

U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington refused last week to reconsider its decision to preserve so-called A/B switch rules. Jack Cole, attorney representing cable operators who asked for reconsideration, said there would be no appeal of decision. Last December, appeals court struck down as unconstitutional FCC rules requiring cable systems to carry some local broadcast signals, but said related A/B switch and consumer education rules were unaffected. Rules have been remanded to FCC for changes to reflect absence of carriage requirements and setting of new deadlines for implementation. Once they go into effect, cable operators will have to inform new subscribers and, periodically, existing subscribers about which local signals they carry. In addition, operators will have to offer to install A/B switches or provide them to do-it-yourselfers. Operators have to pay for installations of switches in homes of new subscribers, but may pass along costs of installation and switches to existing subscribers. A/B switches, which attach to back of television sets, allow for easy switching between off-air and cable reception.

Lorimar Syndication remained in negotiations with New York station at end of last week over sale of A.L.F. Lorimar had set March 29 for bids on show, but no station offered company's \$150,000 per-episode minimum. Minimum was then dropped to \$100,000. Lorimar was also unable to close deal in Phoenix, Atlanta and San Francisco. It made sales in Los Angeles (KHJ-TV) and Las Vegas (KVVU-TV).

RJR Nabisco Inc. withdrew its \$70-80 million account with Saatchi & Saatchi DFS Compton last week because of that agency's advertising campaign for Northwest Airlines, which promotes travel in planes that prohibit smoking. RJR Nabisco Inc. products include various brands of cigarettes. Agency's parent corporation, Saatchi & Saatchi PLC, will retain RJR Nabisco accounts internationally. Domestic accounts included Oreo and Chips Ahoy cookies, Lifesaver candies, Carefree sugarless chewing gum, Breath Saver mints and Bubble Yum bubble gum. Loss of account of nation's fourth largest advertiser will cost agency estimated 7% of its annual revenue. Northwest Airlines account is reported to be worth \$55 million. RJR Nabisco Inc. said that 18-year relationship with agency was discontinued because of importance of dealing with agencies "that have a wholly consistent philosophical approach to our plans and programs."

At NBC management meeting in Phoenix last week, **Jack Welsh**, head of NBC parent, General Electric, **told network executives: "You are performing as well or better than any component in [GE]."** Welsh's remarks came about one year after he gave same group severe tongue lashing for resisting change. "If I had to give you a report card I'd give you an A," for network's performance over past year, said Welsh. He singled out NBC News as having scored "news coup after news coup," and praised NBC's strong stand against striking NABET union last fall. About 120 NBC executives were on hand at what essentially was think session to ponder how network should position itself going into the 1990's.

CBS said last week long-running hit **Magnum P.I.** would have **last broadcast** in form of two-hour special on **May 1** (9-11 p.m.). Program premiered Dec. 11, 1980. ABC announced last week **new premiere date for China Beach, Tuesday April 26, 9-11 p.m.**

Writers Guild of America received strong letter of support from Screen Actors Guild President Patty Duke, indicating SAG board has "determined it will be conduct unbecoming of SAG members to perform writing services normally performed by striking writers." SAG members crossing WGA picket line will be subject to discipline, said Duke. Earlier in strike, Writers Guilds in Canada, Great Britain and Australia pledged not to pick up work normally done by WGA, unless it was contracted for before start of strike. Meanwhile, no further talks were scheduled as strike heads into

sixth week, prompting speculation on how long it can continue without causing delay for start of 1988-89 network prime time season. Producers and network executives contacted last week said if strike lasts more than another month, delay would be likely.

Dick Hollands, NAB senior VP for TV, **retires, effective June 1. Succeeding him is Charles E. Sherman**, president/GM, WHOI-TV Peoria, Ill. Hollands, who joined NAB in 1983, told association president, Eddie Fritts, two weeks ago he wanted to retire. Sherman has been with WHOI-TV since 1984, but with sale of



Hollands



Sherman

station to Adams Communications (BROADCASTING, Oct. 26, 1987), he has been looking for new position. According to Fritts, Sherman approached NAB and expressed interest in position at association's Advanced Television Test Center, but because of his past service on NAB's Research Committee and other industry activities, NAB offered him TV department post.

Hubbard Broadcasting's direct broadcast satellite subsidiary, **United States Satellite Broadcasting Co., last week filed applications at FCC for four more years to build and launch its two approved DBS birds and to modify construction** of satellites. According to November 1982 grant, USSB was to have birds in operation by next December. USSB cited delay due to 1983 international DBS standards negotiations, DBS start-up failures, launch industry failures, lack of domestic DBS dish manufacture and lack of accord on HDTV transmission standards as reasons for extension. USSB, which has invested about \$15 million over six years, said current DBS successes in Japan and Europe are erasing start-up and manufacturing problems, creating more promising DBS environment in U.S. Modification of CP asks for one 16-channel bird instead of two eight-channel birds.

Four-year-old **Pro Am Sports System Inc. (PASS)**, Detroit-based regional cable sports network and Domino Pizza subsidiary, said last week it has **signed five-year, renewable lease of transponder on GTE Spacenet III**, launched March 11. Deal signed before launch puts PASS on same bird with Associated Press, but if GTE also signs Rainbow Programming Enterprises' Bravo and/or Rainbow's five regional cable sports networks (BROADCASTING, Feb. 15), Spacenet III could quickly become established cable bird. PASS's William Wischman said joint C- and Ku-band capabilities, dearth of domestic satellite launches, long life expectancy of bird and timing all played part in choice by PASS, which expects dual feeds during June. Original lease on Westar V expires June 30.

Washington-based columnist **Jack Anderson** and **Saban Productions will produce package of four quarterly "live event"-type specials** under banner *American Expose*. Saban executive VP Bob Unkel said that package of specials was conceived after success of Tribune Entertainment's Geraldo Rivera specials. He said that although Geraldo Rivera specials have not always had "payoff" (opening of Al Capone's vaults revealed only beer bottle), Anderson specials will have guaranteed payoff. First offering—in November—will be *Who Murdered JFK*, special on 25th anniversary