

NEW YORK'S MOST COMPLETE TV COVERAGE

INNER TUBE

McPherrin Up for Grabs

A tug of war is being waged over WABC/Ch. 7 "Eyewitness News" sportscaster **Corey McPherrin** (photo). His contract with the ABC-owned station expires this summer, and while his agent is negotiating a new contract, word is that WBBM, the CBS-owned station in



Chicago, is also hot to sign him. WBBM's new general manager is **Bill Applegate**, former WABC news director, and it's no secret that McPherrin is one of his favorites. McPherrin, who appears on the 6 and 11 p.m. newscasts, has had his ups and downs since joining Ch. 7 in November of 1984, and twice has come this close to exiting. Ch. 7's weekend sportscaster, **Scott**

Clark, who is filling in this week for the vacationing McPherrin, is the odds-on favorite to replace McPherrin if the job opens up. Before McPherrin arrived from Atlanta, there had been something of a revolving door of sportscasters at Ch. 7. Among the departees in the last decade or so: **Warner Wolf, Eli Zaret, Jerry Azar, Bruce King, Richie Powers, Ted Dawson, Paul Guanzon** (now with WINS-Radio), **Mike Barry** and **Dan Lovett**.
— **George Maksian**

Hope Doggin' It, Not Hosting

Last week, ABC issued a press release announcing that **Bob Hope** — who today turns a nice, round 88 — was going to co-host an ABC special called "A Salute to America's Pets," which will air June 13 from 8-9 p.m. The special will air all right, but Hope, who is under exclusive contract for another year to NBC, is not going to co-host. Instead, he'll appear in a cameo appearance with his two white German shepherds. His wife, Dolores, also will appear in a separate segment with her two poodles. The ABC release "is a gross exaggeration," an NBC spokesman said yesterday. "Hope is doing a brief segment on the show as a favor to his daughter, who is one of the producers of the special. He definitely will not be a co-host." A spokesman for Hope's production company, which is producing the show, admitted that the ABC release "is inaccurate." "Last week, it was true that Hope was co-hosting the show," he said. "This week, it's not."
— **G.M.**

Cassidy Succumbs to AIDS

In case you missed it over the holiday weekend, **Tom Cassidy**, the Cable News Network business anchorman who went public on CNN and in a series of Ch. 2 reports about his battle with AIDS, died Sunday. He was 41. Cassidy joined CNN's business department as an anchorman and reporter in 1981. The following year he founded the network's "Pinnacle" program, a weekend show that profiled business leaders. He was diagnosed with AIDS in 1987. He told TV viewers about his illness last March. "Tom was one of the country's best business journalists and his courage and dignity were inspirational to all of us fortunate enough to have known him," **Lou Dobbs**, vice president and managing editor of CNN Business News, said in a statement. CNN on Saturday, 6:30 p.m. (with a repeat at 1:30 a.m.), will repeat Cassidy's last on-air interview, which took place March 30.
— **Jeff Weingrad**

Dot's All . . .

CNBC's "McLaughlin," tonight at 7, features an interview with "Saturday Night Live" star **Dana Carvey**, who has lampooned host **John McLaughlin** on "SNL," in a most bombastic way. At 8 o'clock on CNBC, **Phil Donahue** and **Vladimir Pozner** co-host a 90-minute "Talk Live" session about the media. Guests include **Geraldo Rivera**, Entertainment Weekly TV critic **Ken Tucker** and "NBC Nightly News" executive producer **Steve Friedman**. CNBC, which just bought out the Financial News Network, has taken the FNN spot on many cable systems, including, at various times, Manhattan Cable and Paragon. . . . Rocky vs. Rocky (and Stallone's nowhere to be found): Tonight at 8, CBS runs an episode from the old Rocky & Bullwinkle series, while at the same time WLIW/Ch. 21 repeats the PBS special about the animated squirrel and his moose friend, "Of Moose and Men." . . . **Bob Costas** guest tonight and tomorrow on "Later" (NBC, 1:30 a.m.) is '60s LSD guru **Tim Leary**.
— **J.W.**

Robin Williams yaks & yuks

David Frost tries to get serious with comic/actor

INTERVIEWING MERCURIAL Robin Williams is like trying to catch lightning in a bottle.

