

CABLECASTINGS

MEU ADDS BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Mind Extension University has added its first bachelor degree program to its educational service, which will be available in the fall of 1991. The degree in management will be available through University of Maryland University College. Maryland is one of eight schools in the National Universities Degree Consortium who are participating in the project.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, Disney Channel, HBO and MTV have agreed to promote the value of education during programming on each of their channels April 15-21 as part of Education 1st! Week. Education 1st! is a nonprofit organization made up of individuals in the film, television and music industries.

P&G FOR KIDS

Procter & Gamble has become the third partner in Buena Vista Television's year-round promotional campaign for its highly

rated two-hour animated children's block, *The Disney Afternoon*. McDonald's and Kellogg Co. have been promotional partners since January 1990, and a Buena Vista spokeswoman says the signing of P&G is the final major link in the \$100 million marketing campaign in support of four half-hour programs (*Tale Spin*, *Chip 'n Dale's Rescue Rangers*, *DuckTales* and *Gummi Bears*).

LAUGHING MATTERS

Comedy TV has dipped into the programming pools of both The Comedy Channel and HA! The Time Warner/Viacom venture launching in April has picked up *Mystery Science Theater 3000* and *Short Attention Span Theater* from Comedy Channel, and *Comics Only*, *Talent Pool* and *The Unnaturals* from HA!

Production of 24 episodes of *Mystery Science Theater*, which features clips of bad movies plus commentary, begins on March 4. *Short Attention Span Theater*, which offers entertainment news and comedy clips, begins pre-production in March, and has a commitment for 26 weeks of the twice-daily, one-hour show.

Comics Only, a talk show for comedians hosted by comic Paul

Provenza, begins production on 25 half-hour episodes beginning Feb. 20. Four episodes of *The Unnaturals*, a skit comedy show, and an episode of *The Talent Pool*, featuring New York comedians, have finished production. Additionally, some of the classic comedies Viacom had acquired for HA! (*The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and *Mork and Mindy*), won't make their way to Comedy TV. The off-network series will make their home instead on Viacom's Nick at Nite.

SHOWTIME NEWS SERVICE

Showtime said it will continue carrying the 90-second interstitial news segments it launched Jan. 2 throughout 1991. The segment is produced by Viacom's All News Channel, a 24-hour satellite-delivered news service, and contains Gulf war updates as well as financial, weather and entertainment news. The segments appear each night between 9 p.m. and 11 p.m.

DEAL SIGNINGS

C-SPAN has added 285,000 subscribers from 134 systems since the congressional debate on the Gulf War Jan. 10, with the largest being Buckeye Cablevision in Toledo, Ohio (118,000 subscribers). The network said it added 339,000 subscribers for C-SPAN II and 647,000 subscribers for its audio service.

NuStar, the cross-promotion service, has signed affiliations deals with Viacom Cable, Newhouse Broadcasting and Chambers Communications totaling 1.75 million subscribers. The new additions give the network 16 million subscribers.

Prime Sports Network in Minnesota has signed Nortel Cable (37,000 subscribers) to an affiliation deal, giving the network 130,000 subscribers in the Minneapolis area. WSB-TV Atlanta, owned by Cox Enterprises, is the latest broadcaster to agree to provide five-minute local segments for use on Headline News. WSB-TV began supplying Prime Cable in Atlanta (188,000 subscribers) with the news inserts last Monday, Feb. 18.

CTAM PPV STUDY READY FOR NEXT STEP

The Cable Television Administration and Marketing Society has completed the focus group portion of its PPV study, and although the final results won't be tabulated until May, the early results show that cost and technology are the major impediments for those who use PPV very little or those who have never purchased PPV. (CTAM is gathering focus group information for a larger market study of PPV later this spring.)

CTAM conducted 10 focus groups comprising heavy, medium and light cable users. The heavy users could justify any amount of viewing, said Bob Westerfield, director of PPV for CTAM. The lighter viewers and those who never used PPV acknowledged PPV was convenient but questioned whether it was worth the price, he said. Those people feared runaway costs and/or were intimidated by the technology, often reporting a bad previous experience in trying to order something on PPV. The light and never viewers also cited a lack of compelling programming, relating somewhat to PPV's place in the distribution window.

Westerfield said CTAM found that PPV users in its study tended either to be movie only or event only viewers, indicating PPV was developing two separate audiences. CTAM also found that visits to a video store tended to be more pass-by experiences today, as opposed to the planned visits in years past.

CTAM's next step is to conduct a larger market study based on the results of the focus groups and to run some market tests, hopefully by spring, said Westerfield.

Although there has been much discussion about changing the name of PPV, Westerfield said the emphasis of CTAM's study is not so much a name change "as much as positioning the product in a more positive way to the consumer."