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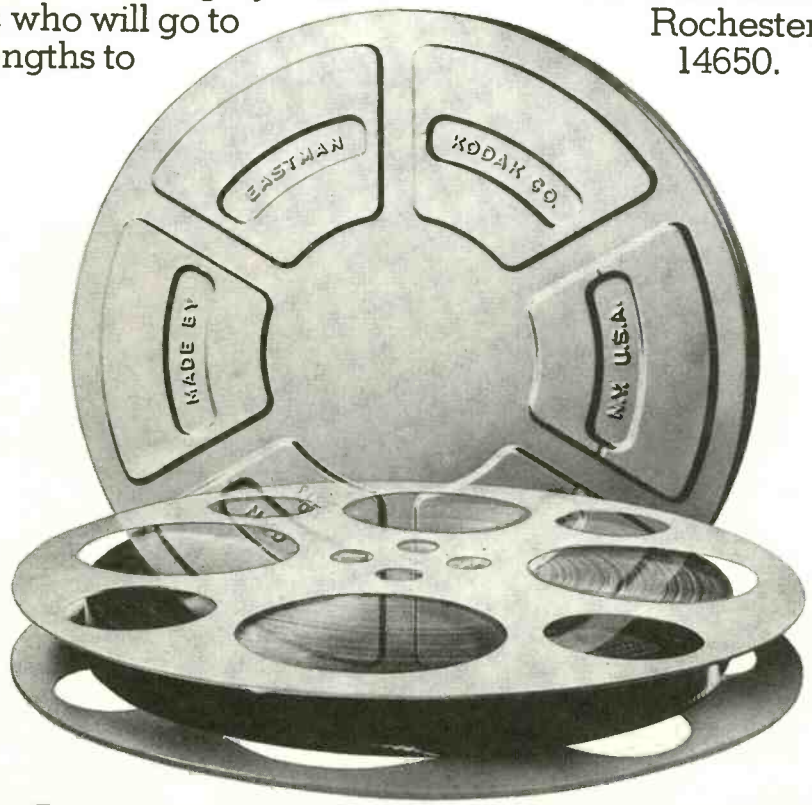

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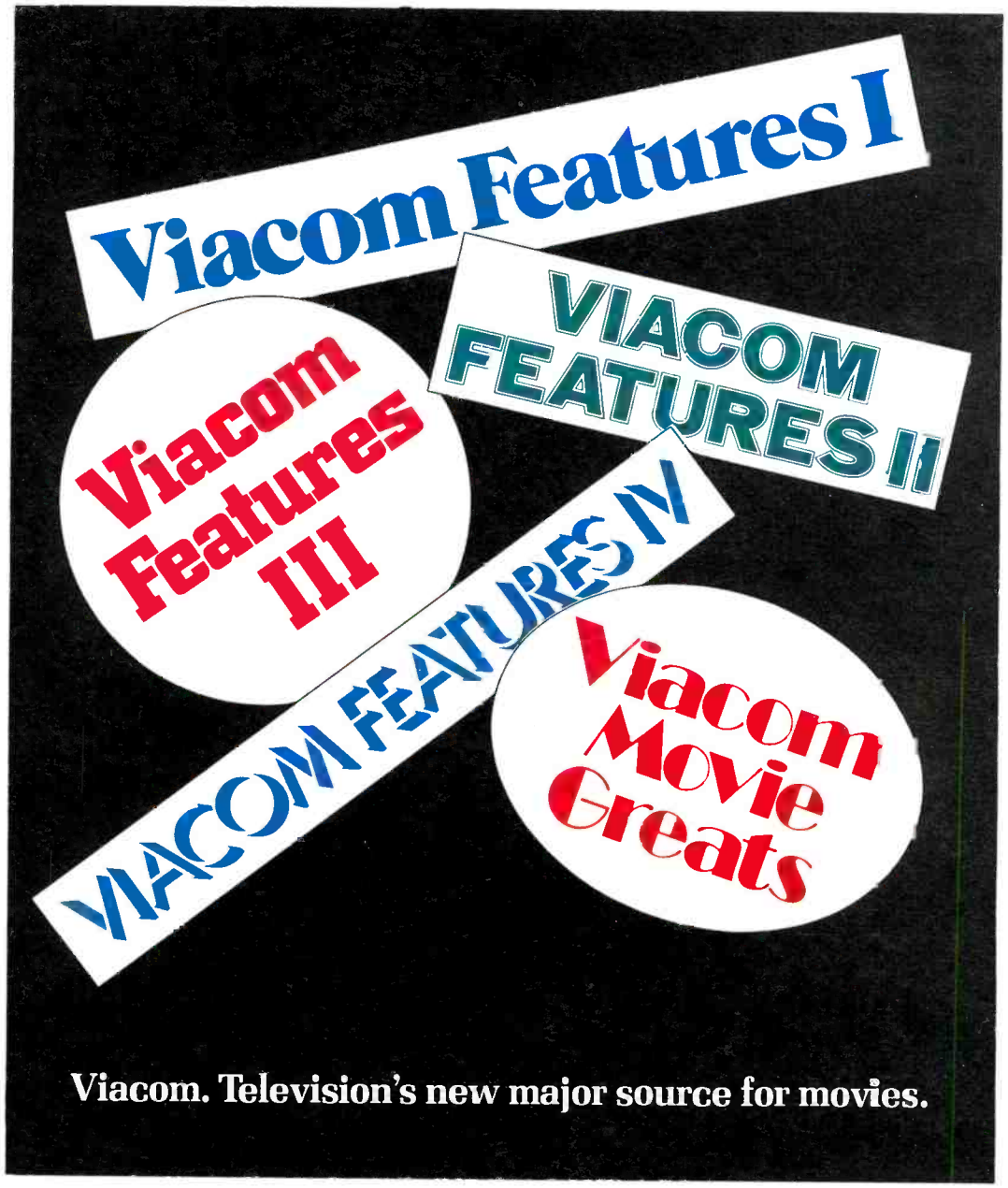
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Public Television Programming and the Future: A Radical Approach

By RICHARD O. MOORE

> The words have been cited over and over again:
> "Noncommercial television should address itself to the ideal of excellence, not the idea of acceptability—which is what keeps commercial television from climbing the staircase. I think television should be the visual counterpart of the literary essay, should arouse our dreams, satisfy our hunger for beauty, take us on journeys, enable us to participate in events, present great drama and music, explore the sea and the sky and the woods and the hills. It should be our Lyceum, our Chautauqua, our Minsky's, and our Camelot. It should restate and clarify the social dilemma and the political pickle. Once in a while it does, and you get a quick glimpse of its potential"—*E. B. White, in a letter to the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television.*

Mr. White's vision is broad-scale. It is also a revolutionary vision, in that it is addressed to the proper uses of television. It describes a potential service for *all* of the American people, and it implies a *primary* rather than a *supplementary* public service television system. It recognizes the importance of popular as well as more elitist programming. In short, Mr. White states the purpose of a television service as a national sociocultural instrument rather than as a corporate enterprise on behalf of stockholders. Regrettably, what is happening today in public television makes White's vision an improbable dream.

The question to be considered here is whether public television can be expected to play a measurably more significant role in our national life in the 1980s than it does today. Many people within the public television establishment tend to think that the answer depends primarily on whether greater federal funding is made available for station operations and programming under a decentralized system. They assume that if only public television were to become financially secure, the programming generated by the system would not only be good for all of us, but good also in the sense of attracting the attention and support of the American people.

I disagree. In my opinion, the future development of public television is directly related almost solely to its ability and willingness to serve a *national, mass audience*—that is, to provide programming that will attract and keep viewers in mass numbers. Furthermore, the size of that audience and the quality of that programming depend *not* on federal funds, but on two variables only: (1) the nature of the institutional structures that generate public television, and (2) public television's definition of its role with respect to its audience.

A History of Neglect and False Priorities

The history of public television's domestic production over the past 20 years reveals that the ostensible priority of good programming has been illusory. Apart from the predictable and dreary disputes over "eastern liberal bias" or, if you prefer, "ideological plugola" and "elitist gossip," noncommercial television has seldom taken the subject of programming seriously. What *is* taken seriously is the issue of control and participation in the hierarchy that makes the programming decisions. And even in these disputes, the issue is never really programming and audiences, but rather the distribution of available monies for the purposes of institutional survival.

As noncommercial television approaches the first quarter century of its existence, it is still making messianic promises and then defaulting on delivery, while the true believers continue to battle over who is to control the priestly hierarchy. Public television has even developed its own Pharisaic class that pretends to divine the true intent of the Carnegie Commission Report and the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 or the latest press release or memorandum from the Ford Foundation and the CPB Board of Directors. The summa of this new scholasticism is to be found in the unwieldy but wholly consistent computer logic of the Station Program Cooperative. Noncommercial television has built a system but has failed to produce the great awakening that its adherents continue to promise.

In the beginning, there was a national production agency (NET) funded by the Ford Foundation. NET had no production facilities and no assured access to noncommercial stations. Although the actual history of broadcasting in the United States and elsewhere in the world has been one of centralization and networking, United States broadcast law underlines the responsibility of the individual licensee; that is, the local station. As a result, the stations very quickly began to realize the power of "the switch." Even though NET programs were offered "free" to the stations, the programs remained on the shelf unless the stations chose to accept and broadcast them.

A battle ensued between NET and the stations, and although the dispute was couched in the language of licensee responsibility, the real issue was not programming but money. If a program is meaningless without being broadcast, should not the first priority be economic assistance to the stations? Would it not be better if the stations were given the money to produce programs which they could then exchange with other stations?

From the moment the stations voiced this argument, NET's days as an independent and primary production and distribution agency were numbered. The question of how to attract the best talent and produce programs in an optimum cost-effective manner became merely a masquerade for the real issue of station survival and system building.

The Carnegie Commission on Educational Television was a direct outgrowth of this first struggle for power and money in what was soon to be called public television. The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 and the creation of CPB and PBS represented the reformation of educational television based on the principles of decentralization. A collective expression of these principles, the Station Program Cooperative, was next in the chronology. And now a new battle seems to be brewing between CPB, PBS, and a third force represented by the larger producing stations.

The struggle is the old one for the control and distribution of monies. The fear is the same old fear that the ghost of NET, as an independent production agency devoted primarily to programming, may return under a new set of initials. The one heresy that public television cannot tolerate is the emergence of a strong individual or group with the resources to generate imaginative and popular programming, free of the extraordinarily dense filtering system represented by the sum of stations.*

A System That Guarantees the Second Rate

The development of new programming is always the most frustrating problem faced by a broadcast system, commercial or noncommercial. There is simply no set formula for a successful program. Historically, excellence in television programming has been associated with strong leadership in highly centralized organizations. Only such organizations seem capable of establishing an environment in which individual judgment and

*The Children's Television Workshop represented a tolerable heresy, in that it began by tapping funds hitherto unavailable to most stations and then giving away a much needed and popular product. However, now that a substantial proportion of CTW's costs have been shifted to the stations—plus the fact that the organization is branching out into other than children's programming and is competing for foundation support, corporate underwriting, and CPB funds—CTW may well become the new principal heretic within a system based on decentralization, localism, and majority rule programming.

creativity can flourish. Television programming is always the result of teamwork, of course, but the generation and execution of an outstanding program concept is usually the work of an exceptional individual.

Public television has devised a system wherein the power rests with a collection of institutions and boards. It is a system that guarantees the second-rate in the name of localism and system survival, and it does so while serving, with our tax dollars, an inexcusably small percentage of the American people.

Programming decisions tend to be made either wholly on an economic basis, in order to fill out the schedule, or on the "safe" basis of striving to create new versions of last year's "standards." The idea of innovation and the breaking of new ground—not in the narrow experimental sense, but in terms of all the objectives set forth in E. B. White's statement—is not even a priority. With 50 percent and possibly more of CPB's funds "passed through" directly to individual stations, the financial condition of each station becomes the determining factor in what passes for program planning and decision making in public broadcasting.

At the root of the problem is the policy throughout public broadcasting of lumping local broadcast operations and program production into the same institutional package. Among other things, this means that program production budgets must reflect the overhead factor for the whole institution. As a result, the budgets tend to be unnecessarily high (the overhead frequently approaches 40 percent of actual costs). One of the early arguments in favor of contracting with local broadcast stations to produce national programs was that it would enable stations to increase staff and facilities and to attract talented people. Basically this attitude remains dominant today, except that stations now compete with each other for production contracts as a means of maintaining existing staff and covering overhead. It is not surprising that somewhere in this shuffle, programming objectives get lost!

It is a painful dilemma for which there is no simple resolution. Current policy in public broadcasting, in FCC regulation, and in forthcoming legislation stresses decentralization, localism, and station-based production. However, this approach is demonstrably more wasteful and, at the same time, woefully inhibiting with respect to innovation and risk-taking in programming. Public broadcasting will continue to be dominated by political rather than programming interests so long as the "integrity" of public broadcasting is identified with a system in which the collectivity of the bureaucracies, as represented by the sum of the licensees, has the controlling voice in national programming policy.

The subsidization of local operations in the name of programming is also, in my view, a self-defeating policy. Granted that without this policy on the part of the Ford Foundation and CPB, the development of public broadcasting might have proceeded at a much slower pace. However, it

can also be argued that if the monies spent on station development and "survival" had been invested instead in programming that was effectively competitive with commercial stations, we would be much nearer to the goal of a public service television system consistent with the "ideal of excellence" described by E. B. White.

I am convinced that public television can hope to develop into a mature and stable broadcast system only by offering a product that the U. S. television audience will watch, applaud and then support through subscriptions or contributions to their local station.

