

## HBO's Ratings Still On A Downhill Run; CNN, USA Move Up

Hollywood, March 19. Home Box Office, superstation WTBS and CBN Cable Network registered ratings dropoffs in January Nielsen's, while USA Network and Cable News Network were up in comparisons with those services' results for January 1984.

HBO suffered ratings dropoffs in both 7 a.m.-1 a.m. and primetime counts for the fifth straight month; WTBS was unable to equal its blistering pace of the previous January (when it set records for highest-rated single show and highest-rated miniseries), and the Christian Broadcasting Network's CBN service equaled its highest 7 a.m.-1 a.m. average since last April, but still ran behind year-ago levels.

USA's year-to-year gains were actually its smallest in at least six months, and its primetime average equaled its lowest over that six-month span, but the service continued to run ahead of year-ago levels. CNN also encountered its lowest primetime average in six months, but still stayed ahead of January 1984 averages.

Among other services, The Nashville Network, in the first month during which it can make year-to-year comparisons, lost rating in primetime, but equaled its year-earlier, full-day average.

CNN Headline News equaled its lowest 6 a.m.-2 a.m. average in nine months, while Lifetime improved to its best primetime number in four months.

The month's 7 a.m.-1 a.m. standings were: (1) WTBS, a 2.2 rating (down 31% compared to January 1984); (2) USA, 1.2 (up 20%); (3) CBN, 1.1 (down 21%); (4) CNN, 0.8 (6 a.m.-2 a.m., up 14%); (5) Nashville Network, 0.6 (9 a.m.-3 a.m., even); (6) CNNHN, 0.4 (6 a.m.-2 a.m., not measured last year); (7) Lifetime, 0.3 (not measured last year).

Three services — MTV, ESPN and Nickelodeon — are measured quarterly. Their fourth-quarter averages were: MTV, 1.1; ESPN, 0.8, and Nickelodeon, 0.9 (7 a.m.-9 p.m.).

The 10-highest-rated series on ad-supported cable in January were: (1) "Academy Award Theater," WTBS, a 6.5 rating; (2) "Sunday Afternoon Movies," WTBS, 5.6; (3) "Saturday Afternoon Movies" and "World Championship Sports," WTBS, both 5.3; (5) "Wagon Train," CBN, 4.8; (6) "Sunday Sports," WTBS, 4.6; (7) "The Monroes," CBN, 4.5; (8) Sunday "Pro Wrestling," USA, 4.3; (9) "Prime Movies," WTBS, and Tuesday "Pro Wrestling," USA, both 4.2.

All ratings are measured against only those homes that receive the service being measured.

Current penetration levels are: WTBS, 40% of the country's tv homes; CNN, 37%; USA, 34%; CBN, 32%; Lifetime and TNN, 25% each, and CNNHN, 18%.

### Whopping Disparity

Nielsen lists HBO with a 25% penetration rate, or about 21,000,000 homes. That represents a whopping 46% disparity over the company's last-announced subscriber count of 14,500,000.

That disparity, which has existed for years, is of particular concern to Hollywood, since what filmmakers get paid by HBO roughly reflects the number of homes in which their product is being exposed.

# Goings On In Cable Television

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Video Group. He had held a similar title at Home Box Office ... **Henry F. Morris** moved to operations v.p. for the Texas Cable Network from exec producer.

**Kevin Methany** to MTV Networks as v.p. of production and music programming for VH-1 and of music programming for MTV. He had been director of programming and operations for WNBC radio N.Y. MTV Networks has also named **Peter Einstein** account director in the east. He'd been eastern sales manager ... **Bill Chapman** survives the defunct TBS Cable Music Channel, where he was creative services director, by moving from L.A. to Atlanta to take creative director slot for parent TBS.

**Paula Singer** named Prism p.r. director. She'd been director of college relations for Haverford College ... **Ellyn Berk** to Arts & Entertainment as director of corporate programming. She'd been with a p.r. company ... **Catherine J. Grzanka** to USA Network as manager of affiliate relations in the central region. She'd been with Chicago Cable Communications.

