

NEW-MARKET DOLLARS CHASE NATPE TO N.Y.

Outsider Heads CBS Cable

CBS has gone outside the organization and tapped Richard Cox, a program and agency exec, to head an upgraded Cable Division within the CBS Broadcast Group. The move by Group senior vicepres Tom Leahy appears to be a vote of no confidence in Bob Shay, who last year was brought in from KNXT to be v.p.-g.m. of the cable unit.

But in upgrading the unit to full division status within the Group, Leahy said he needed an exec with both program and advertising experience, since the CBS cable service will be advertiser-supported.

Whether or not Shay will choose to stay is unclear, although Leahy insists he will. Several months ago, Jack Willis was brought in to head the programming department at CBS Cable.

Cox, 50, served stints with Y&R and Doyle Dane Bernbach before forming his own program/agency business.

Bringing in an outsider to head a CBS division is unusual, particularly after CBS Broadcast Group prez Gene Jankowski emphasized in-house talent as part of his major reorganization of the Group a couple of months ago.

Pay-TV And Cable Film Needs Create Atlantic Releasing Service

In response to the growing demand for product from the pay tv and cable industry, Atlantic Releasing has established Atlantic Television, an affiliated company which will specialize in the distribution of feature films and other types of programming to the pay and cable tv marketplace. The company says it is also committed to creating new programming for the new tv markets.

Jonathan Dana has been named v.p. of programming and chief operating officer of the new division. He was formerly director of acquisition and development for the Samuel Goldwyn Company. During his two years at Goldwyn, Dana was responsible for the acquisition and implementation of five feature film packages for both the pay-tv and syndicated markets.

Other top officers of the new company are Thomas Coleman and Mike Rosenblatt, both officers of Atlantic Releasing.

Growth Factors

"The move to set up a new division is a result of the growth of ancillary markets," Dana told *Variety*. "Today there are at least 40 separate accounts including subscription tv outlets, satellite delivered services, stand-alones and MSO buying groups. You can't just pick up a phone and call HBO and

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Cablers Seek To Restrict Low-Power TV To UHF; JD Is Iffy On Ownership

Washington, March 10.

The Justice Dept. thinks the FCC's low-power tv proposal is a nifty idea, but the National Cable Television Assn. insists they should be limited to the UHF band because of interference.

In comments last week on the commission's low-power proposal, the JD agreed that the planned service would offer a much needed source of additional competition in both commercial and pay tv. But the JD expressed some reservations, particularly whether there should be a limit on ownership of stations by one person. Regulation artificially inhibits those who seek to use low-power tv to capture the economies of scale inherent in network operation, it said.

The antitrust division also supported streamlined licensing procedures envisioned by the FCC, noting that protracted procedures might defeat the very result it

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Added Bands For Cable Seen Aviation Hazard

Washington, March 10.

The Chairman of the House commerce committee has warned that a proposal to give the cable television industry additional frequencies poses a threat to aviation safety.

Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) expressed the fears of the aviation community in a letter last week to the FCC. The lawmaker cited evidence that CATV signals have leaked, creating interference with communications between air traffic and control towers.

The Federal Aviation Administration has asked the FCC to require an offset of 12.5 KHZ from aviation communications bands.

Ask FCC To Mesh Hearings On STV

Washington, March 10.

The Subscription Television Assn., the STV industry's new D.C. group, wants the FCC to consolidate its three STV-related rulemakings to head off the piecemeal regulatory course it is currently pursuing.

In a petition to the agency last week, the org noted that the commission is currently involved in three proceedings that affect its industry: an ongoing STV proceeding that touches several regulatory issues, its low-power tv service docket, and its inquiry into direct broadcast satellites.

Upshot is that a piecemeal approach to STV policy formulation creates the risk of an inconsistent regulatory framework to this fledgling industry. STVA argued, "Issues such as public service programming, decoder rentals, and STV franchise filings are now undergoing debate and scrutiny for full-service stations," the petition said. "To discriminate preemptively against full-service stations by changing the rules for low-power and DBS is to ignore public interest obligations already established by the commission."

Occasion for the petition was last week's filing deadline for low-power tv.

Oklahoma City — John Brooks has been signed to handle football play-by-play for U. of Oklahoma football games aired via the Oklahoma News Network.

CABLE, VIDEO MEDIA WOO TV SUPPLIERS

By MORRIE GELMAN

Hollywood, March 10.

It's going to be a wild free-for-all at NATPE this year. Everybody, it seems, is both buyer and seller.

"We don't even know what badges to give people," reports a conference spokesman who explains that with the color coding of badges it used to be very clear who was a buyer and who was a seller, who was a station group and who was a syndicator.

"We're still using color codes, but we can't distinguish between the buyers and sellers anymore," the spokesman adds.

"A guy comes in and says, 'I'm a station and I'm also a syndicator and I'm also a producer of shows for cable, so give me three badges.'"

This three-badge syndrome illustrates what's happened to the syndication marketplace these days. Dozens of syndicators — in an effort to expand their markets, frantic not to be left behind as the new technologies engine gathers steam — all are preparing to sell their syndicated product to cable systems (actually many of them are already doing so).

A growing number of syndicators are producing first-run product for cable and there's going to be more than several announcements at this year's NATPE covering such production. Finally, the decided trend is for syndicators to designate or hire a specific executive to handle cable sales.

Post-Newsweek Distribution, to cite what could be a typical example of today's new syndicator posture, is currently in negotiation for a couple of cable projects and hopes to make an announcement about it at NATPE.