A New Role for Public Broadcasting

I propose that public television, as a model for our efforts at the improvement and refinement of television *per se*, can become the *dominant system of broadcasting in the United States in the 1980s, superseding both commercial and the presently financed public television system.* This is a fairly bold statement considering the present state of affairs. But it could be an accurate prognostication if public television proves willing to redefine itself with respect to the changes taking place in the United States as a whole.

Television is a function of the society as a whole; it changes as the society changes. Predicting the state of this nation, even over a five-year span, takes a kind of clairvoyance that no one has as yet reliably demonstrated. Nor can we be any more certain about what kinds of television programs will be broadcast in the next decade, or how the electronic media will be incorporated into our lives. It is nevertheless a certainty that the nature and quality of television will change in the next few years, and one does not have to be a "futurist" to recognize some of the fundamental technological and social changes evolving in our post-industrial society.

We can reasonably presume, for one thing, that we have come to the end of the "economy of abundance" based on increasing production and increasing consumption of materials and energy sources. It also seems reasonable to say, then, that as the society continues to shift from an energy-exploiting, producer-oriented system to an energy-scarce, consumer-oriented one, commercial television will become less viable. Commercial television, whose priority is—and has to be—profit-making, depends upon expanding industrial production and extensive consumption of products and services. It can not and will not see itself primarily as a service dedicated first to the needs of its audience. It has never demonstrated any flexibility in responding adequately to new cultural, social, and class demands or in developing new media institutions.

The future issue, in my opinion, will not be whether the commercial system will further the development of a "better" society or a society

bereft of present-day values. The question will be whether or not the commercial system can sustain itself at all in the changing circumstances. Commercial television may well be a reflection of an era we are by necessity leaving behind.

Noncommercial broadcasting, on the other hand, could be on the ascendent. As the population's dependence on television increases and the financial base of the commercial system weakens, the notion that people will be more willing to pay directly for television—as they would for a public utility—becomes a possibility worth serious consideration. It depends, of course, upon whether public television will be able to gain a foothold and then maintain itself as a responsible source of information and a popular source of entertainment.

To my mind, there is only one way that public television can begin to achieve that goal: The system must redefine itself as a *service* enterprise, independent of political interests and obligations and self-consciously dedicated to the sole purpose of delivering entertainment and information to the American people.

I distinctly do *not* mean a public broadcast system that achieves a modicum of political stability and rests there, or one that congratulates itself with providing "an alternative" to commercial broadcasting or with "serving special-interest audiences." I mean a system composed of institutions that continually determine how best to serve the entire American television audience and then set out to do just that.

But can a new and dominant (in the sense that the commercial networks are now dominant) form of broadcasting emerge out of what we now know as public broadcasting?

To many, it may seem that there is no feasible alternative to our present system of broadcasting, in either economic or political terms. It would be politically absurd, of course, to suggest a revival of the old private versus public ownership debate, and it is equally absurd to suggest that a communications system can develop without an adequate economic base. But to stop there is to limit one's thinking. Granted, it may be difficult to imagine another kind of broadcast system becoming dominant in this country. However, not many years ago, it would have been equally difficult to imagine the collapse of the major film studio system and the rise of independent production companies. A different institutional pattern emerged to meet the existing market.

"A name without a concept." Public television, as it was originally conceived, grew out of two principles sacred to American political and social ideology: the importance of education, and the importance of local sovereignity. Both have in effect restricted public television to a supplementary role with regard to commercial television. The "new public television" proposed by the Carnegie Commission Report a decade ago was anything but new. Its system model was no different from the theoretical model for commercial television (a system based on local stations, with the admis-

sion that some national programming is desirable), and its key funding proposal (a manufacturer's excise tax on sets) was wholly unrealistic politically.

Five years after the Carnegie Report and the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, there was still no agreement on the appropriate role of public television either with the ETV enterprise or among the general public. In 1972, an Aspen Institute Program on Communications and Society conference formally asked the questions again:

> Is Public TV a complementary, supplementary or competitive broadcast system? How is program content distinctive from commercial TV? Is it possible to build a viable broadcast schedule from widely varying minority audiences?

Such questions just haven't seemed to bear fruit. To me, they seem too narrow; they subliminally regiment public television to a secondary role. Within the framework of these questions public television continues to be, as Les Brown described it, "a name without a concept."

These very distinct concepts—capability and service—must be considered together. The institutions generating public television must determine not only what they *can* do, but what they feel must be done, irrespective of the existence of an in-place commercial system which reaches at least 95 percent of the total households. The real necessity is for effective leadership and a clear operational philosophy defining why, how, and for whom public television should be developed.

I'd like to return now to the questions asked at the 1972 Aspen conference with regard to defining the role of public television. Those questions were:

> Is Public TV a complementary, supplementary or competitive broadcast system? How is program content distinctive from commercial TV? Is it possible to build a viable broadcast schedule from widely varying minority audiences?

To these questions, I propose the following answers:

- Public TV must see itself as competitive with commercial TV if the intent is to serve the public interest and to play any significant role in satisfying the six-hour-a-day viewing habit in U. S. households.
- Program *content* is the wrong question. It reveals a lack of understanding of the viewing process. The aim should be to provide programs that people watch.
- The concept of minority audiences may be an illusion. The least served minority is the better educated sector of the population, which expresses dissatisfaction but watches what everyone else watches.

The real battleground is for *television*, not public versus commercial television. We must find the best institutional and economic means to make high quality, popular television programming available.

What fascinates me as a possibility is that certain aspects of present-day public broadcasting may contain the "genetic code" for the new broadcast institutions that must evolve in response to changing conditions in our national life. In fact, I am convinced that there are a few—a very few, but enough—factors within the present system to provide a practical ground from which to build public television into a dominant system. What I have in mind, however, has nothing in common with most aspects of the present system and the existing stations.

Two factors presently operating in public television give promise for the future. One is institutional: the existence of nonprofit community PTV corporations, as distinguished from state, municipal, or college and university institutional licensees. The second is both attitudinal and operational: an increasing trend toward identification *of* and programming *for* audiences, combined with a growing understanding of direct audience support as a means of providing income.

The independent nonprofit corporation, free of the limitations and annual budget appropriations of university, state and municipal educational bureaucracies, is the most flexible and responsive institutional form for public television. Although these corporations and their boards of directors have evolved in a fashion similar to the organizations that control local museum, symphony, and other cultural activities, they nonetheless remain open to change and to a broader vision of their responsibilities as trustees of *all* the public's interest.

With respect to identifying audiences and determining what they will watch, the problems are more complicated. Any discussion of audiences seems to make public television advocates uneasy. In the 1973 Annual Report of the Markle Foundation, Lloyd Morrisett concludes that, "after examining alternative arguments and on the basis of simple common sense, it seems that public television can be justified only on the basis of serving an audience."

In very convincing fashion, Morrisett takes public television to task for what he describes as "the myth of localism." He proposes research to identify special-interest audiences; programming designed for audiences thus identified; intensive promotion of these programs; the development of a rating system to measure the success of a program; and, finally, an economic incentive plan to reward successful producing stations and production companies. He suggests that, as a measure of its success, a public television program should reach 50 percent of its target audience. The argument is capped by the reminder that "Sesame Street" was designed for a special-interest audience.

Although one cannot deny that pre-school children constitute a special-interest audience, it should be noted that, by definition, one cannot design a children's program except *as* a special-interest program. The same does not hold true for prime-time programming. A substantial percentage

of day-time programming on commercial television can be described as programming for special-interest audiences; but with the evening hours, and with the whole family as potential viewers, it is a different story. Who is to control the set? The youngest, the oldest, males, females, the best or the least educated? In our enthusiasm for providing the potential viewer a smorgasbord of choices, we tend to forget that there is a scarcity of plates in the home. Even in multi-set families, joint viewing is still the predominant pattern.

I remain very skeptical of proposals that put forth minority or special-interest programming as the goal for public television. True, well-researched and well-produced and promoted special-interest programming would in all likelihood increase public television's present audience. But it would also lock the system, once and for all, into the role of a supplementary television service. We must keep in mind that the American people are not in revolt against the present dominant system of television, nor are they seeking out public television as a means of filling felt needs.

A concentration on program content is simply not enough. In fact, in light of the existing evidence, it does not seem to make very much difference what programs are available to viewers. Researchers have discovered some very interesting—in some cases, astonishing—facts about the attitudes of the American people with respect to television. Dr. Gary Steiner's study in 1960, *The People Look at Television*, and the 1970 study by Dr. Robert Bower, *Television and the Public*, are particularly useful sources. Bower summarizes the changing attitudes toward television between 1960 and 1970 as follows:

> The population of viewers in 1970 found television less "satisfying," "relaxing," "exciting," "important," and generally less "wonderful" than had the population of ten years earlier. This decline in regard to television was found among all subgroups of the population. Even the enthusiastic black audience was not quite as enthusiastic as its brothers and sisters had been 10 years before.[3]

One should not however, jump to the conclusion that the television audience is disenchanted and about to tune out. The study also revealed the following:

> People were watching more television than ever in 1970. Not only that, they seemed to be enjoying more of what they saw. When we turned, for instance, from how people felt *about television in general to how they liked the programs they viewed*, on the whole, we found a higher assessment of the programs as "somewhat enjoyable" or "extremely enjoyable" than Steiner had found ten years earlier.
>
> . . . if we can believe the response at all, we might conclude that people were finding more programs among which they could choose than they had before—thus improving the chance they could watch many things they really enjoyed, even with a diminished respect for

television's fare as a whole. Whatever the reason, the public's generalized attitude toward television (as defined by the measures employed in the two studies) *did* decline during the same period of time when much of the content of the medium was picking up new adherents—more people enjoying a larger proportion of the programs, more applause for the performance of the news departments, and broad approval of the changes that were observed over the decade.

Most surveys of public television audiences have revealed that the preponderance of adult viewers are from the better educated, more affluent sector of the population. The Bower finding that the better educated viewers tend generally to hold the television medium in lower esteem and say they are more apt to be selective in their viewing would appear to indicate that they have substantially different viewing habits. This, however, is not the case:

> There is no more reason to suspect the educated viewer's expressions of attitude and preference than those of anyone else, but there does seem to be something in the act of television viewing that prevents him from behaving quite as one would predict after listening to him talk. We have seen that he watches the set (by his own admission) just about as much as others during the evening and weekend hours . . . the educated viewer distributed his time among program types—comedy, movies, action, information and public affairs, and so forth—in just about the same proportion as did those with less education; and even when he had a clear choice between an information program and some standard entertainment fare, he was just as apt as others to choose the latter.*

Consumer-Supported Television

The problem, then, simply stated, is this: Is there an economic base for broadcasting other than government funding, philanthropy, and the sale of air time? Quasi-commercial support in the form of corporate underwriting is already a major factor in the funding of public television programs, but the majority of public television stations are supported from tax monies. The one promising exception to the kinds of funding that would inevitably inhibit public television from becoming a dominant service is the growth of direct audience support in the form of audience member-

*Predicting what kinds of audiences will watch particular types of programs has long been a dream of television executives. The Bower study does not offer much hope in this regard. Although there are some differences in attitudes toward television in terms of the education, sex, age, and race of viewers, these differences do not apparently have a significant effect upon viewing habits. (The study revealed only that the young, regardless of education, are much more inclined to accept programs dealing with social unrest; "nowhere else in the inquiry do the age groups differ so markedly.")

ships or subscriptions—a kind of voluntary pay TV. Although income from this source presently represents only a small percentage of the total system income, the growth rate is impressive. Station income from memberships and subscriptions amounted to $16.5 million in fiscal 1973, an increase of 59 percent over the previous year.

In recent years, this growth rate has been even more phenomenal, due in large part to the Station Independence Project, which has been aimed at increasing memberships or subscriptions or other voluntary income-producing sources at the local stations. In 1975, the SIP's three-week campaign, known as "Festival 75," produced $5 million; in 1976 a similar campaign is expected to produce $10 million.

There are now in excess of 2 million subscribers to public television stations throughout the country, and by 1977, that figure is expected to rise to nearly 4 million. In 1976, the newly appointed president of PBS, Lawrence Grossman, described another important advantage of this growing public membership: "If we have 5 million members or subscribers paying $20 a year, it not only represents substantial income but considerable political clout. I don't think politicians would want to oppose it."

Such terms as "free TV," "pay TV," and "tax-supported TV" are confusing and inevitably arouse powerful emotional responses. But in our increasingly consumer- as opposed to producer-conscious society, the idea of paying for television should no longer be as "threatening" as the commercial television and motion picture companies would have the public believe. We will have to educate the public to the hard fact that no matter how the money is transferred, all TV is paid for by the people. We pay for "free TV" when the cost of advertising is added to the price of the products we buy; we also contribute our share to the tax dollars that go to the support of public TV. Of all the possible methods of paying for television, the user- or consumer-supported method is the most direct and has the closest "demand" relationship to the source of "supply." It is also more consistent with American traditions than is tax-supported television.

For years, people in public television have been saying that the system can't compete with the commercial networks. The fact of the matter is that if a program is good enough, and, of almost equal importance, if the program is adequately promoted, television is television and people are going to watch the program. The public is already finding public television when there is a superior program—witness the success of the National Geographic's "The Incredible Machine." This raises another point. If public broadcasting is to focus its energies on high quality, *competitive* programming, what will stop the commercial enterprises from imitating the successes of public television and ultimately stealing its new audiences back?