**John Berry**, a former Washington Post reporter, shuffles to Business Times ... **Cheryl R. Zantz** moves to Cable Networks Inc. as a New York account exec. She'd been same with Nationwide Cable Rep ... **Richard Harter** named director of tv ad sales for the National Geographic Society cable series "The Explorer." Harter had been a director of sales for Nickelodeon ... **Wold Communications** named **Stella Labieniec** director of operations for The Disney Channel Tape Origination Center in Hollywood. She had worked previously for three years at the Spotlight pay service, which was discontinued last year.

## Phone Co. Battles Against Conn. Cable Bill

Hartford, March 19.

The energy and public utilities committee of Connecticut's General Assembly has before it a bill that would allow cable companies to provide customers with shopping, banking and other financial services.

The projected bill would allow cable-tv companies to transmit information from one point to another, a function now limited to the telephone company. The Southern Telephone Co. is opposed to the proposed measure. And told the committee, via a spokesman, the telephone company should provide communications and cable companies should stick to tv broadcasts.

At a recent hearing, cable operators said there is now a "window of opportunity," and if they do not receive approval to provide an information-transmission service, the telephone company soon will monopolize that part of the industry. "The real war is going to be over control of your living room," said Sen. John B. Larson.

## British Cable Notes

**Alastair Garrow**, managing director of Windsor Television (the Windsor area cable-franchise holder), is anklng the company. Garrow's move follows Windsor's decision to halt all cabling for six months until the climate for cable in Britain improves ... **British Telecom** has appointed **Colin Brown** to take over as the company's new cable-tv chief. He will replace **Donald Wray**, who is retiring ... Pay-tv operator **Premiere** has named **Frank Dawson** sales development manager and **Nick Russell** marketing manager.

**Walt Disney Prods.** has signed with **Rupert Murdoch's** general-entertainment channel, Sky, to produce an annual hourlong special ... **Robert Maxwell**, publisher of the Daily Mirror tabloid and one of the biggest players in the local cable scene by virtue of his holdings in Rediffusion cable systems, is negotiating to sell a 15,000-home north London system. The potential buyer is Cable Camden, which has plans to apply for the franchise for the whole Camden area ... Maxwell is also rumored to be about to make a bid for cable rights to professional soccer. Story is that he plans to show the games on Rediffusion systems, which are targeted to have 200,000 subscribers by the end of the year.

## Lifestyle Nabs British Telecom Investment

London, March 19.

In New York to nail additional capital for their planned Lifestyle channel on British cable, co-toppers Sue Francis and Patricia Williams disclosed that **British Telecom** has become an investor in the operation.

Due to bow in the fall as a satellite-to-cable feed in Britain and on the continent, Lifestyle is aiming for a £4,000,000 (\$4,240,000) total capital investment, 40% of which it hopes to secure from the U.S. **Richard Price TV Associates** and **Barry Chattington** (of the Roger Cherrill post-production house), are among Lifestyle's founders.

The channel's daytime sked will offer soaps, fashion, child care, health, kidshows and vintage Westerns.

## German Viewers Give Sat-1 High Grades

Mainz, March 19.

The new Sat-1 cable-program service in West Germany is attracting viewers with a better education, in vocations with higher prestige and a higher income than the average German tv viewer.

That's the conclusions drawn by an Infratest study of Sat-1, which debuted Jan. 1 here, and can be viewed by about 250,000 cable-equipped German households.

Sat-1 viewers, according to general manager **Juergen Doetz**, ranked the programs as "very good" or "good" in 84% of the households studied. And 39.7% of the households that can receive Sat-1 tune in daily, while Second German TV Net attracts 37.7% and First Net brings in 35.5% daily.

Sat-1 viewers tune in for an average 52 minutes daily, while Second Net viewers watch 36 minutes and First Net viewers 35 minutes. A year ago, before Sat-1 came into existence, First Net claimed 60 minutes daily watching, Second Net 53 minutes.

## HBO Makes Heavy Investment In Series

Hollywood, March 19.

Home Box Office has disclosed a massive purchase of 72 additional half-hours of three current series and pickup of a fourth.

