 10 p.m. It will be **called 1986.** Its time news hour will be anchored by Roger Mudd and Chuck Chung. Regular program correspondents will be Ed Rabel and Severson. Other NBC News correspondents will also contribute occasional reports to broadcast.

**Motion Picture Association of America and National Cable Television Association**, often at odds over programming copyright issues, **announced last week they would join forces to crackdown on signal piracy** ("Closed Circuit," March 10). Trade associations they would take over Coalition Opposing Signal Theft (COST), setting up office within NCTA Washington headquarters among three-person staff for 18-month-old organization. Staff will include director, assistant director and secretary. According to NCTA spokesman Steve Tuttle, reconstituted COST will serve as a clearinghouse for information on antitheft campaigns and coordinate litigation and legislation. Under agreement, NCTA will provide office space and administrative, legal and public relations support for group, while MPAA covers operational expenses.

**MCA Inc. and Turner Broadcasting** last Thursday (April 24) **announced agreement to produce 74 half-hour episodes of The Leave It to Beaver, which will air exclusively on Turner's superstation WTBS-TV Atlanta** in first run beginning next September. Deal covers 13 previously unreleased episodes originally ordered by Disney Channel. Disney canceled program in early 1985 and, under universal pay television, MCA subsidiary, had been looking for a backer ever since. Program unites most original cast members from network *Leave It to Beaver* series, airing on WTBS since 1982. MCA president and chief operating officer Sid Sheinberg