

Back again

Communications policy for possible Dukakis administration is taking shape under aegis of Charles Ferris, FCC chairman in Carter administration and now partner with Washington law firm of Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky & Popeo. At candidate's behest, Ferris is conducting meetings with representatives of private and public sectors, including key Hill aides. Larry Sidman, staff director and chief counsel for House Telecommunications Subcommittee, and Tom Cohen, senior counsel for Senate Communications Subcommittee, are participating. Group has engaged in broad philosophical discussions (on public interest standard, for example) and is assessing current telecommunications policy with eye toward options new administration might want to pursue. Results of those sessions should surface in fall.

Writer's cramp

Word is that advertising lineup for ABC's *War and Remembrance* mini-series (see story, page 39) has in large part been determined by *War's* author, Herman Wouk. According to sources in advertising community, as part of Wouk's deal with ABC, writer put potential advertising types in three categories, approved, qualified and excluded. Among advertisers on Wouk's approved list: autos/trucks, communications, petroleum, airlines and insurance. Some of those excluded: acne medicine, bathroom products, deodorants, feminine hygiene products and toilet bowl cleaners. Qualified include cosmetics, food and clothes but needing individual approval by Wouk. In addition to establishing hierarchy of advertisers, Wouk also disallowed 15-second spots to restrict clutter during commercial breaks.

X-rated report

FCC decided to fine Media Central's KZKC-TV Kansas City, Mo., \$2,000 for broadcast of allegedly indecent movie three weeks ago (BROADCASTING, June 27), but, as of last week, station had yet to receive formal notification of action (BROADCASTING, June 27). But its wait may soon be over. Notice has been given thorough going over by lawyers and commissioners and should be in mail this week, according to FCC official. Notice describes in detail five scenes that in context of story led to indecency finding. Media Central has vowed to fight fine.

At same time notice comes out, FCC Commissioner Patrica Dennis, who voted against fine, hopes to release statement reiterating her call for rulemaking to

determine when indecent broadcasts are permissible—that is, when presence of unsupervised children in audience is minimal. FCC has indicated that such programing is acceptable after midnight, but Dennis believes FCC was acting arbitrarily in picking after-midnight.

Cued for Ku

CBS-TV started using new full-time lease of GTE Spacenet GStar II, transponder 5 last Tuesday, signaling further solidification of Ku-band as satellite delivery method of choice among TV broadcasting news gatherers. ABC-TV began using second and third of its "multimillion-dollar" GStar transponders last week as well (BROADCASTING, Feb. 22). Network Ku-band investments are partly result of proliferation of Ku-band vehicles among affiliates. Over past two years, all three networks have formed affiliate-network satellite news gathering systems, including network upfront money for trucks, and ABC, at least, expects number of stations involved to double this year. Other factor is price. C-band uplinkers can buy occasional satellite time in segments no smaller than half-hour at \$193 cost. Ku-band uplinkers wanting to send short news actualities can buy as little as five minutes at \$8 per minute.

Futurists

National Association of Broadcasters executive forum for TV group heads slated for Sept. 19 in Washington has lined up speakers. It is one day-seminar on new technologies and how they might be integrated into current broadcasting system. Slated for talks: Paul Bortz of Browne, Bortz & Coddington, Denver consulting firm; Tele-Communications Inc.'s John Sie, who will talk about cable with emphasis on high-definition television; Donald Jansky, Jansky & Barmart, engineers, on satellites, and Don R. Strohmeier, vice president of marketing for BellSouth Services, on fiber optics.

Going slow on telcos

FCC has scheduled telephone-cable crossownership inquiry for action at July 20 meeting. In launching inquiry, FCC indicated that crossownership ban contained in Cable Act may no longer be warranted and said inquiry could lead to recommendation to Congress that it be dropped. Word on street last week was that FCC would proceed cautiously, inviting more comments, while deferring any congressional recommendation. One FCC official would not confirm, but said there are "many questions that could benefit from additional comments."

Re-enacting news

When investigative newsman Jack Anderson debuts in syndication in November with *Who Murdered J.F.K.*, first in series of syndicated quarterly "event" specials under banner, *American Expose*, he will rely on "docudrama" approach, re-enacting news events. Anderson has signed agreement to get back on television on regular basis through syndicator, Orbis Communications. Consortium comprising MCA, Gaylord and Chris Craft stations will help finance and will carry *American Expose*. Production of specials will be handled by Saban Productions in association with Barbour/Langley Productions Inc.

Children's hour

New attempt to distribute live children's radio program may soon be in works. WXPB-FM Philadelphia, operated by University of Pennsylvania, earlier this year hired Kathy O'Connell, co-host of WNYC-FM New York's defunct *Kids America* series, which was distributed by American Public Radio, to anchor local show, *Kids Corner*. Station is exploring feasibility of syndicating broadcast nationally to either commercial or noncommercial outlets in 1989.

Program prospects

Many in cable are looking to Hollywood producers session at Cable Television Administration and Marketing Society conference on Aug. 3 to search for common ground on contract arrangements, production costs and aftermarkets. Group of cable leaders met with MCA executives at National Cable Television Association show in May, and cable group reconvened two weeks ago to discuss issues.

Funding for productions could take several forms: cable network could contract for series with money coming from increased operator fees; money could be raised in blind pool limited partnership, then doled out to particular projects, or MSO's could fund project directly, then distribute it through cable networks or by other means. Industry observers say operators are coming to realization that any produced-for-cable programing will have afterlife beyond cable and that shifting production windows could mean that single pilot mechanism may give way to limited pilot series running on cable before wider exposure. Using HBO as model, cable executives believe quality programing can be produced for less than standard Hollywood rate.