

Four radio towers in Santa Maria, Calif., were toppled last Wednesday night (March 1) in sabotage spree that began that morning. Around 1 a.m. Wednesday, someone forced open main breaker boxes at towers for **KSMA(AM)** and **KSNI-FM**, located 10 miles apart, and flipped switches throwing both stations off air. Transmission lines for stations, both owned by Bayliss Broadcasting, were restored within hour. During storm Wednesday night, guy wires supporting 100-foot FM tower were cut, causing it to fall. Soon after, 254-foot tower for AM station was felled. Also on Wednesday night, primary, 175-foot tower for **KUHL(AM)**, owned by Great Electric Communications, was toppled, along with 398-foot antenna used in nighttime array by separately owned **KGDP(AM)**. KUHL station manager Nick Rice said perpetrator of, and motivation for vandalism was "mystery." Jeff Harris, operations manager for KSMA-KSNI, said stations had received "no threats, letters, calls." Names of former employes have been submitted to FBI, which is investigating incidents, Harris said. KSMA, oldies station, was knocked off air. KSNI, known as SunnyCountry 104, was expected to be back at full power by Saturday. Christian broadcaster KGDP was operating at reduced night-time power and 5000 w news-talk KUHL was operating last Thursday at 1,600 w.

Battle between Madison Square Garden and cable operators heated up last week with MSG releasing Nielsen survey it said showed 65% of area residents were sports fans and interested in seeing Yankees. MSG has been negotiating with cable operators for carriage of Yankees, but add-on cost of games has deadlocked talks. MSG wants to remain on basic, while operators prefer to make it add-on to basic or pay channel. Additionally, cable operators point out that subscribers will see 75 Yankee games on **WPIX(TV)**; Manhattan Cable has suggested **WPIX** carry all games. MSG released survey to rebut claims by some area cable operators that only 15% of subscribers are Yankee fans. Nielsen conducted interviews in December. Carriage costs have been at heart of dispute between MSG and Cablevision Systems.

Stock of Multimedia Inc. continued to rise last week in what has been down market for most group owner issues. Last Friday updated 13-d filing with SEC by Sandler Capital Management said holdings of New York-based money manager/broker in Multimedia had increased from 9.7% to 10.7%. By afternoon stock was trading at 89¼, up from 85 on Monday, and at year's high on heavier than usual volume for week. Barry Kaplan of Goldman Sachs & Co. said direction of Multimedia stock was natural outcome of heavily leveraged company producing positive results. Kaplan said that stock's underlying value could increase by roughly \$20 per year, and noted that in 1990 company has promised it would "reassess" its strategy, leading possibly to another recapitalization or leveraged buyout.

Knight-Ridder signed definitive agreement last week selling WTVU(TV) Oklahoma City to Palmer Communications for price estimated at \$50 million. Company was said to be still negotiating sale of stations in Albany, N.Y., and Flint, Mich.

News Corp. is considering forming separate company to acquire and develop media and communications businesses, according to announcement last Thursday (March 2). News Corp. CEO Rupert Murdoch said that News Corp. would own at least 20% of new company. Under proposed plan, News Corp. would transfer its book publishing businesses to new company, with proceeds from transfer used to pay down News Corp.'s debt. Company made \$3 billion purchase last year of Triangle Publications, publishers of *TV Guide*.

Cannon Group has ended talks on purchasing De Laurentiis Entertainment Group, it was announced last Wednesday (March 1). Cannon had been in negotiations for past five months with management of DEG, which is operating under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Cannon CEO Giancarlo Parretti is also majority shareholder of Pathe Entertainment, which in February

agreed to purchase New World Entertainment ("In Brief," Feb. 27).

FCC Chairman Dennis Patrick testified before House Telecommunications Subcommittee and Senate Communications Subcommittee on FCC's proposal to substitute caps on prices for rate-of-return regulation of AT&T and some local telephone services. Patrick took some hits, most notably from Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.), but, by week's end, he and proposals were intact. At March 16 open meeting, Patrick expects to proceed with plan to adopt price caps for AT&T, but postpone adopting cap for local companies until agency has received another round of comments. At Senate hearing, Hollings attacked proposals, saying they would cause degradation of service provided by telephone companies. At impromptu press conference outside hearing room, Hollings said there was nothing Patrick could do to make proposal acceptable to him and, in response to question, said Patrick has done nothing to change Hollings's earlier opinion that FCC chairman was "incompetent." However, Hollings stopped short of saying he would try to head off March 16 votes through either legislation or political pressure on commissioners.

CBS-owned KNX-FM Los Angeles changed its call letters to KODJ(FM) and switched to an oldies format last Thursday (March 2). Station joins four other CBS FM's broadcasting oldies.

Sterling Communications Corp. last week retained Gary Stevens & Co. to sell four stations: **WSSL-AM-FM** Greenville-Spartanburg, S.C., and **WJDX(AM)-WMSI(FM)** Jackson, Miss. Stevens said he expects "in excess of \$24 million" for group, principally owned by Prudential Venture Capital.

D.L. Taffner has cleared half-hour game show strip *Talkabout* on seven Fox Broadcasting O&O's for fall 1989. Stations are **WNYW-TV** New York, **KTTV-TV** Los Angeles, **WFLD-TV** Chicago, **WEXT-TV** Boston, **KDAF-TV** Dallas, **WTTG-TV** Washington and **KRIV-TV** Houston. *Talkabout*, produced by Comedia Productions and distributed by D.L. Taffner Entertainment Ltd., is scheduled for national start in September.

Tattingers will return to NBC prime time lineup "sometime in April," said Bruce Paltrow, executive producer, and will be re-titled *Formerly Tattingers*. Four new half-hour episodes of one-hour show that NBC pulled from schedule will not have studio audience and will be shot on film rather than tape. In addition, comedian Chris Elliott, from *Late Night With David Letterman*, has been signed as restaurant's maitre d'. Network has not announced time slot for show.

Showtime Networks Inc. and Viacom Enterprises last week entered into exclusive deal with Nelson Entertainment for 18 theatrical films to be produced or acquired by Nelson. Showtime and The Movie Channel will have exclusive pay television rights in U.S. and Canada, and Viacom will control North American broadcast television distribution rights.

Over 80 proposals for funding of either high-definition television video display or video processing research projects were received last week by Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). DARPA plans to grant \$30 million to companies developing HDTV technology, with about \$15 million going to companies developing high-resolution video screens and \$15 million to companies working on computer chips that will process video information. Defense officials were still sorting through proposals late last week and said that list of participating companies would not be announced until middle of this week. One company, Zenith Electronics, released some details of its proposals for both display and processing projects. It asked for \$10 million to supplement \$21.5-million project to develop its high-resolution "flat tension mask" screens in sizes ranging from 14 to 35 inches. It also announced that it will work