"First-run is where we want to go," is the word that comes from Tay Vove, vicepres, program production and distribution for Post-Newsweek Productions. "We'll probably concentrate on doing specific stuff, especially for cable (and specific projects for other new media as they happen)," he confirms.

There's no question that though the company does not as yet have a designated cable exec, Post-Newsweek is positioning itself to become heavily involved in the emerging markets.

A Thin Line

Same is true at Metromedia Producers Corp., where an in-house cable marketing operation was formed last fall. MPC exec vicepres Alan Silverbach is determined that Metromedia should be part of what's happening, whether as a distributor or program producer or both.

"We obviously have an inventory which we can make available to cable," agrees Silverbach, while pointing out that MPC is not looking to compete with what it does in the commercial tv marketplace.

Still, he acknowledges, walking the thin line distributors must these days not to alienate existing markets while expanding into new ones, "there seems to be a non-conflicting marketplace as we see it for basic cable programming and if there is we should be part of it."

At Group W Productions the (Continued on page 206)

UA-Col Cable O.K.'s Sale To Knight-Dow For \$248-Mil; UA Theatres Coming Around?

By FRANK BEERMANN

The UA-Columbia Cablevision board voted on Wednesday (4) to accept an offer from Dow Jones and Knight-Ridder to buy all its stock for \$75 a share. The combine of the two publishing companies had originally offered \$72 a share for the stock, but sweetened the offer before the directors met. The vote was 8-6, with one non-voting absentee.

Of the six no votes, one was cast by Robert Naify, president of UA Theatre Circuit, which owns 28% of the cable stock. Four other negative votes came from UA directors. The sixth vote was cast by a non-aligned director.

When the offer was made two weeks ago, a UA Theatres statement said that the company would sue to keep the deal from going through. Naify refused comment on whether that is still being considered. He said, however, that acceptance of the offer doesn't prevent UA-Columbia from seeking higher offers until a definitive agreement is reached.

Gladstone Whitman, financial v.p. of UA Theatres, had said before the UA-Columbia board voted in favor of the offer that his company would prefer a stock transfer rather than cash. UA Theatres had maintained earlier that it was not interested in getting out of the cable business.

With the UA Columbia board's acceptance of the new offer (the boards of Dow Jones and Knight-Ridder had previously okayed it) the deal now requires a definitive agreement and approval of UA Columbia stockholders.

The latest offer raised the total value of the deal to \$247,500,000.

Five-Year TV License, New-Applicants Lottery In Goldwater Comm. Bill

Washington, March 10.

Legislation that would prescribe a five-year license for tv stations and choose among new applicants by lottery has been introduced by Senate Communications subcommittee chairman Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.). Hearings are slated for March 23 and 30.

The license renewal provisions are similar to those of the panel's radio deregulation measure aired during two days of hearings earlier this month. No further action has yet been taken on that bill.

The Goldwater bill (S. 601) would renew a station's license if the FCC finds it substantially met the needs and interest of the public, station operation had not seriously violated regulations, and if it meets standard qualifications.

The lottery provision would randomly choose between two or more equally qualified applicants for an initial license, reducing the lengthy and sometimes arbitrary comparative licensing procedures. "This bill recognizes that growing competition in the broadcast industry is quickly eliminating the need for restrictive regulations," Goldwater said.

The bill is cosponsored by Sen. Robert Packwood (R-Ore.), parent commerce committee chairman.

Nothing For Nothing

Home Box Office says it plans to do "nothing" about ABC-TV's refusal to accept its paycable service advertising (*Variety*, March 4).

HBO said it would meet its media plan with NBC's acceptance of \$2,000,000 of its ads and it hopes that it would be able to use CBS. The latter web had rejected the ads on grounds of unacceptable or unsubstantiated copy points. But unlike ABC, CBS says it has no problem with accepting the ads "in principle."

HBO hopes the situation with CBS can be worked out with some changes.

Higher-Than-Brow Marks Alpha's Bow

Ann Baxter will host the first week of ABC Video's Alpha Repertory Television Service when the ad-backed satellite feed debuts on RCA Satcom 1 on April 12 at 9 p.m. In the two following weeks, Pierre Salinger and Olivia de Havilland will take turns as weekly hosts.

After opening week, the two following will be focused on the art of Paris and Vienna, although such geographical themes will not hold throughout.

Opening night's longest segment will be a feature on painter Gustav Klimt and art nouveau which will run for about an hour of the three scheduled. It was made by RM Productions in Europe. RM also made a short piece on Gustave Courbet's painting "Huntsmen's Picnic" and produced the Israel Philharmonic performance of Mozart's Andante under the direction of Isaac Stern. TF-1 in France produced a 30-minute "La Sylphide" ballet and CIP Video, also French, produced a flute ensemble's performance of a Debussy work. ABC, itself, made a short feature on painter Paul Cezanne and produced a performance of a variation for flute by Chopin. The Sunday program will be repeated on Tuesday and Friday.

Monday's major work will be a 105-minute version of the Giordano opera "Andrea Chenier" made by RAI/Sacis in Italy. And a Nureyev performance choreographed by George Balanchine produced by TF-1.

Anthony Burgess will spend an RM produced 60-minutes in a reassessment of the writings of Ernest Hemingway and another hour will be devoted to a Marcel Marceau performance also from RM, with shorter pieces with organist Pierre Cochereau from CIP Video and a ballet piece by TF-1. That program will be repeated on Thursday.

On Saturday, a two-hour performance of Georges Pretre's "Mauon Lescaut" from RAI/Sacis will take two hours. The time will be filled out with a Cochereau performance of Bach (CIP Video), a Gluck flute work (CIP Video) and a study of Rene Magritte's painting "The Empire of Lights."