

**fourth quarter ratings, NBC's *Today* and ABC's *Good Morning, America* tied in ratings with 5/23.** During quarter, *Today* was up m 4.5/21 during fourth quarter 1984, *GMA* was same, and *CBS Morning News* was down from 3.4/16, at 3.1/14. *Today* ended after with three consecutive weekly wins in December. During week of Dec. 23-27, *Today* had its largest margin of victory with /24, versus 4.2/20 for *GMA*.

**Louisiana state court of appeals** has overturned lower court decision and ruled that **Louisiana Public Service Commission does not have authority to regulate pole attachment agreements and rates** in state. IC had claimed jurisdiction in 1978, preempting regulation by IC, and, two years later, it adopted formula for calculating pole attachment rates that resulted in "substantially higher" rates than IC formula did. PSC has power only to regulate "services" of utilities—"electricity, telephone service, etc., whatever the case may be," appeals court said.

**Smith Burke & Azzam, Baltimore**, has created what it calls **"interrupted" 30-second television commercial for Playboy magazine** for airing in late January and in February on stations in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Barry Smith, president of agency, told news conference in New York last Friday (Jan. 10) that commercial one 30-second spot of two different 15-second parts interrupted unrelated advertiser whose message will be no longer than 30 seconds. He said stations have approved concept but are now reviewing two commercials for content. He explained that first part of commercial is "teaser," building up suspense for second part. Smith said stations believe approach is new.

FCC has granted **Financial Satellite Corp.** conditional authorization **private international satellite system.** According to FCC, Financial may begin construction when it satisfies commission's financial requirements.

**Step toward possible reunification of New York-based National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and Los Angeles-based Academy of Television Arts and Sciences** took place last Wednesday (Jan. 8) with meeting of NATAS Chairman Richard Rector and NATAS President Rich Frank at latter organization's headquarters North Hollywood. They issued joint statement terming session "productive" and promising more negotiations in future, probably within month.

**Chase, confidential assistant to NAB President Eddie Fritts, is retiring,** effective Feb. 28. Chase joined NAB in 1970 and moved to president's office in 1981.

**National Association of Broadcasters** announced last week **winners first round of elections to its radio and television boards.** Second round of balloting begins in February with results to be announced March. Incumbents re-elected to radio board were: William Shaughnessy, WVOX(AM)-WRTN(FM) New Rochelle, N.Y., district 2 (New York and New Jersey); William Rollins, WEGO(AM)-WPEG-FM Concord, N.C., district 6 (North Carolina and South Carolina); John Vid, KFSS(AM)-KXIO-FM Joplin, Mo., district 12 (Missouri and Kansas); Ray Lockhart, KOGA-AM-FM Ogallala, Neb., district 16 (Colorado and Nebraska), and Robert Fox, KVEN(AM)-KHAY-FM Ventura, Calif., district 24 (southern California, Hawaii, Guam and American Samoa). Newly elected radio directors: William Sanders, KICD-FM Spencer, Iowa, district 14 (Iowa and Wisconsin) and James Fox, KWIK(AM) KPKY-FM Pocatello, Idaho, district 20 (Montana, Idaho and Wyoming). Participating in radio runoff: district 4 (Delaware, D.C., Maryland and Virginia): John Cole III, WHLF(AM)-CFM South Boston, Va., and incumbent J. William Poole, WFLS-FM Fredericksburg, Va.; district 8 (Louisiana and Mississippi): Ray Karst, KDBS(AM)-KRRV(FM) Alexandria, La., and incumbent Ray Idi, KTIB(AM)-KHOM-FM; district 10 (Indiana): Charles A. Blake, WJZ(AM)-WKY-FM Evansville, Ind., and Jeffrey H. Smulyan, WENS-FM Indianapolis; district 18 (southern Texas): Lowry Mays, KAJA(AM)-KAJA-FM San Antonio, and Dick Osburn KYKS-FM Lusk, WY; district 22 (Arizona, Nevada, Utah and New Mexico): Joe