The answer involves the economics of programming. If, as I assume, the advertising base of commercial television begins to falter, the newly successful system will be that which can achieve maximum cost effi-

ciency in delivering the product. The nonprofit corporation has the advantage here. If a corporation is in the business of returning income to stockholders, it has one priority: profitability. In contrast, the responsibility of the nonprofit corporation is to direct all available income into its product. Furthermore, the nonprofit corporation enjoys the benefits of a much lower overhead.

Certainly, it is much healthier for the free marketplace of ideas to seek its support in the free marketplace of direct consumer support than to be threatened with the withdrawal of support because its programming displeases whichever party is in power. Independence from outside pressures could best be achieved if television were developed, in both its information and entertainment modes, as a service paid for directly by those to whom the service is made available.

The institutional expressions of this idea are the nonprofit broadcast corporation and the nonprofit program-producing corporation. They would differ from present television practice in that their programming would be "sold" directly to the audience, not packaged for advertisers or provided "free" through tax funding. Usually this audience-support idea is dismissed lightly as impractical, but my response to this is that the idea has never been put to a serious and practical test. In public television, the prospects of substantial federal funding has always dominated everyone's attention as the easier and therefore more attractive alternative.

I don't advocate a quick reversal in funding policies for public television. Obviously, if all funding other than that received directly from the audience were to be withdrawn from public television, the entire enterprise would collapse overnight. The present funding mix is generally a good one so long as it doesn't get out of balance. Certainly, the federal government will continue to play an important role in public television as will the corporate underwriter. The difference in my proposal is that there will be a radical increase in the role of the voluntary subscriber.

I'm certainly not suggesting that school stations or, for that matter, any commercial stations that can manage to hold on will have no place in the new television spectrum. I think they will. I also think that we will probably move more in the direction of the so-called "television of abundance," with multiple channels and fragmented audiences. Even so, for all the reasons I've cited, from cost efficiency to political clout to membership loyalty, the community-supported station offers the most flexibility for successfully entering this new television age.

It will not be dissatisfaction with commercials, but the loss of advertisers altogether that will make the voluntary-payment idea possible. And it will not be so-called "good programming" as opposed to popular programming that will prove attractive to viewers. Because the "break-even" point for a program under voluntary sponsorship is lower than that for a program run for advertisers, the nonprofit production agency offers the

potentiality for a wider choice and less slavishness to formula. The agency would also be less dependent upon immediate popular success than the commercial networks are now, and it would be under less pressure to follow the imitation formula. It would exist for the sole purpose of meeting the needs of the audience and would therefore concentrate on defining and interpreting those needs. And it would hopefully abandon the notion of television as a conduit for "good programming" and begin to investigate television as a broad-scale but little understood process which involves and affects almost all U. S. households.

The present leadership in public television appears to be moving closer to these goals. For example, PBS president Larry Grossman stated in 1976: "We should have no ambivalence and no shame about going after audiences. We operate with public funds. We ought to reach out to the widest possible number of people." Grossman also stresses that unlike commercial television, which is tied down to a single source of revenue—advertising—public television, with its much wider source of funds, should be able to offer a much wider spectrum of programs. Public television should begin to compete for audiences in measurable terms, in the same way that commercial television does. He notes that it is a questionable use of the public dollar to serve merely a small minority of the American audience. On the other hand, Grossman cautions, ". . . we're not simply another market for an unsold commercial project. We have to be certain that what we broadcast is something quite special. But public TV is where the real opportunity lies for creative television."

Research and analysis at least as comprehensive as the Carnegie Commission Report is needed to establish marketing data and strategies and specific objectives relative to the regulatory, legislative, and other changes that would be required by a consumer-supported television service. The research required for an on-going analysis of the viewing process would be monumental. But adapting to changes in society has always been hard work. It should not discourage serious folk from asking serious questions about what kind of television will best serve the American people in the substantially different world that lies immediately ahead.

Mr. Moore produces programs for both commercial and public broadcasting. He was formerly the general manager of KQED in San Francisco. The foregoing essay is appearing simultaneously in "The Future of Public Broadcasting", published by the Aspen Institute and Prager Press.

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Nielsen Families Hold Convention

By MARVIN KITTMAN

A few years ago I wrote a series of columns for Long Island *Newsday* (and syndicate papers) inviting America's 1200 Nielsen families to get in touch with me. "For educational purposes", I stressed. As one of your typical, highbrow TV critics, I felt I ought to know what the Real People—average viewers represented by the meters in every Nielsen family set—thought about the medium.

Why get this information from middlemen, when I could go straight to the source?

The A.C. Nielsen Company's lawyers suddenly got jumpy. They threatened to sue me and my papers. They said my invitation would "contaminate" the validity of their scientifically pure sample.

As nearly everybody knows, each Nielsen family's viewing habits, registered electronically on a black box or audimeter, is then multiplied by 50,000 or some such, thus projecting the viewing preferences of the entire nation. At least, that's the theory.

After a time, I stopped advertising for Nielsen families to tell me their secret formulas for making or breaking a TV show. In no time I had all the Nielsen folk I could handle.

Over the years we have had some dandy meetings. We are now firmly joined in a cultural-fraternal bond we call the Nielsen Family Circle. We conduct no formal business. We just slump in our chairs and talk shop—memorable nights on the old boob tube.

As a research scholar, I had hoped to go into the Nielsen homes and study the emotional climate and drinking habits. But, my goodness, do those Nielsen families love to get out of the house! Any excuse to play hookey from TV. Inevitably, we end up having a fine dinner in some wood-paneled steak house where you can smell the old leather and charcoal.

My hospitality was not an isolated case. Naturally, when I took one Nielsen Family out to dinner at a steak house in New York, 1199 other families were being taken to dinner by TV critics in other parts of the country. There were nights when you could legitimately ask, "Is anybody home watching the box?"

Oddly, the ratings didn't seem to change much.

I try to help my Nielsen Families whenever I can. Their fee for services, when we first began meeting, was one dollar a week. After I described their

dreary working conditions, A.C. Nielsen consented to a pay raise—to two dollars a week.

But this isn't enough to insure collective bargaining. I am trying to organize a Union of Nielsen Families. That $104 a year is very nice but it ought to carry fringe benefits. Blue Cross coverage, for example. Think of the risks involved in the Families' nightly tasks! Eye-strain, headaches, nausea, tired blood . . . the list is endless.

My ultimate goal is to link all the Nielsen Families under one banner. I'm not saying we'd strike, but we may go with the Teamsters.

Next summer we hope to hold the first annual National Convention of Nielsen Families in Las Vegas. This will be one of those all-expenses-paid, three day junkets to a posh, four star hotel, the kind the Nielsen Families have been hearing about for years on the Merv Griffin Show.

Actually, I got the idea from the junkets the networks are always arranging to dazzle TV critics who hardly ever get away from the set.

The junket may be the highest honor American society can bestow. But how foolish of the networks to waste these gala trips on TV critics who, their executives say, are a bunch of parasites and hacks who don't know nothin'. But the Nielsen Families are lovely people who play a vital role in the industry. They are the only citizens TV potentates trust to tell them who is watching what. Now, isn't it about time *they* were wined and dined and fussed over? Shouldn't they finally meet the celebrities they have created out of thin air and a laugh track?

The most glittering stars in the television firmament will entertain the convention of Nielsen Families—free. Their agents have said they will fight, claw, maim and kill for the privilege of getting to know these wonderful people who give the industry its Nielsen ratings.

A partial list of entertainers who have not said no includes: Fonzie, Vinnie Barbarino, Mr. Kotter, Phyllis, Maude, Rhoda, Laverne and Shirley, the Jeffersons, Doc, Sonny (with or without Cher), and all the Waltons. Security arrangements will be handled by Starsky and Hutch, Lieut. Kojak and, in case of a real emergency, Sgt. Pepper Anderson.

This convention may well be the media event of the decade. Imagine Nielsen Families coming out of the closet, giving interviews, explaining the audimeter, telling how they sometimes go out for an evening and leave the set *turned on* just for the hell of it.

The Families could also broaden their horizons by attending program briefings and panel discussions on TV violence, TV and ethnic prejudice, TV and women's rights, TV and nagging back ache. Discussions like that go on around the clock all over the country, especially where there are women's clubs.

When they have learned to speak openly of their closet experience, i.e. their painful years of anonymity, the Families may even take to the lecture platform themselves. A little talk, with color slides, might be titled, "We're a Nielsen Family—and You're Not!"

I don't mean to sound frivolous about this Family junket to Las Vegas. There's a serious scientific purpose underlying my proposal. I hope to get a foundation grant to help me in my study and also cover any losses at the tables.

The question we must resolve is this: If all 1200 Nielsen Families left their homes on the same day to study the arts and crafts of the Nevada desert, and the subsequent Nielsen ratings fell to zero, would that prove that everybody in the United States stopped watching TV that weekend?

With the help of the Nielsen Families, I hope to answer that question. Stay tuned.

Marvin Kittman monitors the television industry for Long Island Newsday. He is the author of several books, including "George Washington's Expense Account" and "You Can't Judge A Book By Its Cover." He attended City College of New York. He claims to have applied for workman's compensation for "loss of mental agility" from too much TV viewing. He lives in Leonia, N.J., with his wife, three children and three television sets.

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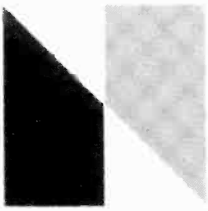

It Was Cold in China

By JOHN W. LOWER
Staff Cameraman, ABC News, Tokyo Bureau

Richard Nixon and I have one thing in common. We've both been to China twice.

His first historic visit opened the doors for cameramen like myself to make documentaries aimed at demystifying a China shut off from the American public for more than twenty years. My first visit in the fall of 1973 had been an incredible 6,000 mile tour filming an ABC News Documentary, *The People of People's China.* I saw a "model" China, peopled by "model" workers, peasants, soldiers and students and governed by new bureaucrats, determined to stamp out his or her own "elitist, revisionist tendencies." I left feeling I'd made real friends, had engaged in open discussions, and that drinking toasts to the friendship of the American and Chinese people was not as hackneyed as it sounds.

Well, Richard Nixon's imperial visit last February, which I covered for ABC, changed all that. The warm and friendly hosts of 1973 had disappeared—perhaps to a May 7 Re-Education School—replaced by guides as chilling as a visit to Peking's Summer Palace in mid-winter. Every attempt to film vignettes of daily life was frustrated by guides who shooed the Chinese away from cameras with caustic remarks. On this trip, publicity was not welcome.

Why the change in treatment?

Foremost in the minds of our Chinese hosts was how to deal with twenty journalists plopped down in the middle of a power struggle within the Chinese Communist Party. Fully aware of our aggressive, competitive nature, Ma Yueh-Tsen, Deputy Director of the Information Department of the Foreign Ministry, told us delicately how he planned to control our coverage.

"Primarily, you have been admitted to China to cover the visit of former President Nixon," Ma told our group, gathered in the ninth floor lounge of the Min Zu Hotel. "There will be some days when Mr. Nixon will be engaged in talks with our high officials. This will allow you free time for sight-seeing and shopping."

A senior journalist from our group diplomatically suggested that we might use our free time to cover other aspects of China. Ma replied that he would have to consult with his superiors but in the meantime he would accept written applications for the stories we wanted to report.

Another journalist added, "What about permission to visit Tsing Hua University to see the wall posters?"

Ma reacted with a cool smile. "We'll have to wait and see."

Admittedly, we were in China to cover Richard Nixon. As prime architect of détente with China, he was being used by the Chinese leaders to show their disapproval of the "Ford-Kissinger policy" which the Chinese feel backs down to the threat of Soviet "social-imperialism." Coupled with the adverse criticism in America to this disgraced former president emerging from seclusion in San Clemente to be received as a head of state in Peking, the Nixon visit demanded extensive coverage while he remained in Peking.

The twenty of us dashed about recording Nixon's every move, gesture and statement, heightening the presidential atmosphere laid on by his Chinese hosts. Yet there were hours of "official" talks leaving us idle to contemplate how to cover the real story.

We were sitting on the biggest news in China in recent years, virtually trapped inside the grey stone walls of the Min Zu Hotel. How to get over to Tsing Hua University where the great wall poster campaign, launched by leftists determined to oust then Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-Ping, had first begun, that was the problem.

From my trip in 1973, I knew the futility of trying to film without "permission."

First of all, taxis are rarely available, thus all transportation is controlled by one's hosts. Most foreign visitors must rely on government assigned translators for communication with the average man on the street. But, when you want to shoot film, you want to shoot film. Correspondent Ted Koppel and I had ventured out, unattended, into a neighborhood near the same Min Zu Hotel. We had noticed arc-like support structures, used in the construction of bomb shelters, strewn up and down the back streets of Peking. When we walked down one narrow street, with my camera, about one hundred kids popped out from alleys and courtyards to block my filming. For an hour, they crowded around the camera, laughing and shouting playfully, frustrating any attempt to put the bomb-shelters-to-be on film. Local censorship, decided by this neighborhood's street committee, enforced by its children.

Yet, the trip in 1973 had taught us that Chinese officials are willing to compromise. We had requested to film a division of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) patrolling the disputed Sino-Soviet border. Nervous laughter was the reaction from our hosts who insisted that for security reasons this was absolutely impossible. We settled for a PLA division, not far from Peking, which is frequently visited by foreign journalists. Not as dramatic, we thought, until the division staged a mini-re-enactment of the historic Long March.

They marched to a nearby village where they would spend several days sleeping in the homes of the peasants, instructing the local militia in guer-

illa warfare, leading criticism sessions against the current traitor to the socialist way and teaching the latest revolutionary culture in the form of dance and ballads.