But it doesn't seem to faze the serious-sounding David Frost, who, with large horn-rimmed glasses, is in amusing contrast to his hyper subject tonight on PBS' "Talking With David Frost" (Ch. 13, 8 p.m.). Determined to find out what makes this funnyman/actor tick, Frost probes and plunges into Williams' psyche as if he were interviewing a Richard Nixon or Margaret Thatcher.

Williams, who just prior to the interview received an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, the Juilliard School, appears uneasy when forced to be serious. His brilliant insights come through quick comedy flashes that fortunately season an otherwise belabored hour. He also offers numerous impersonations, even one of Frost.

Williams is serious one minute, funny the next (he even jumps up and hugs Frost at one point), and one detects a sensitive, shy man beneath all the buffoonery. He claims he almost had a nervous breakdown adjusting to New York City when he arrived in 1973 to attend Juilliard, where he studied under the late

John Houseman.

Quoting Houseman, Williams says: "The theater needs you; you must become soldiers in the army of the theater" . . . And the next week we saw him selling Volvos."

The actor, who's currently in production on "Hook," the Peter Pan film, touches several bases, including his parents. He calls his mother a "Christian Dior Scientist"; his father, he says, "advised him to have a backup profession, like welding." Of his father, he touchingly admits: "Just before he died, I got to know who he was . . . and that's been influencing my recent work. It just frees you up and opens up whole areas."

Williams is especially sensitive to criticism directed at his wife, Marsha, who has been accused of breaking up his previous marriage. "Branded," is the way he describes it. Says he: "This woman is magnificent. Give her her due. Acknowledge her for who she is."

The 38-year-old Williams, who has starred in recent years in "Good Morning, Vietnam," "Dead Po-



LIFTING THE COMEDIC MASK: Robin Williams

ets Society" and "Awakenings," describes his soaring popularity as "like being taken from the bottom of Death Valley to the top of the Empire State Building in two seconds. It's totally disorienting."

As one might expect, the interview, which lingers too long on a single subject (his parents, for instance) works best when Williams is doing different characters, including Vice President Dan Quayle (who else?), E.T., and Sen. Jesse Helms, among others. Improvisation, Williams says, "is total freedom."

Williams also talks about his earlier experience with drugs. He says it was "an escape from people." And, he concedes, "sometimes it was the fear of failure . . . the fear that this was going to fade one day."

Moyers eyes 'Home Front' amid Gulf War

THE HOME FRONT," with Bill Moyers, tonight at 9 on Ch. 13, is a cleverly conceived, significant hour that examines what was happening in America during the Persian Gulf War.

The voices of President Bush and Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, along with various radio reports, are woven throughout the hour as scenes unfold showing people on unemployment lines, sleeping in streets, murdered, killed in car accidents and, in general, struggling with the current recession.

Moyers' message: A battle was raging at home and the casualty count among citizens was much higher in the U.S. than in the Gulf.

For example, in Morris High School in The Bronx, Gen. Colin Powell's alma mater, a boy was shot while examining a friend's gun the day

after the general visited on April 15.

While the war didn't create poverty, crime and unemployment, Moyers' purpose for using the war as a counterpoint is to underscore the country's ability to make resources available in an emergency like war while government funds for libraries, hospitals, psychiatric centers, schools, etc., are being seriously cut back.

Proposed state and city budget cuts threaten educational efforts, community programs and aid for the homeless, now estimated to total between one and three million people in the U.S.

Moyers interviews many people, including a New Jersey couple in their 50s who, after years of employment, lost their jobs. They are now fearful because the bank and mortgage company are threatening foreclosure on their house.

— **Kay Gardella**

'48 Hours' in crime world misses mark

TONIGHT'S "48 Hours" on CBS (10 p.m.) takes a scattershot approach to its topic. It purports to go behind the curtain of organized crime, but what's shown is nothing new, including a visit with a born-again mobster.

Michael **Franzese**, identified by CBS correspondent Bernard Goldberg as a one-time captain in the Colombo crime family, is seen praying in church and sitting with his wife in their yard as he talks about why he dropped out of the mob (who

cares?). The irony is that he's shown planning a book about his life, which can mean only one thing — another mob movie coming up, and the ex-gangster, who made millions on crime, gets richer.

The program also includes an interview with mob informer Henry Hill and segments on John Gotti — the "Teflon Don" — and on mob-controlled companies that illegally dump toxic wastes. Overall, the hour purports to be more than it really is.

— **Kay Gardella**