



I've ever seen on commercial television. . . ." [The series] "is embarked on a revolutionary course in American TV. It could be the start of telling stories again, an art that cannot be learned quickly." *Marvin Kitman, Newsday.*

"The general production . . . is quite splendid . . . The visual 'values' are unusually rich . . . virtually all the details are accurate. . . . *Beacon Hill* can lay claim to a brilliant company of actors . . . lovely television." *John J. O'Connor, The New York Times.*

"The sequence is so heavily plotted, so focused on action rather than character and detail, that one suspects the producers are in danger of forgetting that the aim of the show is to present an authentic picture of a time, place, household. The danger inherent in the *Beacon Hill* project is a possibility that it will prove to be too high-brow for soap and sitcom fans, too lowbrow and tasteless for *Masterpiece Theater* fanciers." *Art Unger, The Christian Science Monitor.*

*Beacon Hill* "is a spectacular hit. The acting is uniformly excellent and the show is beautifully photographed." *Frank Judge, Detroit News.*

"The producers claim to have gone to wild expenses to buy up the proper furnishings and interiors for the 1920 New England rich. If so, the show isn't worthy of its props. The worst thing about it is the utter waste of such first-rate acting talents as George Rose and Beatrice Straight as the butler and housekeeper, and Stephen Elliott as Lassiter. The suspicion lingers that the real difference between the new show and its alleged model is that public television can afford to be honest; commercial network television has lost the meaning of the word from long disuse." *Frank Getlein, Washington Star.*

## 'Kotter' not so welcome

**Boston ABC affiliate turns down ghetto teacher sitcom citing cities present school problems**

The edgy school-busing situation in Boston has prompted WCVB-TV, the ABC affiliate there, to drop the prime-time sitcom *Welcome Back, Kotter* (Tuesday, 8:30-9 p.m., NYT), which deals with a

young ghetto-high school teacher and his wisecracking students.

"After a lot of soul-searching," explained Robert Bennett, the vice president and general manager of WCVB-TV, "we decided that a classroom series involving anything stronger than *Room 222* might be too explosive in light of all the problems our school system has been going through."

Mr. Bennett went on to say that he has no objection to the show itself, which he thinks is "very well-done," but "I had to exercise my judgment as a licensee."

*Kotter* will end up on WSKV-TV Boston, a UHF station owned by Storer. WCVB-TV will probably fill the vacant *Kotter* time slot with ITC's *Space 1999* from 8 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, a maneuver that would push *Happy Days* up a half-hour, to 7:30, according to Mr. Bennett.

## Same-game rule is out of bounds, say sports, broadcasters

**Following NBA petition, Kaiser, pro football, hockey, baseball also ask FCC to take another look at its cable sports-carriage order**

Broadcasters and professional sports groups asked the FCC last week to reconsider its sports carriage rules for cable. They say the rules, adopted earlier this summer (BROADCASTING, June 30), do not provide adequate siphoning protection. The new rule, the so-called "same-game rule," prohibits a cable system from importing a sports event into a 35-mile zone around the local station in a city that is blacked out for that particular game.

The National Hockey League said protection should not be limited to the zone of an individual station, but rather a larger zone around the entire market. It is not adequate to protect only a San Francisco broadcaster, for example, when in fact the game has an audience in the San Francisco-Oakland area, said NHL. The National Football League advocated a 75-mile zone.

NHL also claimed the notice period for the sports rights holder to notify cable systems of their coverage plans was unrealistic. The rules specify that notice must be given eight days prior to the calendar month during which the game occurs. That type of advance notice is impractical, NHL said, when it comes to the "uncertain nature" of play-off games. The NFL filed similar comments, suggesting that the FCC might dispense with the advance-notice provision.

The commissioner of baseball urged leeway up to 12-hours prior to an event for giving notice to cable operators. The 35-mile zone of protection is "arbitrary," said the commissioner, and should be recalculated to reflect realistically a sports team's actual drawing area.

Kaiser Broadcasting Co., licensee of five UHF independents, said the new

rules add a "new element of risk to an already difficult situation"—UHF viability. The rule overlooks the significant role independents play in broadcasting sports events, said Kaiser, noting that independent U's originate regular season baseball games for teams in three top-10 markets (Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia) and five of the top-22 markets. Additionally, U's provide hockey and basketball in seven markets including Houston, Kansas City, Mo., Sacramento, Calif., Cleveland, Boston, Philadelphia and Detroit. Unless broader restrictions are adopted, Kaiser said, UHF will suffer "significant competitive harm."

Kaiser urged the FCC to adopt a rule that prohibits distant signal importation into a market of any live professional or collegiate sport when carriage of that signal would overlap with the telecast of a sports event on the local station.

ABC faulted the 35-mile zone of protection, claiming it is smaller than the broadcast black-out area and would allow cable systems to bring in sports events to blacked-out homes. The commission has failed to come to grips with its fundamental responsibility to "foster and promote carriage of sports by free TV," said ABC.

The National Association of Broadcasters had earlier filed a petition for reconsideration (BROADCASTING, Aug. 25).

## Research, new ideas reshape ABC's 'Sundae' to 'World of Adventure'

ABC Owned Television Stations faced a dilemma this year: The group had committed itself two years ago to produce a quality children's series, and to keep it on the air in prime-access time. But it had to admit that its entry, *Rainbow Sundae*, had failed to light up the ratings firmament.

Determined to honor its commitment, the division tapped McHugh & Hoffman, McLean, Va., for guidance. In turn, M & H asked R.H. Bruskin & Associates, New Brunswick, N.J., to conduct a study among New York children, ages 6 to 11, to find out what they liked and disliked about *Rainbow Sundae*, which began in the fall of 1973.

Out of the study came a critique from McHugh & Hoffman suggesting a new program concept. Phil Boyer, vice president of programming for the ABC Owned TV Stations, last week said that the access children's series starting this fall will have a new title, *World of Adventure*, and will include elements that will appeal to all family members, rather than the 6-to-11 audience only.

"We found out that at 7:30 p.m. the channel doesn't belong only to the younger children, but that older children and the parents exert some authority," Mr. Boyer commented.

The new series will differ from *Rainbow Sundae* in several respects (based on conclusions from the study): each half-hour