We also visited the showcase of Chinese agriculture, the commune of Tachai, located in remote Shansi province. All over China people are exhorted to "learn from Tachai." Hundreds of thousands make the pilgrimage annually to see first hand the principle of self-reliance in action. Our hosts had arranged a typical package tour fit for a Kissinger or Ford: a glimpse at new housing, a stroll through a pig farm or a visit to a nursery school where colorfully polished kids sing for their new foreign friends.

This isn't the stuff documentary filmmaking is about and we complained. Once the local revolutionary committee understood our technique of filming, we were completely free to move about the entire farming and housing areas. We followed barefoot doctors on their rounds to remote villages where locals exclaimed that we were the first westerners they'd ever seen. We filmed the grueling labor of city kids sent to the countryside to learn from the peasants. We filmed not so antiseptic daycare centers where babies slept, flies buzzing around their nostrils. And we filmed teenage boys and girls shooting carbines in practice for the defense of their socialist motherland.

By contrast, when former President Nixon left Peking for sight-seeing in southern China, the entire scene was staged for our cameras. One network producer, arriving at a Canton commune ahead of the Nixon entourage, asked for permission to film some peasants at work nearby. He and his film crew found the workers mindlessly hoeing a *cement* walkway. So, while our hosts were busy ushering Nixon and the press about, keeping the throngs of excited Chinese a safe distance away, we sneaked into a housing area to talk with some commune members.

Our guide was so busy interpreting that we missed our rendezvous with the Nixon caravan, headed for a hot springs resort. When we emerged from the housing area, the commune seemed like another world. Out from under the scrutinizing eyes of party officials, all those hard working people were at ease, chatting and playing with their children. They smiled and waved at us, hardly concerned that we were filming. Our guide was panicking. We'd be late for the next important exchange of toasts! Luckily for him, a bright blue, Russian-built Gil, speeding down the road, screeched to a halt and gave us a lift.

Of course, it would be naive to say that my trip in 1973 had not been carefully controlled. But once an area was cleared, our hosts never interfered with our filming, never influenced the people we filmed. At that time the Chinese were anxious to continue the atmosphere of friendly co-operation set in motion by the first Nixon trip. Exchanges between the peoples of America and the People's Republic of China were growing steadily. Our hosts from the Central Broadcasting Committee helped in every way possible to move our production along its 6,000-mile course.

On a six-week trip, you get to know your hosts fairly well. The three men who accompanied us throughout our travels worked as hard as we did to insure the success of our filming. Together we engaged in stimulating, sometimes provocative discussions.

We dined on exquisite food, occasionally got drunk together, laughed and made fun of each other. My fondest memories of China lie with these men. Mr. Liu, cameraman and editor from Peking Television, assigned to co-ordinate all our production needs from Peking to the remotest mountain commune; Mr. Hsing, interpreter, 4 foot 11 inches tall in his oversized Mao suit, who became so fascinated with the "standupper" that he strutted about rehearsing: "This is Steve Bell, ABC News, Peking," and Li Tan, interpreter and former Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution of the sixties, the radical idealogue of the trio. Li Tan cried at the Canton railroad station when we said our last good-byes to them and to China.

These men have been replaced by nervous, "wait and see" types, engulfed in a world of continual political uncertainty. They have learned that security lies in taking no risks. And perhaps xenophobia is rearing its ugly head. Resident correspondents in Peking have stated that their relations with the Foreign Ministry's information department officials have deteriorated since former Premier Chou En-Lai's illness kept him from over-seeing daily governmental operations. That spirit of friendly co-operation, still fresh and vital in 1973, has gone. Differences of opinions are met with narrow-mindedness and arrogance. Shoving hands in front of lenses and shooing "the people" away with nasty comments have become the official modus operandi.

The difference was so striking that I couldn't contain my anger. When I complained, I was reminded that China is a sovereign nation now, and that her people have thrown off the yoke of the "imperialistic exploiters."

"Mr. Lower," my guide rattled on in his British-accented English, "the Chinese people have stood up!"

What he never was able to see was my desire to show just that: how they were standing up.

At the age of two John Lower, then a resident of Bangkok, spoke Thai more fluently than English.

Not surprisingly, Lower drifted back to the Orient after completing his education at Phillips Andover Academy and Northwestern (B.S., 1970).

The son of Elmer Lower, Vice-president of ABC, John covered the collapse of South Vietnam and Cambodia. He is now assigned to the ABC Tokyo Bureau as staff camera man.

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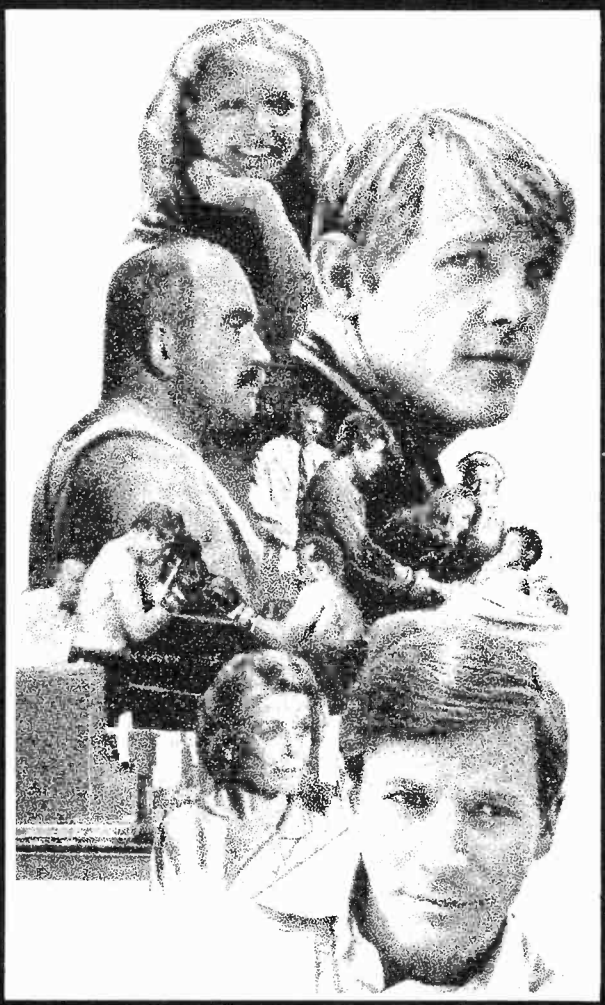

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To Who It May—Y'Know—Concern

By ROBERT WARREN

Some fifteen years have passed since we made the shocking discovery that Johnny couldn't read. Millions of tax dollars were poured into remedial reading instruction with but slight effect on the national reading scores.

This year considerable dismay attended another discovery. Not only is Johnny a poor reader, he can't write or speak very well, either. And his bad grammar and impure diction are being blamed, inevitably, on television.

Since young people spend so much time in front of the television set, educators have suggested that television has a moral obligation to maintain certain standards in grammar and pronunciation. Instead, concerned parents complain, television is debasing the language.

Admittedly, language is a living medium, always growing and changing. "It's me," for example, was once considered bad form. Now it's in common usage and acceptable.

What comes out of the tube today might be called "common abusage." Even news reporters and commentators, presumably educated men, insult the language.

Naturally, one expects "characters" to use bad grammar. "The Fonz", for example, and Laverne, Shirley, and Archie would be beyond belief if they spoke in flawless sentences. Unfortunately, their speech, colorful and authentic as it is, may also be having a negative effect on young children.

Discounting the characters whose bad grammar is written into the script, a viewer is still subjected to a barrage of sub-literate speech every single day and night. The majority of these errors flow ad lib from people who should know better: talk show hosts and guests, newsmen, authors (yes, authors!) promoting their books on TV, and politicians.

Said one author recently, "For Dominique and *I*, one of the great characters in the book. . . ." For he, maybe. Not for I. Still another author was heard to muse on "what was right between *he* and God". (If God is a grammarian, He winced.)

We may be seeing the gradual and inexorable disappearance of the objective case. The day may be upon us when nobody can remember back when there were three cases (five in Latin), and prepositions were always followed by objective pronouns.

A few samples, selected in a week of random viewing: Milton Berle to Tony Orlando: "You and your lovely wife, Sylvia, are having dinner with Ruth and *I* tonight."

Roger Peterson on the *ABC Evening News:* ". . . a cost that will eventually be passed on to you and *I*, the consumer".

Robert MacNeil on PSB, ". . . nobody but *he* knows who it will be." (Well, at least he didn't say "whom it will be").

There are voices on the tube whose grammatical lapses we take for granted. But it hurts to hear Mort Sahl, described so often as an "intellectual humorist", saying that he "had dinner with *he* (Gov. Edmund Brown) and Gene McCarthy".

Has it come to pass that in Hollywood one no longer dines with a member of the objective case?

On that curious show, *The Bionic Woman*, Jamie's "cover" is teaching elementary school. You wouldn't guess it to hear her talking to her mother. "Tell me something, just between you and *I*", she said the other night.

And here is a depressing thought. That vulgar speech error had to pass through many hands: typist, script editor, director, producer and the cast. *Somebody* should have caught it.

Transitive and intransitive verbs occasionally get muddled on TV. Chevy Chase of *Saturday Night* is the product of good schools and the son of an editor. But here's Chevy telling another actor, "Just *lay* back and tell me what you see." Johnny Carson, who usually speaks correctly, also has trouble with lie vs. lay. His bicycle, he told us, "had been *laying* in the yard . . ."

Errors of "agreement and number" also rank high on TV. We all know that one is singular, never plural. But Morley Safer, on *60 Minutes*, informed us that "One out of four persons *have* been . . ." And Oscar Goldman declared, "One of my men *are* trusting him . . ."

The words either, neither and each are also singular and take a singular verb. Nobody expects Fred Sanford to speak in any style but his own, but a proper, educated character, a woman in a position of authority recently told him, "I'm afraid that neither of you *fulfill* our requirements.

Quiz show hosts often fail the good grammar test. Peter Marshall of *Hollywood Squares* will remark, "One out of every five women *have* . . ."

Unless the rules have been changed overnight, the following words are singular: everybody, everyone, anybody, anyone, somebody, no one and person. We hear, nevertheless, that "Everybody is doing *their* own thing". Or, "A person can do what *they* feel like."

If you change "person" to another singular you will quickly see the illogic of this confusion in number. A common sentence, "A person ends up with egg on *their* face" becomes "He ends up with egg on their face". Senseless, no?

Some of the people who ought to know better said as follows, within my hearing:

John Lindsay, "Everybody thinks *they* have political advisers . . ."

Merv Griffin to Dick Cavett: "Nobody wants to admit *they* have writers."

Morley Safer (again): "Each of them must have *their* own horse and buggy . . ."

Tom Snyder, the NBC newsman, projects an air of supercilious authority which makes his grammatical slips faintly amusing. They're still a bad example for children, however, and a viewer wonders if he'll ever learn.

"How much sugar *do* each of us consume in a year?", Snyder asks Betty Furness.

One wishes Miss Furness would reply, "I don't know about you, Tom, but I doesn't consume too much."

Snyder is also given to such odd pronouncements as, "Tonight we have some auspicious names in the news . . ." He earns, according to the press, $300,000 a year. That should cover the cost of a tutor.

Other television luminaries are frequently confused—as are many Americans—about the difference between less and fewer. A handy rule is: if it's a mass or a lump, say "less"; in case of an entity made up of separate units, say "fewer." Thus, less dough but fewer calories.

Astonishingly, F. Lee Bailey was heard one evening suggesting that what the country needs is "*less* lawyers."

Latin plurals are a serious problem on television and in the press. Some newspapers, including the New York Times, now write "memorandums" rather than the correct memoranda. Scholars would call this "corruption through usage", and we are seeing a lot of it.

If you would speak correctly, however, it is best to keep in mind that criteria, data, phenomena and media are all plural. One says "the media are . . . ," never "the media is." If we continue to make these plurals singular what will happen to the true singulars, criterion, datum, phenomenon and medium?

Spiro Agnew, champion of solid American values, isn't too solid in his grammatical constructions. "The media *is* guilty of . . .", he will begin.

There's hardly a man alive who hasn't had trouble with *who* and *whom*. But I can still recall my shock at hearing Sebastian Cabot, playing a proper English butler, answer the door with a polite, "*Whom* shall I say is calling?"

Almost any hour you can hear, "*Whom* do you think the winner will be . . .?"

Sports commentators have never been hired for their excellence as grammarians. Still, it must make some viewers wince to hear Byron Nelson saying, "there's a tree between *he* and the green".

Boners by sportsmen have lately become pandemic. Fran Tarkenton (and one wishes his confreres would stop calling him *Tarkington*) may be

at home on the gridiron but he's a stranger in the realm of correct English. "If this discussion between the players and owners *aren't* productive", he warned.

A few more common errors: From Dave Marr, at a golf tournament, "Each have *their* own standards." From Dick Button, at the Winter Olympics, ". . . rapport between *she* and the audience." And from Glen Campbell, host of the Los Angeles Open, "I love *them* kind of shots."

From the sports world, grammatical lapses do not shock us. From television's high priced newsmen, they certainly do. You rarely catch Howard K. Smith, Eric Sevareid or David Brinkley in an error. Edwin Newman, who has made the English language his hobby, is the very model of a well-spoken gentlemen. But local newsmen—in New York at least—are often at sea when it comes to the niceties of grammar. And Frank Reynolds, one of ABC's best reporters, was heard to say, ". . . perhaps she, unlike *he* . . ."

