

W.H. Smith, which has the UK's Lifestyle and Screensport satellite channels.

In other developments, CBS has acquired TV and ancillary distribution rights to four Oscar-winning films by producer Arthur Cohn; Westernworld has bought distribution rights from ABC for five movies of the week; former local program and network news executive, Jim Hayden, has signed a deal with Italy's Reteitalia to produce a mag-

azine show for international distribution in partnership with producer Mike Cerre of Episode Inc., and UK Coda record label executive Nick Austin is preparing the European launch of the Landscape Channel, a three-hour rotation of new age and classical music with video of various natural settings.

During the conference, organizer Bernard Chevy of the trade show association, MIDEM, also set the next dates for MIP-TV,

which the group handles, along with MIP-COM, MIFED, and other international programming conferences. MIP-TV is scheduled for April 28-May 3, 1988. According to Chevy, the program will coincide with two other conferences in Cannes—one on the future of television in the Common Market, organized by Lorimar-Telepictures' Michael Jay Solomon, and the other a conference on barter. □

Cable's interest in 'Hollywood's best'

Turner, Fuchs, Cox, Cooke talk about value of good programing on cable, despite increased cost

Elaborating on his plans for the basic cable network, Turner Network Television, Ted Turner told a National Academy of Cable Programing luncheon audience last week in Los Angeles that he is considering airing mini-series on the service. Turner previously announced TNT would consist of made-for-cable movies, special high-profile presentations, sporting events and movies from the MGM film library he bought.

Addressing the topic, "Why Cable Will Pay for Hollywood's Best," Turner, appearing with HBO Chairman Michael Fuchs, Showtime Chairman Winston (Tony) Cox and Disney Channel President John Cooke, appeared to dismiss one-hour action/adventure series as candidates for the TNT sched-

ule. Turner said he can air one of the MGM movie classics for about \$500,000 per hour compared to the average license fee of \$800,000 for an original hour-long episodic series. That, coupled with the battering most off-network hours are taking in the syndication marketplace now, is forcing Turner to look at other sources of original dramatic programing.

Turner is still lining up multiple system operators for TNT, but he said after the panel session, those efforts were stalled last week by the commotion in the cable industry caused from the Oct. 19 stock market plunge (see "Top of the Week"). Turner will need to have enough MSO's on board by November when the TBS board of directors is scheduled to consider the service for final approval.

Fuchs, one of the directors representing HBO-parent Time Inc.'s interest on the Turn-

er board, said in response to an audience question that he would not have voted in favor of the new channel had he felt competition for major sporting events from TNT would interfere with HBO's strategic objectives. Turner said he considers the channel's main competition to be ABC, CBS and NBC.

All the participants on the panel remarked about their increased spending to get "Hollywood's best" and increase their share of the audience. Since HBO began, Fuchs said, the pay service has spent more than \$3 billion on motion picture licensing fees and almost \$1 billion on other original programing. Cox said the movie channels have overpaid for exclusive movie packages that are forcing them to order a whole group of films to get the premium titles they want.

The Disney Channel's emphasis will continue to be on original programing. Cooke

Syndication Marketplace

King World reports that *The Oprah Winfrey Show* is now a firm go through 1989-90 given renewals on such stations as WABC-TV New York, KABC-TV Los Angeles, WLS-TV Chicago, WXYZ-TV Detroit, WEWS-TV Cleveland, KDKA-TV Pittsburgh and WPLG-TV Miami through that time. *Oprah* is seen on 198 stations and is now the third highest ranked show in syndication. Sales are on a cash-plus-barter basis with 10 minutes for stations and two minutes for King World per one-hour show.

Casablanca IV reports that it has reached an agreement with the five NBC-owned television stations to carry *Howard Cosell: Speaking of Everything*, the weekly one-hour, late-night talk show that debuts January 1988 on Sunday nights. The Ohlmeyer Communication Co. production, patterned after the ABC Radio Network show of the same name, will also be carried on 20 other stations including WTVJ-TV Miami, KQVR-TV Sacramento, Calif., KPXX-TV Mesa, Ariz. (Phoenix), and WTNH-TV Hartford, Conn. Casablanca will keep six minutes per episode with stations getting eight minutes. Cosell's daughter, Hilary, is the show's senior producer.

MCA TV Enterprises has cleared *The Munsters Today*, an updated version of the original *Munsters* series that aired on CBS-TV in 1964-66 on stations covering 40% of the country. Those stations include MCA's WWOR-TV New York, and the 12 TVX stations. MCA is offering stations a total of 72 episodes over three years, beginning in September 1988, on a barter basis with four minutes for stations and three minutes for MCA. WWOR-TV New York and the TVX stations will all retain a financial interest in the series. The Arthur Co. will produce the new series. Appearing in the late 1980's background of the new show will be John Shuck (*MacMillan and Wife*) as Herman Munster, Lee Meriweather (*Barnaby Jones*) as Lily Munster, Howard Morton (*Gimme a Break*, *Barney Miller*) as Grandpa, and Jason Marsden (*General Hospital*) as little Eddie.

Help is on the way from **MCA TV** in the form of *American Heartline*, a half-hour program designed to fulfill the dreams of one of the show's contestants. The program, to be offered at NATPE next year,



is "not a game show and not a talk show, but something different," says Shelly Schwab, executive vice president of MCA. Each episode of *Heartline* features three people who share their problems and then tell a three-member advisory panel how they would like to be helped. The guests are questioned by host Bob Hilton and the panel, who decide which of the three should be granted his request. According to Schwab, the program is different because the contestants are motivated by "a genuine need" rather than greed. The two people who do not receive their request "are not losers," says Schwab, because they may receive assistance from the viewing audience. *American Heartline* is taped before a studio audience, and will also feature celebrity guests. It is an Arnold Shapiro Production.