

slate of Stanley Cup playoff games this week. As few as two and as many as five games will be offered on any given night to SCA affiliates, which now number 8 million.

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**Worldvision's After Hours is now cleared in more than 60 markets,** representing more than 60% of country. New clearances include two Fox O&O's, KRIV-TV Houston and KDAF-TV Dallas, as well as ABC affiliates in Denver (KUSA-TV), Pittsburgh (WTAE-TV), Cincinnati (WKRC-TV) and Buffalo, N.Y. (WKBW-TV); NBC affiliate WTMJ-TV Milwaukee, CBS affiliate KTSP-TV Phoenix and independent stations in Baltimore (WNUV-TV), Indianapolis (WXIN-TV), San Diego (XETV-TV), Kansas City, Mo. (KSHB-TV), and Las Vegas (KVVU-TV). Previous clearances include KTTV-TV Los Angeles, WPWR-TV Chicago, WXYZ-TV Detroit and WSB-TV Atlanta.

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Major League Baseball season begins today, but as of late last week, **New York Yankee games on MSG were being carried by cable systems,** principally TCI-owned, **servicing 750,000 subscribers, far below MSG's overall 2.4 million reach.** Added cost of carrying Yankees has been at center of dispute between MSG and major cable operators, including Cablevision Systems, B-Q Cable, Manhattan and Paragon Cable. Negotiations on carriage continued last Friday.

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**ESPN last week announced scheduling of four pre-season football games:** L.A. Rams vs. San Francisco 49ers will air live from Tokyo Aug. 5 at 10 p.m.; Buffalo Bills at Cincinnati Bengals will be seen Aug. 13; Philadelphia Eagles vs. New York Jets from North Carolina State University Aug. 20, and Kansas City Chiefs at Chicago Aug. 27. Games will mark first ESPN appearances for Bills, Bengals, Jets and Chiefs.

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**J.C. Penney announced Telaction,** interactive home shopping service serving 30,000 subscribers in Chicago, **will cease operations on April 7.** Company said search by Kidder, Peabody to find sufficient additional funding for service was fruitless. Penney invested \$106 million in business and said it would "incur cost of approximately \$20 million" in shutting down service. Penney products will continue to be sold on Shop TV, in which it has upped its ownership stake. Telaction employed 164.

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**Midwest Sports Channel has reached agreement with one of two cable companies with which it had rate dispute.** MSC said Rogers systems, serving 105,000 subscribers in Minneapolis area, have picked up service. Rogers is paying basic rate card of 25-30 cents per month for SportsChannel America NHL hockey and 24 Twins baseball games. Separate deal involves 40 PPV Twins games to be seen on MSC. Source said Rogers received slightly better than 50-50 split for games retailing at \$7.95. Hauser system, other operator in dispute, had no comment last week on any carriage talks.

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Motion picture and television producer **Edgar J. Scherick,** president of Edgar J. Scherick Associates Inc., and **Haim Saban,** chairman-CEO of Saban Entertainment, have formed Saban/Scherick Productions, joint venture for development and production of prime time TV programming. Venture will be division of Saban Entertainment. *Phantom of the Opera*, four-hour miniseries for NBC, is first project.

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**Deal that brings MSO ownership in Discovery Channel from 60% to nearly 100% has closed.** Tele-Communications Inc. will control slightly less than 50%, Cox Cable and Newhouse slightly less than 25%, while management owns remaining fraction. Price was \$120 million.

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**Representative John Bryant (D-Tex.) sent letter to Time Inc.** last week, requesting it answer questions Association of Independent Television Stations has raised about Time-Warner merger. INTV is concerned that further vertical integration will jeopardize carriage on cable systems and continue flow of product to

independent stations. Bryant sent letter after seeing responses from Time and Warner to INTV's earlier letters. Bryant asked for "a far more detailed letter which addresses these questions head-on and in a noninvasive manner."

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**Black Television Workshop late last month requested \$1,750,000 minority distress sale of noncommercial KEEF-TV Los Angeles, station ordered off air by FCC in 1987** because of construction permit violations (BROADCASTING, Dec. 26, 1987). Proposed buyer, Hispanic Christian Communications Network, is programmer but holds no other broadcast interests. In response to distress sale request, FCC review board delayed for two weeks hearing scheduled for March 27 that would have examined permit violations and allegations that disputed BTW President Booker Wade had misrepresented himself in FCC filings. Hearing would also have examined challenges to Wade's control of BTW brought by Mary Woodfork, member of BTW's original board of directors. Wade is proposed seller. Review board stayed hearing despite requests to reconsider filed by Woodfork and FCC Mass Media Bureau, which will handle distress sale request. Woodfork, who has claimed that Wade illegally removed her and others from their directorships, argued Wade is "not recognized as the official owner" and is therefore "in no position to act as the seller. The sooner the hearing takes place," she said, "the sooner this ownership issue can be resolved." Mass Media Bureau argued Wade had "not satisfied the conditions of a stay." HCCN believes that state of California, not FCC, should decide control question, said its attorney Vince Curtis. Trial to settle dispute has been scheduled for this month in California Superior Court of Los Angeles, same court that issued a preliminary injunction denying Woodfork's claim of control in October 1987. Still caught in middle is Radio Telecom & Technology, developer of two-way data transmission service designed to use first adjacent channel of host TV station. RTT paid for KEF's transmission plant in exchange for access to that adjacent channel and is consequently BTW creditor. HCCN, said Curtis, has agreed to negotiate and "expects to reach full agreement" with RTT.

### Say it ain't Snow

*The Walt Disney Company, not happy—in fact downright grumpy—about what it considers the unauthorized use of its Snow White character on last week's Oscar telecast, filed suit last Thursday against the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in U. S. District Court in Los Angeles. The suit alleges copyright infringement; unfair competition and violation of the California anti-dilution law, which protects trademarks.*

*A Disney spokesman said the company knew nothing prior to the broadcast about the appearance of a live actress dressed as Snow White, who spoke to Army Archerd in the lobby of the Shrine Auditorium and then sang parodies of famous songs. "We requested of the Academy only that it admit to its unauthorized portrayal of Snow White," said Frank Wells, Disney president and chief operating officer, "and for a public apology for having used our copyrighted works without first receiving Disney's consent. If such a statement had been agreed to by the Academy, we would have considered the matter ended." The Academy did not agree to those terms, however, and Disney "reluctantly" filed suit in hopes that "the public will learn...that Disney had nothing to do with the opening segment of the Academy Awards ceremony."*

*The Awards ceremony, which drew a 29.8 rating/50 share (its best numbers since 1984) on ABC last Wednesday, also aired for the first time in the Soviet Union, one of the record 91 countries and territories that carried a live or taped version of the telecast.*