The vulgarizing of our noble English tongue owes much to television commercials. They are deliberately, brutally ungrammatical. The theory, apparently, is that low-class English *sells.* There are Americans who, to this day, will not buy a certain cigaret because of the noxious campaign whose catch line was, ". . . tastes good, *like* a cigaret should".

Copywriters long ago decreed that the word different is always followed by "than" rather than "from". Thus we have "Is Diamond Crystal different *than* my salt?" And "Doan's Pills act *different than* . . .", and to hell with that "ly" on differently.

Comparing two soft drinks, a voice asks, "Which do you think is *best*?" Can you imagine the anguish of English teachers who used to drill their pupils in "good, better, best"?

My New England schooling left me with instant distaste for anyone who confided he "felt *badly*." Does he, one wonders, also feel sadly at times? For some reason, "feel bad" sounds gauche to the untutored ear. It isn't.

There are dozens of common errors one would like to see outlawed on the home screen. Let us remember that television talk is probably the single most influential force in shaping the speech of the young. If we are not to beget a race of illiterates, we should insist—with irate letters and a negative response to certain commercials—on correct English from the voices that pervade our daily existence.

Let us hear no more that a certain product is "most unique". Impossible. Unique has no degrees of comparison; it's incomparable.

Then there's the subtle distinction between lend and loan. Because lend is a verb, you may lend money. You make a loan, loan being a noun.

Other examples: One says, "He has smoked continually," never continuously. "Because of" is preferable to "due to." The past tense of dive is dived, not dove. A criminal is hanged, never hung. "Real" is no substitute for "very." It is not, in fact, an adjective.

It is sad but true that the English we hear is the English that sounds correct. Television has probably done more to debase the language than all the newsprint ever put to press. But it cannot be denied that if television were to insist on correct English, especially in prepared copy, our young people would instinctively begin to echo the correct forms.

One sometimes wonders if the script writers who commit grammatical mayhem do so intentionally, in a craven desire to pander to the lowest common denominator, or if they are simply ignorant of the correct form. Either way, the language suffers.

Many young people, it has been noted, speak a slurred, inarticulate patois. Groping for words, they gulp and say, "You know . . .". Their clumsiness in expressing their thoughts is carried over to their writing.

As 1976 surveys have shown, many college graduates today cannot compose a simple, direct paragraph. As for recent averages in college entrance examinations, words fail us. They have obviously failed the students, too, for remedial English is becoming a required course at many universities. Not for the foreign born, mind you, but for young people from homes where English is spoken. And where, one suspects, the television set is never turned off.

Before it's too late, let us beseech all who write for television and all who speak before the cameras, to study the classic guides to correct speech, Fowler, Strunk and Partridge. Otherwise the language of Shakespeare and Swift will continue to rot. The day may come when we'll not send to know for who the bell tolls. It will be tolling for thou and I.

Robert Warren is a composer, arranger and writer of satirical prose. He has been associated with an impressive list of performers and conductors, including Fred Allen, Frank Sinatra, Dinah Shore, Mary Martin and Ray Bloch. He is the author of a humorous book, published during the 1972 campaign, "Nixon Made Perfectly Clear." Mr. Warren is a graduate of Dartmouth College.

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Editor's Note: Edwin Newman, NBC's veteran news commentator, dissected our speech patterns a few years ago in a best-selling book, "Strictly Speaking." The first published excerpt from that book appeared in Television Quarterly. Now Mr. Newman has prepared a sequel, "A Civil Tongue," to be published in November. Herewith, by special permission of Mr. Newman and his publisher, Bobbs-Merrill, are some excerpts from a work that is to be the Book of the Month alternate selection for midwinter.

A Word in Your Ear

By EDWIN NEWMAN

"Mend Your Speech a Little . . ."

—Shakespeare

Competition on television may take many forms—who has the better pictures, the more appealing anchormen and anchorwomen, the snappier gimmicks, the more attractive set, the more striking visual effects, even whose weatherman grins more bravely at the lame jokes that suggest that he is responsible for the weather rather than for transmitting the government's forecast. Some of this is bunk, and television has few sights to offer more painful than the local anchorman taunting the sports broadcaster because one of his predictions went wrong ("You didn't look so good on that one, Al") or smiling determinedly and congratulating him because one came out right ("And here's our fearless forecaster, who was right on the nose again"), but it does not make news any less a business. It merely shifts the competition away from the news itself.

It is true, of course, that the weatherman, who merely transmits a forecast others made, is a medium. So are television news broadcasters who do not write their own copy, who read whatever is put in front of them, and who bring no independent judgment to what they do. I think it is significant that publicity stunts and staged incidents are dismissed as media events. Nothing is dismissed by being called a news event.

News itself is competitive. What is news at nine o'clock in the morning may not be one or two minutes later. You can go into a studio to do a news show and, in the few minutes before going on the air, change the script because of breaking news—change stories, eliminate stories, add others. On a program like NBC Nightly News, with a tight routine, with film and

tape set to roll, commercials fixed, camera moves planned, and complex timing, a decision by the producer to change the show while on the air makes great demands not only of the broadcaster, who is out front where he can be seen, but of many people behind the scenes.

News is also an accidental business. Not always, of course; you can foresee some of what is coming, and one NBC News executive made himself famous by saying of a presidential inauguration parade, "I believe that this is what may be called a predictable event." Nobody was putting anything over on him.

A good assignment editor, looking ahead, makes news as predictable as he can. To the extent that this can be done, news resembles public relations and advertising, in which effects are calculated and campaigns staged. But for those who are in it—perhaps I should speak only for myself—news is at its best when it is most accidental, for that is when it is most challenging.

Even on a horrifying story—the murder of President Kennedy, the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.—there is satisfaction in doing it well. Perhaps there is more satisfaction than comes from other stories, because the story is more important, and it is important that it be told accurately and without theatrics. This is nothing we choose, but for a newsman or newswoman, what is tragic or sad will almost certainly provide better opportunities for demonstrating ability than happy events do. That is one thing that differentiates news from public relations and advertising. Public relations usually, and advertising always, try to create expectations of happiness.

On the last night of the 1964 Democratic convention, in Atlantic City, New Jersey, President Johnson was speaking. It was the climax of the affair, the king acknowledging the affection of his people. I was on the floor of the convention hall, standing near some members of the Mississippi Freedom Party delegation. They, blacks and whites, most of them poor, had come to Atlantic City to challenge the regular Mississippi delegation. A compromise had been worked out and some of them were seated.

On the last night the entire delegation was on the floor. As President Johnson spoke about freedom and liberty, a black woman in the Freedom Party group began to cry. I told the NBC producer in charge of our coverage. Should he cut away from the President? If he did, why to this one person out of thousands in the hall? Again, if he did, what did it show—that she was weeping for what she knew about the United States, or the President, or the Democratic Party, or Mississippi? Or was she simply overwhelmed by being where she ws?

There was little time to think and there was no textbook, or study of the "media," setting out what should be done. News judgment is an amalgam of experience, knowledge, wisdom, workmanship, and competitive urge.

His amalgam told the NBC producer to cut to the woman. I hope we will never get to the day when that is called media judgment.

During the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Tet offensive in 1968, some unusual film came into NBC. (The Associated Press also had stills of it.) It showed a man, dressed in shorts and a sport shirt and identified as a Viet Cong, being taken along a street in Saigon to the chief of the South Vietnamese national police. The police chief, without a word, drew a revolver, put it to the man's head, and shot him dead. Somebody at NBC had to decide what to do with that film. If you use it, are you implying that this kind of thing is going on wholesale? Suggesting that there should be sympathy for the unarmed underdog shot down in cold blood? How much do you show? The look on the doomed man's face as he realizes what is about to happen? His face as the bullet strikes? His head hitting the pavement, the blood running out of his head, the blood running down the gutter? Where do you cut off? The decisions are made according to the news judgment of the person, or persons, making them. That is circular: those who decide decide. But that is the way it happens.

★ ★ ★

Howard Cosell speaks of teams in a poor field situation and of a back who will run unmolestedly down the field, thereby enabling his team to perpetrate a major upset, which may revivify the fans' interest or, if they are on the other side, lead them to give vent to their vocal discontent, rather as Muhammad Ali did before the George Foreman fight in Zaire, when he rendered himself, so Cosell told us, into a hoarse frenzy. During the Ali–Jimmy Young fight in April 1976, Cosell noted that Ali attemptedly delivered a number of punches. Young attemptedly blocked them.

On another night, during half-time of a football game, Cosell announced, "I am variously bounded and circumscribed by Senator Edward Kennedy and John Denver." Kennedy was, geographically, on one side of him and Denver on the other.

Unfortunately, Cosell is not alone. Early in the 1975 professional football season, during a game between the New York Jets and the Kansas City Chiefs, Charley Jones of NBC noticed Joe Namath raging about a call of offensive pass interference and announced that Namath was holding a détente with the officials. Actually, it was a démarche accompanied by an aidemémoire, ending in a tour d'horizon. Luckily for the Jets, the officials did not declare Namath persona non grata and ask for his recall.

On NBC, Jim Simpson described David Knight, a wide receiver for the New York Jets, as "a young man not of any specific speed and any specific size, who makes a living by knowing how to run the patterns." It is because Knight is of no specific size that, after he catches the ball, he is hard

to tackle. Simpson also told us, before a Miami-Baltimore game, that Miami was driving for its sixth consecutive play-off in a row.

Many sports broadcasters now believe that consecutive is shorthand for consecutive in a row, just as eight straight wins seems incomplete to them alongside eight straight wins without a loss, and they would rather not take the easy way. All credit to them. All credit also to NBC, which told me one late summer day that college football had made its first full-fledged debut of the season, in a game in which one side beat the other closer than expected. And to CBS, which reported on what had to be the most westernmost football game played in the U.S. (It was in Hawaii.) Having to be most westernmost is evidently a distinction in sports and is not to be spoken about in reprehension.

Sports broadcasters often have a shaky grip on grammar and on the connection between words and meaning. I learned one night from NBC that Dock Ellis, a pitcher formerly with the Pittsburgh Pirates, was "looking ahead to a low-profile image with the Yankees." A low-profile image is not unlike a poor field position situation and involves keeping an ear to the ground. From Brent Musberger of CBS, I learned during a game between the New York Jets and the Dallas Cowboys that "Tom Henderson found an opening and blocked Greg Gant's would-be kick." The would-be kick was disappointed at failing to fulfill its potential and promised to be satisfied with being a pass or a run next time. ABC, during an Ivy League football game, told us that one team's chance of winning had diminished completely, a clear infraction of the law of diminishing returns (which occur when a team runs back punts and kickoffs for less and less yardage as the game goes on.)

When the Boston Bruins traded their forward, Phil Esposito, to the New York Rangers, an NBC sports expert theorized that it might have been because of a feud between he and Bobby Orr. In golf, *Sports Illustrated* noted that "a twosome of Bobby Nichols and Lee Trevino talk no more than most pairs—except that Lee does it all." Well, Jam, Howard, Brent, and *Sports Illustrated,* maybe Nichols came to play.

* * *

I have been told that a television news broadcaster in Alabama announced that a deputy sheriff, killed in the line of duty, would be funeralized the following day and there is, unfortunately, no reason to doubt it. United Press International, in a story about the Kennedy political tradition, remembered an occasion when John Kennedy prophecized. The Reverend Allison Cheek, one of the first women ordained in the Episcopal Church, said after celebrating communion, "I will not let the church inferiorize me again."

I was covering the Turkish elections in 1957, relying on interpreters, as everyone else was. Then the BBC sent in a correspondent who spoke Turkish. It seemed to the rest of us that the BBC was hitting below the belt, but we were indubitably inferiorized. President Roy Amara of the Institute for the Future, an institute for the future of Menlo Park, California, prophecized not long ago, "Most of the influences on us today are rigidized for the next five years, and on a current momentum course that is irreversible." Five years carry the current momentum course to the point of no return, where it sees what the fates have in store if it continues. It reverses.

There is no limit to the bountiful imagination with which Americans ize. Sometimes I seem to hear thousands of voices raised in song:

I fell in love with you
First time I looked into
Them there ize.

* * *

Eye contact is a television phrase, and it occurs when a broadcaster is courageous enough to look up from the script and into the camera lens. This requires that the broadcaster have confidence that when he looks down again he will be able to find his place in the script or, lacking such confidence, be willing to risk it. You will hear it said of someone particularly adept at this, "Boy , has he got eye contact!"

In the elections of November 1974, Governor Francis Sargent of Massachusetts, though he lost to Michael Dukakis, exhibited, according to the *New York Times*, "a folksy, grinning, hand-shaking, hugging style that won him the admiration of professional politicians, who said that he could lead a parade and make 'eye contact' with everyone in the crowd." Sargent, of course, with no script to follow, could concentrate on eye contact alone, and it may have helped, since late in the campaign he came from a long way back and almost won. This may start a new form of competition for votes among politicians, in which they no longer make promises or issue position papers or even make speeches, but simply go out and look citizens squarely in the eye. "Come to the speakin'," Lyndon Johnson used to tell voters when he campaigned. "Come to the eyeballin'," he would be saying now.

In television, a broadcaster need never look down at his script at all if a Teleprompter with a script on it is placed in front of the lens. However, one not skilled in its use may appear to be peering, mesmerized, into space. This does not count as eye contact. Sometimes the Teleprompter is placed above the lens, which calls for still more skill in looking up while not appearing to look up. A viewer sent me a drawing showing my eyes virtually

all whites and pupils disappearing northward. This also would not count as eye contact.