Crystall, KGVY(AM) Greenvalley, Ariz., and Ronald Sack, KNMQ Santa Fe, N.M. There are 12 nominees for TV board, of which top six will be declared winners: Steven Beard Jr., KBVO-TV Austin, Tex.; Carolyn S. Chambers, KEZI-TV Eugene, Ore.; Gary R. Chapman, Freedom Newspapers, East Providence, R.I.; Jerry P. Colvin, WUHQ-TV Battle Creek, Mich.; William Duhamel, KOTA-TV Rapid City, S.D.; Milton D. Friedland, WICS-TV Springfield, Ill.; Tom Goodgame, WBZ-TV Boston; Benjamin D. McKeel, Nationwide Communications, Columbus, Ohio; incumbent Harold Protter, WNOL-TV New Orleans; Ellis Shook, KOLR-TV Springfield, Mo.; Patricia Smullin, KOB-TV Medford, Ore., and incumbent Greg Stone, WSOC-TV Charlotte, N.C.

**Family affair.** The Louisville, Ky., media holdings of the Bingham family, including Louisville stations WHAS-AM-TV and WAMZ(FM), and the Louisville Courier-Journal and Louisville Times, are for sale. The properties have been placed with Goldman Sachs, and are valued at between \$450 million and \$500 million. Television market analysts estimate that WHAS-TV is worth a minimum of \$60 million and could go for as much as \$75 million or \$80 million in a heated bidding contest. It is estimated by one sales executive with knowledge of the market that the station commands about one-third of the \$45-million Louisville TV market, but may be "a little bit of an underachiever on the profit-margin side," doing perhaps 38%, compared to 40% or 45% it might do in other hands. According to an estimate by Henry Ansbacher Inc., representing Sallie Bingham, daughter of Barry Bingham Sr., family patriarch and controlling shareholder of the properties, the estimated operating revenue of the TV and radio stations combined in 1985 was \$24.4 million with operating income of \$7.9 million. Also, observers noted, with the likelihood that the properties will go to separate buyers, rates will probably increase, expanding the dollar volume of the market somewhat. A CBS affiliate, WHAS-TV was tied for first in the market last November with NBC affiliate WAVE-TV, both catching an overall 29 share, according to Nielsen. WHAS-TV, however, was the dominant news station commanding a minimum eight point share lead at 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. As for the radio properties, station broker Ted Hepburn said they should command a minimum \$10 million but probably not more than \$15 million. Others agreed, suggesting a \$15-million range was close. The two stations dominate the Louisville radio market, being the only two with double-digit 12-plus metro shares in the fall 1985 ratings period, according to Arbitron. Number-one ranked WHAS(AM), a 50,000-watt clear channel, averaged a 15.3 share, and WAMZ, the only Class C station in the market, averaged an 11.4. The decision by Barry Bingham Sr. to sell was apparently his final solution to squabbling among his children, Barry Jr., Sallie and Eleanor, as to the future direction of the company. It was at the direction of Barry Jr., editor and publisher of the Courier-Journal and Times newspapers and vice chairman of WHAS Inc., that his two sisters, mother, Mary, and sister-in-law, Joan, were removed from the parent company's board a year ago, citing the need for more "professional" corporate guidance. Sallie responded by deciding to sell her interest, but over the past year, has been unable to come to an agreement with the rest of the family as to the value of her interest. The decision by Barry Sr. to sell the family's entire holdings came last Wednesday (Jan. 8). In a statement, he called it his "unwelcome duty" to announce the sale, citing "divergent interests" of his children. In response, Barry Jr. resigned, characterizing the decision to sell as a "betrayal" by his family. "Had I thought, in the early 1960's, that my career would be abbreviated by my parents in this summary way, I would have dedicated my life's work to other enterprises," said the 52-year-old son. Goldman Sachs executives handling the Bingham properties declined to say who potential buyers might be, although New York Times Co. Vice Chairman Sydney Gruson was quoted in the Times last week saying that Goldman had approached the company and that "we are interested in taking a look at the figures."