

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER®

a BPI publication

65th year

December 15-17, 1995

\$1.25 (California) \$1.75 (Elsewhere)

Imagine lands at Uni again

Critics Circle finds 'Vegas,' Cage glittering

By Lea Saslav

NEW YORK — MGM/UA's "Leaving Las Vegas" was voted best film of 1995 by the New York Film Critics Circle on Thursday, with Nicolas Cage winning best actor honors for his portrayal of a self-destructive alcoholic in the film. It was the second award in two days for Cage, who a day earlier was honored by the National Board of Review.

"Sense and Sensibility's" Ang Lee also won for the second day in a row, capturing best director honors for his work on the Jane Austen adaptation. Lee also was

See **CIRCLE** on page 41

Thurman near Niccol's Col pic

By Stephen Galloway

Five months after winning a bidding war for an untitled, futuristic script by "The Truman Show" writer Andrew Niccol, Columbia Pictures is close to wrapping a deal for Uma Thurman and Ethan Hawke to star in the film, sources said Thursday.

See **THURMAN** on page 41

Media4 square on pilots, clients

By Lisa de Moraes

Ninety days after its formation, production-management company MediaFour, under partners Scott Siegler, Steve Sauer, Pam Prince and Don DeMesquita, is developing programming for three networks. It has also signed

See **MEDIAFOUR** on page 42

First-look deal covers 6 years

By Stephen Galloway

In the wake of the phenomenal success of "Apollo 13," Imagine Entertainment has signed a new first-look deal with Universal Pictures that will cover the next six years.

At the same time, Imagine co-CEO Ron Howard's services as a director will now be exclusive to Universal for that period, with the exception of one film that has yet

to be determined. "He has one 'out' during the six years to direct another film," Imagine co-CEO Brian Grazer said Thursday. That does not include Howard's work on "Ransom," now in preproduction at Touchstone Pictures with Mel Gibson starring.

Grazer noted the agreement technically dates from October and replaces a pre-existing first-

See **IMAGINE** on page 38



Wide World

NBC CEO Robert Wright, at podium, and Microsoft chairman Bill Gates, via video from Hong Kong, as they bowed MSNBC news net.

Microsoft paying NBC \$220 mil in news pact

By Stephen Battaglio

NEW YORK — MSNBC, a cable news network that will give viewers 24-hour news coverage on television and text and real time video over their computers, was unveiled Thursday by NBC and Microsoft Corp. But the \$400 million joint venture by the two companies was met with polite praise and a lack of commitment from cable operators.

Leading software maker Microsoft will pay NBC \$220 million for a 50% stake in America's Talking, the cable channel the network launched 18 months ago. The news-talk channel will be converted to MSNBC by mid-1996, putting the service in 20 million homes, a staggering launch for any new cable network.

The network also has commit-

See **MICROSOFT** on page 38

'Friends' show up early for WB syndie party

By Steve Brennan

Marking a milestone for the syndication business, Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution has carved out a major clearance deal for NBC's hit sitcom "Friends" for its off-network rollout three years from now in fall 1998.

Adding fuel to the fire for "Friends" is the pending sunset of the Prime Time Access Rule, which prompted an early run at the show by several Big Three network affiliates looking for a blue-chip sitcom to play in access. PTAR prevented affiliates in top 50 markets from airing off-network shows in the primetime access slot.

However, the principal deal

See **"FRIENDS"** on page 41

Tribeca 'Tale,' 'Whoopi' at Fox

By Lisa de Moraes

Tribeca Prods., under founders Robert De Niro and Jane Rosenthal, is developing a drama series for Fox based on Tribeca's successful small-release feature "A Bronx Tale" as well as a half-hour series with Whoopi Goldberg.

The projects, among several in the works at the company, also include a foray into children's specials programming.

See **TRIBECA** on page 40

WHAT'S INSIDE

China golden for Globes3
Leoni in DreamWorks pic3
Movies hit with low blow.....8

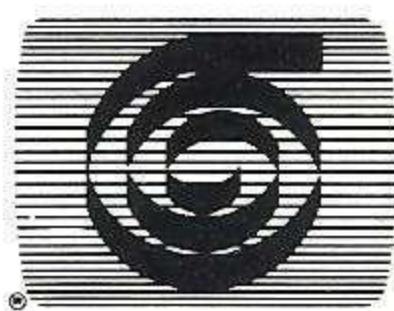


FOTO-KEM/FOTO-TRONICS

MOTION PICTURE FILM & VIDEOTAPE LABORATORY 2800 W. OLIVE AVE., BURBANK, CALIFORNIA (818) 846-3101