* * *

My employer engages in public relations, sometimes with provocative results. One NBC press release about a dramatization of *Robinson Crusoe* summarized the plot (another summarizative description) for those not familiar with it: "It focuses on Robinson Crusoe, of a middle class English family, who turns away from a chance to lead a relatively quiet life in England as a businessman in order to become a sailor. His days on the high seas end when his ship breaks apart on a reef off the coast of South America. That's when his greatest adventures begin, first as a man with a friend—a native he saved from certain death and named Friday."

There was hardly any need for the dramatization after that, though I may have assumed too much knowledge of the book: WVUE-TV in New Orleans, Channel 8, advertised "a strange and eerie adventure on a hostile planet," which was the movie *Robinson Caruso on Mars.* Singing his heart out. Still, I wanted to watch Crusoe saving Friday from certain death. It is the most extreme kind of death one can be saved from.

Edwin Newman has covered news events in 25 countries since joining the NBC News Bureau in London in 1952. Based in New York since 1961, Mr. Newman has been a regular on the TODAY show and the drama critic for WNBC-TV. The Overseas Press Club honored him in 1961 for his foreign correspondence. He has also won an Emmy for his interview series, SPEAKING FREELY. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin.

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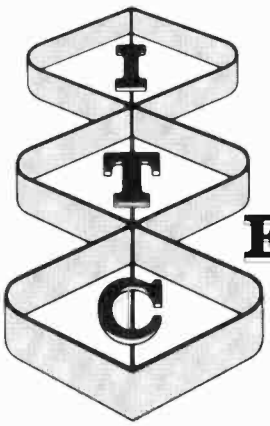

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As Others See Us

By PAUL FOX

(Editor's Note: With this issue we inaugurate a new feature: how American television looks to foreign eyes. The following article is by a visiting Englishman, and was written for The Listener, weekly journal of the British Broadcasting Corporation.)

It was just like being at home, the week I spent in America looking at television. In addition to *Upstairs, Downstairs, Cakes and Ale, Monty Python,* and even commercials for fish and chips, there was Malcolm Muggeridge promoting a third Testament; Ted Heath promoting his book; Michael Charlton talking to Solzhenitsyn; and there was Robert MacNeil.

MacNeil, the former *Panorama* reporter, is perhaps the most interesting phenomenon. He is anchorman and editor of *The MacNeil Report,* public television's first nightly national news show. In New York, it is on the air each week-night at 7:30 pm. That means it comes on immediately after Walter Cronkite on CBS and John Chancellor on NBC. In Los Angeles, it plays at 11:30 pm.

The major metropolitan areas like Chicago, Dallas and Washington all play it, yet it could not be more different from the networks' news shows. Its format is much more familiar to British eyes. MacNeil's aim is to examine the complexities of a single, controversial issue in the news, with three or four guests representing different points of view. MacNeil is usually at the New York end; his correspondent, Jim Lehrer, is in Washington. In one recent programme on unemployment, four out-of-work people in New York told their stories. Then they confronted two Congressmen in Washington.

If it sounds a bit like many a programme you've seen in the United Kingdom, you could be right. MacNeil admits that some of his ideas stem from the days when he worked for BBC Television Current Affairs. The extraordinary thing is that the show is such a hit. It is always starred in the *New York Times* TV listings—the only news programme to get that distinction. More and more public television stations are picking it up; and MacNeil, at 45, is getting the big star treatment—which is nice for him, because he was a rising star when he left NBC to come to England and work for *Panorama.* It has taken him time to get back and make an impact in the American league. The surprise is that he has done it with a format that is simple, straight and, to some, a little old-fashioned.

What attracts Americans to *The MacNeil Report* is that it does not ape what the networks do. The sheer amount of time that CBS, NBC and ABC give to news and near-news programmes remains prodigious.

On any weekday, you start in the morning at 7 am with an hour's straight news from Hughes Rudd, on CBS: probably the best news programme on the air. You then pick your way through the second hour of *Today*, NBC's long-established, but somewhat sagging news magazine, which is due for a face-lift when television's first $5 million journalist, Barbara Walters, departs.

And then, at 9 am, you switch over to ABC for their *AM Show*, a local programme. So, in the three hours between 7 am and 10 am, you have had more than a glimpse of the day's stories. It is a form of television that simply does not exist in this country; and while, of course, as a visitor in a hotel room, you pay more attention to it, it is something we will have to learn when it gets here—as, assuredly, it will.

The prestigious, big-name evening news programmes on the networks have changed. It was Robert McKenzie who lauded them recently in a BAFTA discussion on whether we should have hour-long news over here.

Of course, the two hours of local news programmes that precede Cronkite and Chancellor and Reasoner, between 5 pm and 7 pm, represent a major achievement. 'Local' is a misnomer. While local news is, naturally, prominent, national and even international news get a good share. So much so that, when the big names turn up at 7 pm, they are, to some extent, regrinding the news. Even for those who first switch on at 7 pm, there are some oddities: 'David Brinkley's Journal'—encompassed within the news—consists of a 90-second piece straight to camera. 'Special Report' is the three-minute piece of investigative journalism that calls for twice or three times the length. There are stories that would sit better elsewhere, like the two-and-a-half-minute film report on the River Thames and its fight against pollution.

Although each of the American networks gives more time to news in a day than we give in five days, the question is: what sort of news? Peter Jay and John Birt would have a fit if they saw how sketchily and superficially the big issues are being tackled.

The stories are being covered all right: the American networks' news coverage circles the world. But it is news-at-a-glance, which is another reason, not only for MacNeil's slow-burning success, but for the fact that CBS has turned back to a weekly current affairs programme, at peak-time: *60 Minutes*. It is the only regular current affairs show on the network, the only one in peak-time—Sunday at 7 pm—and it is getting respectable ratings. With reporters Morley Safer, Dan Rather and Mike Wallace, it is more like *Panorama* than *This Week* or *World In Action*. It is a magazine programme and it does not pretend to be anything else. It is well filmed and well reported; it is a familiar format that American television has rejected in the past, and has now restored.

If all this sounds too complacent and only marks up another notch in the British-television-is-best theory, there is another side to the picture. The amount of time, the amount of money, the great resources of tech-

nology and manpower that American television can pour into news coverage is staggering and enviable. The morning programmes between 7 am and 10 am are remarkable. The local programmes in the evening, in cities like New York and Los Angeles, represent a considerable step forward in popular television journalism. There is nothing to equal them over here. But, if you are looking to the United States for some guidelines in advancing the frontiers of news programmes, this is not the time.

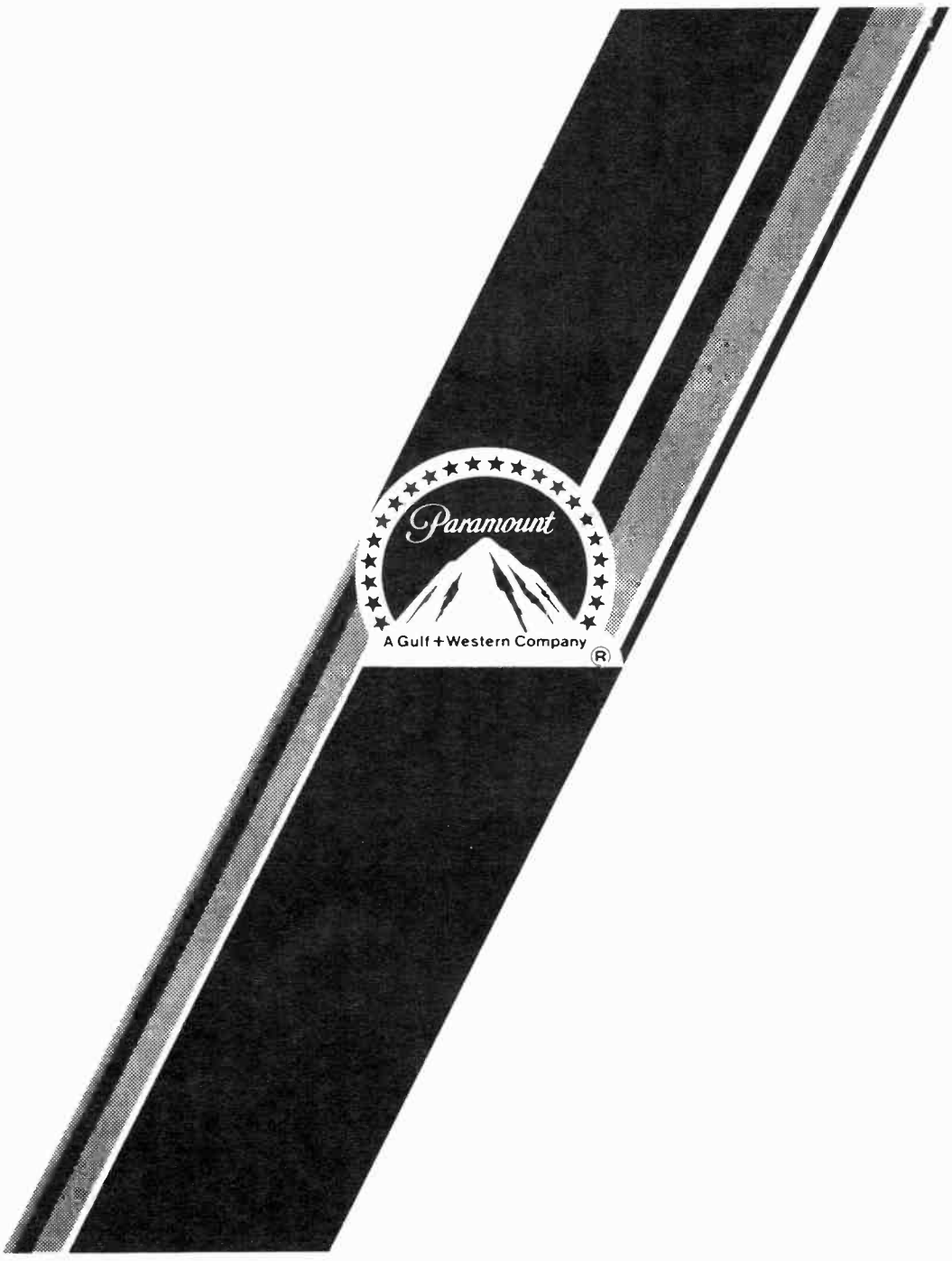
P.S. My favorite radio commercial in the United States boosted the merits of a product designed to fight 'jackage'. At least, that is what it sounded like. After several exhortations to fight 'jackage', I finally found the solution, in *Variety*. This commercial, it said, had to be specially cleared by the FCC. For the first time on American radio, the word could be used: it was 'jockitch'.

Paul Fox is Director of Programmes, Yorkshire Television, and a former Controller of BBCI.

Quote—Unquote

"If television is not the meaningless nightmare deplored by numerous elders, could it, in fact, be something of the inverse: a significant flow of collective dream materials which we have not yet begun to interpret adequately? Most of us can recall incidents where television contributed to our own dreams . . . If we can accept the idea that television affects the dream life of individuals, can we entertain the thought that television may also constitute—in some unrecognized way—part of the collective dream life of society as a whole?

Dr. Peter H. Wood of Duke • in American Film Magazine.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Some Straight Talk

By WALTER CRONKITE

(This article was adapted from the transcript of an extemporaneous speech delivered by Mr. Cronkite last May at the CBS Affiliates Conference in Los Angeles.)

It seems to me, as I travel around the country, that all it takes to be an "anchor person" is to be under twenty-five, fair of face and figure, dulcet of tone and well coiffed. And that's just for the men! Oh, yes, you must also be able to fit into the blazer with the patch on the pocket.

These attributes don't make a journalist. And I think the public may be more aware of this than the television stations. The stations cling to the belief—abetted by out of town consultants—that the anchorman's personality rather than his (or her) news ability, is the key factor in building an audience.

Let me say right here that I am not one who decries ratings. Those of us in the broadcasting business who do decry ratings are simply naive. Of course ratings are important. And no one—newsman, program manager or salesman—need hang his head in shame because that is a fact of life. We have been cowed into the position of deploring ratings by newspaper critics who conveniently forget their own history.

How short their memory when they fail to recall, as they criticize us, the great circulation wars of the past. In those epic battles newspapers stooped to every dirty trick in the book, not halting before murder, to sell a few extra papers.

The best newspaper in the world isn't worth much if no one reads it. The same is true of broadcasting. So, let us put to rest any moral arguments about ratings.

But it is *how* we get those ratings, what we do to make us competitive, that bothers me. As it is no good to put out a superior product if you can't sell it, it is far worse to peddle an inferior product solely through the razzle-dazzle of a promotion campaign.

And aren't we guilty of that when we put the emphasis in our news broadcasts on performance and performers rather than content? Isn't that really what we are looking for when we examine ourselves to see whether we are indulging in show business rather than journalism?

There is no newsman worth his salt who does not know that advisors who dictate that no item should run more than forty-five seconds, that there

must be a film story within the first thirty seconds of the newscast and that it must have action in it (a barn burning or a jackknifed tractor-trailer truck will do), that calls a ninety-second film piece a "mini-documentary," that advises against covering city hall because it is dull, that says the anchorman or woman must do all voice overs for "identity"—any real newsman knows that sort of stuff is balderdash. It's cosmetic, it's pretty packaging. But it's not substance.

I suspect that most station operators know that too. I think they've been sold a bill of goods; they've been made suckers for a fad—"editing by consultancy." Yes, suckers, because there is no evidence that this "formula news"—the top twenty hit news items—works.