An order of 32 shows went to Moffitt-Lee Prods. for its "Not Necessarily The News" topical satire. Amount will be split evenly as 16 segs each for this year and next. **Jim Henson's** "Fraggle Rock" was renewed through 1986, with another 24 shows to be added to the 72 ordered by HBO since the show premiered as the pay service's first original weekly series in January 1983.

An additional 10 episodes of "The Hitchhiker" adult dramatic mystery-suspense anthology have been requested from Quintina Prods. And rounding out the tally was the purchase of six episodes of "First And Ten," a comedy centering on a football team with a female owner which debuted as a pilot in December. **P & D Partners**, **Peter Locke** and **Donald Kushner** will also come up with another half dozen scripts for possible continuation of the series.

**Bridget Potter**, senior v.p. of original programming for HBO, said that the actions did not signal any change in company strategy but represented "our ability as a business to begin making these kinds of commitments." She added that each series was designed as a pay-tv program and emphasized that they were not geared to future syndication potential.

Reviewing the performance of each of the ongoing programs to date, Potter called "Not Necessarily The News" is consistently among the top 10 titles each month.

Potter said that "Fraggle Rock" regularly turned up among the top five shows in subscriber satisfaction ratings. It will be taping new shows this fall at the CBC Studios in Toronto.

The HBO exec said that "The Hitchhiker" has generated 33% more tune-in than other primetime shows. She added that its initial appeal among young adult males has expanded to include men and women in the 35-49 age range.

The show was introduced in November 1983 and will resume production in July in Toronto. There have been 13 segs ordered previously. HBO listed **Lewis Chesler** and **Richard Rothstein** as producers for Quintina Prods.

## Cable Council Goes After Hispanic Market

In an effort to boost the number of Hispanic subscribers of cable tv, the Council for Cable Information has created a special Spanish-language advertising campaign that will be seen on the SIN tv network through April 8.

The campaign, which represents a network buy exceeding \$350,000, stands to reach 3,900,000 Spanish-speaking households.

SIN, along with ABC, CBS and basic cable networks, is part of CCI's \$6,000,000 cable-awareness campaign. **Kathryn Creech**, CCI prez, said these networks were selected for their ability to deliver CCI's target audience, which is men and women 25-54.

SIN will air three 30-second spots in Spanish on a rotating basis during such programs as "Siempre En Domingo" and "Tu O Nadie." CCI's English-language spots have been on "60 Minutes" and the ABC miniseries "Hollywood Wives."

## Cable Could Enter Emmy Race — For A Price

On Thursday (14), the day after the Cable Academy formation was revealed, the TV Academy in Hollywood said its board of governors had voted to allow entrance of cable programming for consideration among primetime programs for Emmy Awards.

But, the Hollywood group said, admission to TV Academy membership will be dependent on a dismantling of the new Cable Academy structure.

A spokesman for the Cable Academy said the "decision" by the tv group had come without any discussion with NCTA or the national program services and that there has still been no contact.

Actually, cable won't become eligible for inclusion in the awards until 1987. The tv group's contract with the three networks, which rotate coverage of the Emmy Award show, runs out after the 1986 ceremony. Right now, the contract excludes from consideration any programming not available in 51% of American homes. That excludes all program services and certainly HBO and Showtime — the two services which are financially able to mount the kinds of programming which might compete in several categories.

A conference call meeting was scheduled by the executive committee late Tuesday (19) to discuss the TV Academy proposal. The most that can be expected at this time, however, is an invitation to the Hollywood group to put its proposal on the table.

## British Put 5 More Franchises On Block

London, March 19.

The Cable Authority, the U.K. cable regulatory body, has announced seven areas for which it will advertise new cable franchises.

Five will come up for grabs immediately, the remaining two will be advertised in the next round of franchises. The first five are the northern town of Bolton, the West England towns of Cheltenham and Gloucester, the east London suburbs of Tower Hamlets and Newham, the central London Wandsworth area and the suburban sections of the county of West Surrey, near the capital.

The authority gave advance notice that central Lancashire, in northern England, and the Welsh city of Cardiff would be up for cable franchises later this year.

**Robert Maxwell**, owner of Rediffusion, the largest cable system in Britain, is reportedly interested in applying for the Surrey franchise. He already holds the neighboring Guildford franchise.