

Sherry Woods

TV / Radio Editor

Channel 6 pegs rating hopes on MTM, Carol Burnett sandwich

Tinkering with program schedules to pick up sagging ratings is a common enough habit among television executives. Networks bounce shows around to different time periods, cancel obvious bombs, throw in mini-series for viewer sampling and use the strongest shows around which to build a better line-up. Local stations follow a similar pattern.

While all of this happens on a regular basis, one of the more unusual ploys yet to be tried is taking place beginning this week on Channel 6. "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," which has been the one bit of gold in a season of tin for the local independent station, has been scheduled for two airings nightly — at 6 p.m. and again at 7.

While other shows, such as "Hogan's Heroes," have been aired in back-to-back half-hours in the past, I don't recall ever seeing a series scheduled in quite this sort of sandwich pattern. In this case "The Carol Burnett Show" is providing the filling between the two MTM episodes.

The explanation for this particular bit of packaging is clear enough, if you look at Channel 6's ratings story in the late afternoon and early evening.

According to the February ratings survey, the assortment of syndicated reruns airing between 4:30 and 6 p.m. had a 5 rating and 13 per cent share of the audience and although its total audience was not particularly high, it outdistanced "The Dinah Shore Show" among women 18 to 49.

At 6 p.m. with more people watching TV, "Emergency" pulled a 6 rating, but only 10 per cent of the audience, losing out to all of the local newscasts.

Then, at 7, along came "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" with its solid enough 9 rating and 16 per cent share. Not only did that top the ABC Evening News in terms of rating and share, but it represented a larger audience among men and women 18 to 49 than either the ABC or NBC newscasts and more women 18 to 49 than the CBS Evening News, which airs a half-hour earlier.

Clearly Channel 6 didn't want to drop the series at 7. In order to try it against local news at 6 o'clock. It opted, instead, to try it in both places. That's a real boon for the diehard MTM fans. It remains to be seen



Woods

whether it'll be a boon for Channel 6 as well.

★ ★ ★

BITS 'N PIECES — Advertising is not always 99 and 44/100 per cent pure, but the folks who created the cover for the paperback book, "To Kill a Cop," really stretched things. The cover describes the NBC-TV film, based on the book, as a big hit. Starring Joe Don Baker and Louis Gossett Jr., "To Kill a Cop" may well turn out to have been a hit. Unfortunately, for those who prefer to wait until the returns are in, the book was on the newsstands long before the movie aired last Monday and Tuesday.

Two Channel 6 news staffers — Don Adams and Wendy Feinberg — are moving over to Channel 7. For Adams, a producer, it marks a return to producing WKBT's 11 p.m. newscast, which he had handled for seven years before switching to Channel 6. Feinberg, who will work with Roger Burnham's public affairs unit, has been an associate producer of Channel 6's 10 o'clock news and has worked with "To the Point."

Also coming into the Channel 7 shop, as an assistant news producer, is Martha Cotton. She's coming here from KOMU in Missouri.

On the departure side of the ledger at Channel 7, the station just lost one of its top producers, Stan Matthews. Matthews has left to produce short features to be used as fillers at the end of short movies for a Dallas TV station.

WNWS, only on the air a couple of weeks, has already made one schedule change. Dr. Allen Blum, whose "Doctor Show" is a regular 9 a.m. to noon Sunday feature on the new news and talk station, has been given an hour-long spot during the week as well. The 9 a.m. block has been turned over to Blum for a few weeks for a health series. "If South Florida is one thing it is hypochondriacal," station executive Richard Casper explained. In a discussion last week about cancer during the hour, a West Palm Beach caller reported his symptoms and asked if they automatically meant he had cancer. Reassured that wasn't the only possible cause of the symptoms, the man may well have been willing to go on to see his own doctor. "We may literally have saved that man's life," Casper enthused. A few such positive results from the series make it all worthwhile, he said.

TV Key Mailbag

Steven H. Scheuer

Writer is starry-eyed over Kristy McNichol

Q: I'm writing for my brother who is too shy. He recently saw Kristy McNichol on the "Mike Douglas Show" and fell in love. Where can I get in touch with her to tell her. He hasn't been himself since he saw her. — W.A., Brooklyn, N.Y.

A: You may write Kristy c/o the series "Family," 20th Century-Fox Studios, West Pico Blvd., Century City, Calif.

Q: Is Richard Roundtree still in the acting business? He was on a few years ago with "Sledge"

ian accent? — L.S., Philadelphia, Pa.

A: Harrington is an excellent mimic and does accents superbly. He used to appear on "The Tonight Show" as a character named Guido Panzini, and many people thought that was his real name.

Q: "Operation Petticoat" is great and I don't care if I'm the only one who thinks so. — F.S., Durham, N.C.

A: You're not the only one... there are probably a few other fans of the series.

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