It may—*may*—produce a temporary one or two-point rating advantage, or an interesting set of demographics. But the evidence that it does not work is in the startling turnover of anchor people and news directors in our affiliated stations. Inexact but indicatively approximate figures show that fifty percent or so of these people change jobs every two years. For many stations the roll-over is quicker than that.

Now, that's no way to build a reliable, dependable news staff. For one thing, these fly-by-nights don't know the territory. They don't have the credibility of long-time residents, nor, what is worse, do they have any long-term interests in the community. The unsettling fact is that viewers are impressed *un*favorably by these frequent comings and goings. These transient performers are simply using the broadcast manager as a stone in the quicksand to hold them up long enough to jump to the next rock.

Let me play consultant for a moment. Permit me, if you will, to talk directly to those of you whose stations may have been caught up in this "formula news" fad.

The reason you are being taken is that the answer to your news problem probably is right under your nose. In the first place, why buy somebody else's idea of an ideal anchor person or news editor for your market?

Your anchor person is the most intimate contact you have with your community. Don't you know what sort of person your neighbors like? Don't *you* know better than any outsider the tastes of your friends and acquaintances? If not, I suggest that maybe *you* ought to be the one to move along.

Second: isn't a homeowner, or a long-time resident, or at least a young man or woman who has chosen your community and wants to make a career there—isn't he or she likely to give a great deal more in enthusiasm and dedication and interest (qualities, I might point out, that are easily detected across the airwaves) than the wanderer looking for the next big break in the next biggest town?

Why not try building your staff with such people, promoting the ablest from desk writer to street reporter to anchor person—from within?

If you don't have those people with news training immediately available, have you considered scouting your local newspaper? For what you pay those inexperienced announcers, you could hire the best—the best newspaperman in your town—as on-air broadcaster or news director, or, possibly both . . . Find a fellow or gal who knows the city like a book, who likes the city, warts and all, and plans to raise a family there.

Possibly he has a little grey in his hair; He may be bald, or wear horn-rimmed bifocals. Chances are his collar is somewhat crumpled and his tie is done in an old-fashioned four-in-hand instead of a bulbous Windsor. But I'll guarantee you this: He knows more about your town and what makes it tick than will ever be learned by that young fellow from 2,000 miles away, the chap some consultant tells you got a good rating back there. And you know what? That slightly tousled codger is going to exude more authority and reliability and believability and integrity from the nail on the little finger of his left hand than that pompadoured, pampered announcer is ever going to muster. Isn't that really what you want to sell: authority, believability, credibility, integrity?

Who has said that won't work? Some market analyst who has no concern for news integrity? Somebody looking only at the numbers? Do you really feel right abdicating your responsibility to him?

And, what about this question of age, anyway? I admit I speak on this issue with a certain special interest, but what about it? Why do you feel obliged to believe the demographic demons who say it takes a kid to appeal to kids? Let me just mildly—and as modestly as possible—note that the hottest tickets on the college lecture circuits, packing them in wherever they go, are some newsmen with a little grey at the temples and a crinkle or two around the eyes, perhaps even a dewlap under the chin. I refer to Dan Schorr, Dan Rather, Eric Sevareid—and I'll even mention yours truly.

Since I've stumbled onto my favorite subject, let me dwell—lovingly—there for a moment. I've gained a certain prominence in this business. There are those polls that show I'm the most trusted American. (My God, what shape the country's in!) There is the new U.S. News & World Report survey that purports to show that I'm the sixth most powerful man in America, a perfectly ridiculous assessment, of course.

But what is important about all this is that I have become a sort of symbol of television journalism, a generic face of television news, spoken of as an authority figure. Occasionally I am asked by our critics to shoulder the blame for all our sins as well.

Why this exalted position? Longevity. I'd like to think I've done a good job, but it goes deeper than that. I've been tolerated for a long time as the front man for a solid, consistently good, news organization that through the years has never wavered in its total dedication to the principles of ethical journalism. Doesn't that say something to all of us?

What people are really recognizing in honoring me is this steadfastness of CBS News as represented by this long-time association. The two things cannot be separated.

While I certainly do not recommend that you try to pattern your news organizations after ours, it seems to me that at least in this matter of building some seniority into your staffs, off- and on-air, you would not only be better serving your community, but you would not be suffering in the ratings battles. And, over the long run, you might even win a few.

I know that, with a very few exceptions, you are anxious to make your news operations the very best you can. I know that you won't sell out cheap, that you don't want to pander to show business values in an area of the business where such pandering is a fatal flaw.

So, don't let someone else who claims to know better than you do what your community news needs are, dictate your news operation.

You have in your command such vast power, such great potential for leadership in your community, and such an overwhelming responsibility that it will be nothing short of sinful if you turn your backs and fail to play the role that has been presented to you.

This world of ours is in a pretty frightful mess. There are decisions on the cosmic scale that must be made in the next decade that will determine, literally, whether we live or die. We cannot long tolerate delay in reaching solutions for such problems as population, pollution, depletion of natural resources (including food), and nuclear proliferation.

Not one of these problems can be solved in Washington or New York, without understanding and support from the population at large. Our strength comes not from Washington, but from Houston and Wichita and Salem and Missoula and Charleston. The leadership begins there, too. And YOU are the leaders.

Your responsibility to your stockholders is great, and must be considered prime. As I have said earlier, if you don't stay in business you can't very well discharge the other responsibilities that station ownership and management have visited upon you.

But this does not give you license to ignore those other responsibilities. I'd like to suggest that in the discharge of those other responsibilities you may find the greatest satisfaction for yourselves, for your communities and thus, as day follows the night, for your stockholders.

Broadcasting can be responsible in the news areas, and simultaneously successful. I invite you to look again at the networks—at CBS and, yes, NBC, too. The managements of our networks have built vast show business empires. Never in the history of man have there been such impresarios as our network executives. Never has there been such a sales medium, and never, of course, has there been anything like that combination.

At the same time, never has there been such a news medium as television. But those same men who built those great blocks of entertainment

in a competitive environment with more dollars at stake than many of us can even dream of, who never lost sight of the sales potential in every tough decision. Those men have been so perceptive that they have also understood that news is something vastly different. They have fought to protect the news teams they chose from the pressures of the marketplace and the political forums.

We of the news department made—still make—impossible demands upon them. We ask them to appeal to public acceptance for sixteen or seventeen hours of the broadcast day, and then for an hour or two, turn their backs on public favor and permit us to broadcast those stories that must be told, be they pleasant or unpleasant, bland or highly controversial.

These network decision makers have been forced to stand against the most horrible kind of political pressure. They have valiantly protected news integrity against commercial demands. All this has taken extraordinary courage, but the Paleys and Stantons and Taylors and Schneiders have done it, and are doing it.

Significantly, the network that has the highest confidence of the people, as shown in the news ratings, also happens to be the biggest money maker. Playing it honest, playing it for integrity, hasn't seemed to hurt. I suggest it probably has helped.

You who operate at the local level, like us at the national, are a vital force in the free flow of information. Without that information democracy cannot survive. I envy you and your opportunities to play that lofty role in your communities, from which the strength must flow for the challenging battles ahead.

Walter Cronkite needs, as they say, no introduction. The veteran newsman has been a familiar face on CBS for the past 25 years.

WNEW-TV 5
New York

KTTV 11
Los Angeles

WTTG 5
Washington, D.C.

WTCN-TV 11
Minneapolis-St. Paul

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It's a Long Bike Ride to the TV Set

By DAVID BONAVIA

Low incomes and political inhibitions are the chief deterrents to the development of television in China, where private ownership of TV sets is still a rarity.

Though color television is now available in Peking, it has been plagued by technical difficulties. The capital still has only one channel for this great metropolis. It operates in color and in black and white for three or four hours every evening.

What are the programs like? Heavily political, as you might expect. Nothing frothy or jolly or what the Chinese would call "decadent." But more and more documentary films are being turned out, mostly on technical and scientific subjects.

Miniature sets are being manufactured and sold in China, but their cost is beyond the reach of most families. In general, the Chinese prefer to spend their savings on bicycles, sewing machines, watches, synthetic fabrics, radios and foodstuffs. No figures on the number of sets in operation are released.

Standards of program production and presentation have remained simple and basic since TV was introduced to China, with the Soviet Union's assistance, in 1958. The Cultural Revolution and its aftermath have insured that politics dominate the small screen. This, of course, sets a clear limit on the type of entertainment offered.

A typical evening's viewing begins at 7 o'clock, with a program guide and news. No late bulletins, no on the spot action films enliven the newscasts. The news reflects the policies of the centrally controlled press and radio services. Most of them are 24 hours behind the event.

The lead story usually concerns internal political campaigns, or the reception accorded to foreign dignitaries visiting China, of whom there is an endless parade. Until Chairman Mao Tse-tung's recent seclusion from foreign visitors, his appointments with callers from abroad invariably led the day's news.

Before the announcement in June that the Chairman would no longer receive foreign statesmen, China-watchers and the Chinese people themselves found the film of his encounters with them an invaluable guide to the state of his health and likely longevity—a matter of great political importance.

However, a certain amount of judicious cutting by the Peking television station made it possible to show the Chairman as more vigorous than he really was—for instance, by repeating shots of him shaking hands with visitors from different angles.

The New China News Agency claimed recently that the showing of Chairman Mao on TV was a great inspiration to the Chinese people. It quoted workers, peasants and soldiers as saying: "Each time we see Chairman Mao on the TV screen, we feel a great upsurge of spirit." It is not known how the people will be affected by being deprived of their regular sight of the Chairman on TV.

A useful feature of the TV news broadcasts is the feeling they convey about the relative precedence of other top leaders, and their relations with each other. For instance, after the death of former Premier Chou En-lai in February, the TV news clip showed his widow, Mrs. Teng Ying-chao, giving a cool reception to one of the chief mourners—the youthful Shanghai worker-hero and military commissar, Wang Hung-wen.

This implied a foreboding of the coming split between those whose political loyalties had been focused on Chou and his presumed successor, Teng Hsiao-ping, before the April disturbances in Peking brought about Teng's political disgrance. Wang was believed to be a strong supporter of the "radical" movement which ousted Teng, and which was apparently led by Mao's wife, Chiang Ching.

Chiang Ching, a former actress now in her sixties, apparently has a large say in the programming of Peking television. Several times a week, on average, it screens re-runs of the film versions of "model" revolutionary operas and ballets which she has planned and helped produce.

With the exception of occasional war-films—or imports from Albania and North Korea—this is almost the only type of feature film on Chinese television.

A recent survey of the progress of television put out by the official Chinese news agency noted that it has given prominence to "tremendous changes in Hsiao Chin Chuang village." This small rural community near Tientsin was chosen by Chiang Ching as the experimental site for testing her ideas about culture for workers and peasants. Teng is said to have criticized it severely, to Chiang Ching's displeasure.

The TV service also allows viewers in Peking and the provinces to see concerts which they would be unable to attend—for instance, a performance of Mongolian songs and dances by a troupe from the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region.

Technical documentaries are also popular. A recent one showed the cultivation and many uses of the lotus plant. Others concentrated on such vital subjects as grain storage and crop-seeding.

Few Chinese communes have TV sets in large numbers, however, and this means that peasants would have to walk or cycle after nightfall to

watch programs at the commune or production brigade headquarters—in many cases, a journey of several miles. Since the peasants rise at dawn and go to bed early, the rural TV audience is of necessity limited.

In the cities people also have to rise early to catch their buses or cycle to work, and TV sets may be available only at the factories, or other semi-public institutions.

A probable result of this is that TV has a largely youthful audience, since young people are more likely to live in dormitories near their places of work, where sets are available.

Whoever the viewer is, he or she is unlikely to be lured to stay up later than about 10:30 p.m. By that time, the TV stations will have closed down, after broadcasting their regular final item of the evening: "The summary of tomorrow night's news bulletin."—GEMINI.

David Bonavia is on the staff of the Far Eastern Economic Review, Asia's leading business weekly. He is also Far East correspondent, based in Hong Kong, for a number of newspapers, including The Times of London.

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The Philadelphia Project or The Motivating of Millions

By ERNEST DICKINSON

Throughout Philadelphia on two nights last winter thousands of parents and children watched television together as a school assignment. What was even more unusual, they were also reading the script of the program, *Eleanor & Franklin*, and discussing it.

"My mother remembered a lot about Roosevelt," says Tanya Roane, a 14-year-old eighth grader. "She told me that my grandmother liked him so much that when he died, she said she was never going to vote again."

The father of 12-year-old Cheryl Rogers asked his daughter to write all the words from the script that she didn't understand and look them up in the dictionary. He tested her on them afterwards.

In their house on North Taney Street, Kim Hall and her mother, Anita, each took notes on their impressions of the characters and compared them.

These and similar family experiences all across the city were just one of the results of a project that, Philadelphia school officials believe, will have nationwide implications for both education and TV programming.

The venture was unique. It involved the cooperation of a city school district, a television network, a major industry and a newspaper. The experiment was so successful that the next such program will be undertaken on an even larger scale, covering several cities.

For the past three years the Philadelphia School System had been pioneering in the use of tapes and scripts of commercial television to teach reading and other skills in the classroom.

"But wouldn't it be great to tune in an entire city," asked Michael McAndrew, the district's television reading program coordinator, "especially if we could get texts into every home?"

The board of education and Superintendent Michael P. Marcase agreed. The question was: how?

The ABC Television Network proposed its dramatization of Joseph P. Lash's book, *Eleanor & Franklin*, as a worthy prospect. It was to be telecast

nationally on Sunday, January 11, and Monday, January 12. Dr. McAndrew and others endorsed the plan.

