

SABAN DEBUTS NEW SLATE AT NATPE

Veteran distributor makes first appearance as exhibitor at annual conference

By Mike Freeman

Saban Entertainment has formally unveiled a slate of programming that the privately held company will be distributing in syndication through its newly formed Saban Domestic Distribution arm. The 12-year-old producer of long-form drama programming, animated TV programming and background soundtrack music for the U.S. and international broadcast marketplaces will be making its first NATPE appearance at this January's program conference in San Francisco.

Heading up the Saban push into the domestic arena is Senior Vice President David Goodman, who values SDD's slate of three new animated series for the 1993-94 season at \$50 million, including costs associated with program development, production, distribution and promotion.

Goodman was hired by Saban Entertainment's chairman and founder, Haim Saban, earlier this year after closing the doors on his financially troubled Goodman Entertainment Group. SDD has a staff of five salespeople, including former GEG staffers Peter Schmid and Mark Lieber, vice presidents of East Coast and West Coast sales, respectively.

SDD's first and most ambitious programming effort in syndication is the strip *The Hallo Spencer Show*, a live-action puppet show that Goodman says combines the entertainment and educational content of Jim Henson's *Muppet Show*, *Sesame Street* and *Eureka Castle*. In a significant departure from most other all-barter animated programs in syndication, Goodman says Saban will be offering the 52-episode strip on a 1½-minute national/4½-minute local per-episode barter split during the more lucrative spot-dollar second and fourth quarters. (The first and third quarters will have a two-minute national/four-minute local split.)

"We're a lot different than other major distributors in that we retain control over international distribution, which [president] Stan Golden handles for the company, giving us a larger share of the international revenues

than if we had to go to outside distributors," says Goodman, adding: "This allows us to return a larger portion of the barter inventory to stations because we're going to also recoup a significant portion of our revenue from international sales."

On the *Hallo Spencer* project alone, Goodman says that Saban, which he says is producing the show with "other [undisclosed] partners," is budget-

MORE CLEARANCES FOR 'LAKE'

Columbia's *Ricki Lake* talk show has now been cleared in 7 of the top 10 markets. Three Group W stations have signed on—KYW-TV Philadelphia, WBZ-TV Boston and KDKA-TV Pittsburgh. Another buyer is LIN Broadcasting's KXAS-TV Dallas. Earlier, Columbia reported that Chris-Craft's WWOR-TV New York and KCOP-TV Los Angeles cleared the show, as have WPWR-TV Chicago and KRON-TV San Francisco.

Word is that WWOR and KCOP have penciled it in at 5 p.m. for next fall, while WPWR is contemplating 4 or 5 p.m. KRON is said to be looking at 3 p.m., when *Geraldo* currently airs. —MF

ing \$370,000 per episode, or roughly \$19.4 million for the first 52 original episodes.

In the weekly series arena, Saban will be launching *The Mad Scientist's Toon Club*, an hour-long series in which a "mad scientist" will introduce two new animated shorts, *Samurai Pizza Cats* and *Tic Tac Toons*, for airing within the 52-episode series. Saban is offering *Mad Scientist* on a 4½-minute national/5½-minute local basis.

Also on tap is Saban's *Toon of the Month*, a package of 12 one-hour specials for broadcast in the 1993 and 1994 broadcast seasons. Starting in November 1993, Saban is planning on kicking off the holiday season with its animated version of *Cinderella*, followed by *The Nutcracker* in December

and *Kid 'n' Play* in February to tie in with Black History Month. The specials will be available on an even five-minute national/local barter basis.

With regard to adult programming, where Saban has established longtime presence as a producer of miniseries and made-for-television dramas for the broadcast networks, Goodman says that SDD has sold *The Saban Movie Network* in 130 markets representing over 85% of the U.S. Titles in the package, which is being offered on a barter basis (11 minutes national/13 minutes local), include *Heathers* (starring Winona Ryder and Christian Slater), *The Queen of Mean* (Suzanne Pleshette) and *Gun Runners* (Kevin Costner).

Goodman added that some adult series programming is in various stages of development, but he declined to discuss those projects individually. ■

A CALL FOR ENTRIES

The American Legion 1993 Fourth Estate Award Competition

Individuals, publications or broadcast organizations may submit work completed between January 1 and December 31, 1992.

The work must cover an issue of national interest, be in accordance with American Legion principles, and have contributed to the furtherance of the American way of life.

Past winners of this prestigious award include C-Span, LIFE Magazine, The Poughkeepsie Journal, and individual journalists from all across America.

Entry deadline is January 31, 1993. Award will be presented at the 1993 National Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Entries should be submitted to:
The American Legion
Public Relations Division
700 North Pennsylvania Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 635-8411



Conducted in voluntary compliance with Resolution 9 of the 1984 SPJ. SDX