Then IBM, sponsor of the program, offered as a public service to pay for having the scripts printed as a 16-page insert in The Philadelphia *Inquirer* and for having enough extra copies of the insert run off so that they could be distributed to all junior and senior high school students.

The newspaper carried the supplement January 9. It printed also a full page of enrichment exercises—discussion topics, questions, additional information about FDR, Eleanor and the era in which they lived.

Scripts went into about 850,000 homes in the Delaware Valley. They were also distributed to 129,000 public school students in Philadelphia, as well as 73,000 in the suburbs and 20,000 or so college students.

The viewing response was strong. In the Delaware River Basin which includes Philadelphia, Part I of *Eleanor & Franklin* attained a Neilsen rating of 38; Part II, 51. This contrasts with a national rating of 20.3 on the first night and 24.1 on the second.

"We received about 5100 letters and 1800 telephone calls, overwhelmingly favorable," Dr. McAndrew says.

Philadelphia educators had learned earlier that the use of a script gives the viewer a participatory feeling, that of having a director's seat at the show. It brings words to life and it enormously heightens both retention and recall.

Although this particular project concentrated less on classroom application than on involving parents and students in the home, many teachers did put the program to use afterwards.

In some instances it provided a focal point for discussing black history of the period. Blacks formed one of FDR's most devoted constituencies. Women's rights were also involved, Eleanor having been a forerunner of that movement.

At Lincoln High School William Brown's social studies class pondered such questions as: Did President Roosevelt's paralysis make him a compassionate man?

After learning of her husband's affair with Lucy Mercer, was Eleanor weak in staying with Franklin or did she show great strength?

The Philadelphia school system has been using tapes of commercial television in combination with scripts in innovative ways for several years.

In 1973 Dr. McAndrew and Dr. Bernard Solomon were motivating children to read with videotapes of *Here's Lucy, Sanford and Son* and *Kung Fu.*

At Lincoln High School a class of 20 culturally disadvantaged youngsters—most of whom either have no parents or do not live with them—have had problems understanding what they read. The televised images give the words of the script reality and meaning.

In a different way, videotaped shows and their texts are used to develop creativity in children who are already excellent readers for their age. At the John Hancock Demonstration School in open classes children work at a rate that is comfortable for them. There television is the core for the whole academic program.

Fourth graders, for example, may read a short section of the script of *Brian's Song,* watch it on television, then analyse it from the standpoint of emotion and expression. The children may even role-play the same situation. Eventually the class expects to write, produce and put on its own television program.

In the city's high schools, a tape of *Missiles of October* was extensively used in conjunction with studies of the Constitution and the powers of the presidency.

At one point, networks enjoined Dr. McAndrew and his associates from videotaping their programs and transcribing their scripts. The practice did violate copyright laws. But when network officials learned how the programs were being used, they not only relented but even offered to provide a master copy of any script requested. Their only condition was that Philadelphia had to agree to make copies of these available to any other districts that might want to use them similarly.

Such an arrangement has been made with about 3500 other systems. So, in effect, the city has become the television language arts center for the nation.

With the success of the *Eleanor & Franklin* venture, all the school districts in the Delaware Valley want to become involved the next time, Dr. McAndrew says. Almost any general television curriculum package effective for Philadelphia would be equally so for other metropolitan areas.

So city school officials are planning to undertake another blanket distribution of scripts and enrichment aids for an appropriate coming TV program—this time in coordination with districts in several other major cities.

Dr. McAndrew is certain it can and will be done.

Already, he says, networks are coming to him with prospective shows.

"If we can guarantee the networks the kind of ratings that we got in Philadelphia—and I believe we can even improve on them by getting the scripts out a little earlier next time—and if we can do this over a much wider area," Dr. McAndrew says, "the networks have much to gain. And so does the cause of quality television."

He believes it may eventually be possible for school districts to work as partners with the media and to develop the leverage to obtain the sort of programming most needed.

The *Eleanor & Franklin* project pioneered in the alliance of schools, industry, press and television. At a time when education budgets are being squeezed, it enabled thousands of students to bring home a living text and keep it at no cost.

At a time when parents are often feeling isolated from their children and asking educators, "What can we do to help?" this enterprise provided an answer. And perhaps it is particularly appropriate that it occurred in the bicentennial year, since, in colonial days, so much of education occurred at the hearthside.

Ernest Dickinson is a veteran freelance whose byline has appeared in Reader's Digest and other publications. He is a regular contributor to the Sunday New York Times. He resides in Chappaqua, N.Y. with his wife and two children.

Quote—Unquote

"Americans in their role as viewers are not very adventurous. They dote on old pals—Marcus, Archie, Dear Little Mary. They have gone through a lot with them and are loyal through thin and thin. They even resent seeing their good buddies shoved out of old time slots."

Richard Schickel • Time Magazine

★ ★ ★

"I hate the word 'media'. It reeks of ostentatiously trying to make something sound grand which is not grand at all. I never heard the word when I first worked in television twenty years ago. Now it is always 'the media' which are everywhere attacked for bias, or entreated to disseminate some point of view with which the public has supposedly not been sufficiently deluged."

Woodrow Wyatt • London Sunday Times

As They Were Saying . . .

Innumerable newspaper critics seem to insist that broadcast journalism be like *their* journalism, and measured by their standards. It cannot be. The two are more complementary than competitive in most ways, but they are different.

The journalism of sight and sound is the only truly new form of journalism to come along. It is a mass medium, a universal medium, as the American public education system is the world's first effort to teach everyone, so far as that is possible.

It has serious, built-in limitations as well as advantages, compared with print. Broadcast news operates in linear time, newspapers in linear space. This means that a newspaper or magazine reader can be his own editor in a vital sense. He can glance over it and decide what to read, what to pass by. The TV viewer is a restless prisoner, obliged to sit through what does not interest him to get to what may interest him.

Everybody watches television to some degree, including most of those who pretend they don't. Felix Frankfurter was right. He said there is no highbrow in any lowbrow, but there is a fair amount of lowbrow in every highbrow. Television is a combination mostly of lowbrow and middlebrow, but there is more highbrow offered than highbrows will admit, or even seek to know about.

They will make plans, go to trouble and expense, when they buy a book or reserve a seat in the theatre. They will study the week's offerings in music or drama or serious documentation in the radio and TV program pages of their newspaper, and then schedule themselves to be present. They want to come home, eat dinner, twist the dial and find something agreeable ready, accommodating to *their* schedule.

—Eric Sevareid of CBS News
From an address before
the Washington Journalism Center

★ ★ ★

What can public television do to fill in the gaps in public affairs coverage? Even within our limited resources, I am convinced there is plenty.

For example, there are today no awards presented on national television for the best of news and public affairs. There are Emmys for entertainment,

Oscars for movies, and Tonys for Broadway. But there is nothing on television to honor the year's outstanding accomplishments in television journalism. And I believe this is a disgraceful state of affairs.

We are working on plans in public television to give access to the independent documentarians. We need a regular series, some place in television, not only for the likes of Fred Wiseman, Michael Roemer and the irreverent folks at TVTV, but also for independent producers who work in film and videotape. These artists now have no outlet for their ideas, their craft and their inspiration, because the commercial news departments will not go outside their own staffs for material.

Finally, we ought to find a way to take some of the outstanding past documentary reports seen on the commercial networks . . . and re-broadcast them on public television. To me, there is something wasteful and irrational about spending so much money, energy and time on vital reporting efforts, for only one showing. Public television has the air time. The American people ought to have the opportunity to see these programs on basic issues they may have missed when they were shown originally on CBS, NBC or ABC.

—Lawrence K. Grossman,
President, PBS
From an address to the
International Radio and Television
Society in New York

WCBS-TV New York
KNXT Los Angeles
WBBM-TV Chicago
WCAU-TV Philadelphia
KMOX-TV St. Louis

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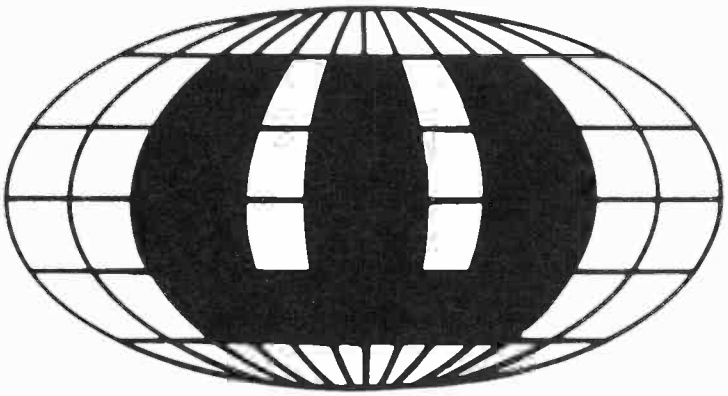

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In Memoriam

Television Quarterly sorrowfully notes the death of Joan Mack, senior program underwriting officer of WNET/13, New York. Miss Mack died of cancer at her home in Easthampton on July 11.

A pioneer in raising corporate funds for public television, Miss Mack brought together the coalition of patrons that made possible *The Adams Chronicles* and *Dance in America.*

At the memorial service for the British-born Miss Mack, Virginia Kassel, producer-creator of *The Adams Chronicles,* paid tribute to her colleague.

"To have had the honor of being Joan's friend is to have received a great responsibility", Miss Kassel said. "For to have been given much is to have the task of passing along these gifts which cannot be returned to her. Joan believed in friends and in the dreams of her friends. Not indiscriminately—always with a fierce judgment and a leveling wit. But through her belief we were challenged and came to believe in ourselves."

Said Robert Kotlowitz, Vice-president for Programming at WNET/13, "Joan spent her life in the chronic, painful search for excellence, and everything she touched in that search grew in some way."

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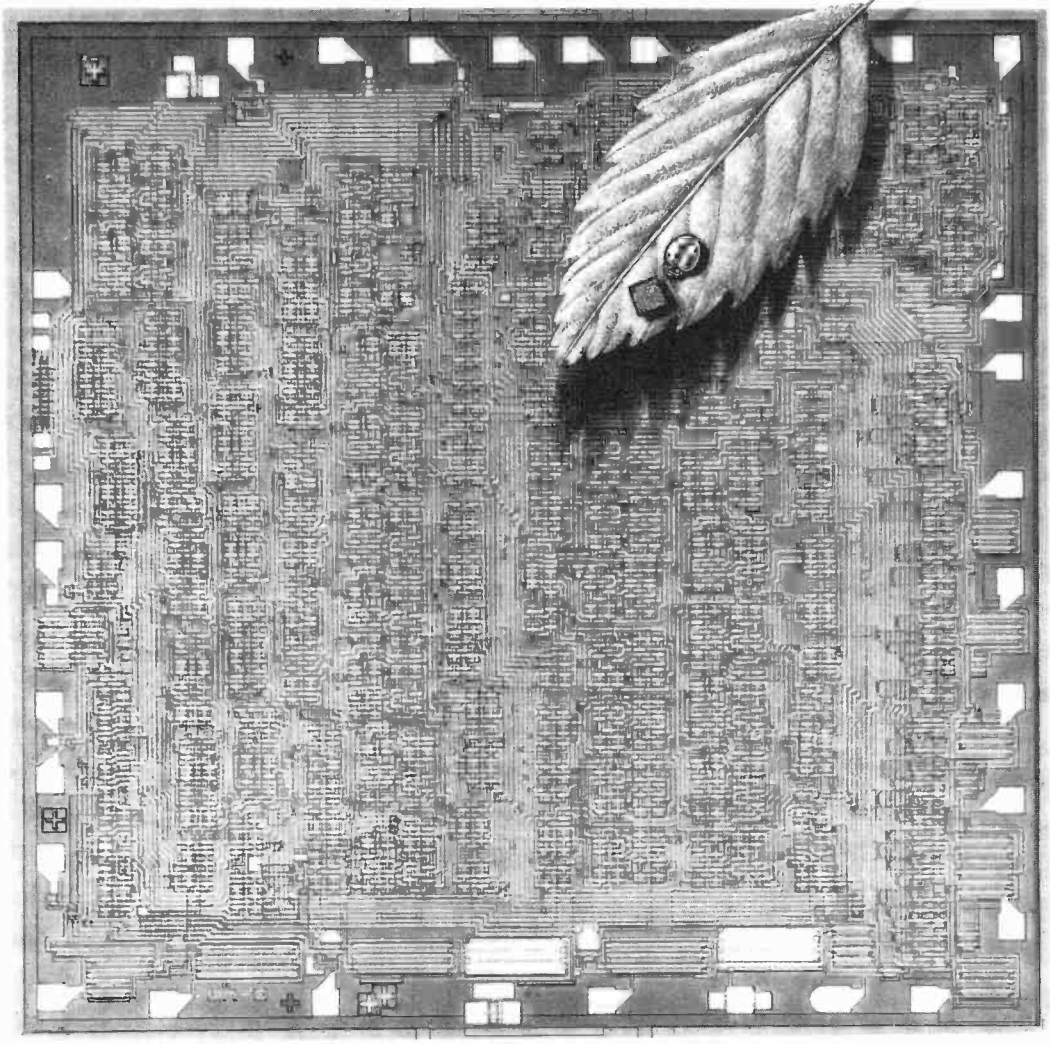


The electronic way

RCA

The Last Minority
Television and Gay People

By NEWTON E. DEITER, Ph.D.

In 1968, the television industry made its first tentative acknowledgment that homosexuals existed and, in fact, might be suitable subjects for something other than documentaries.

In that year, the short-lived series *N.Y.P.D.* presented an episode showing homosexuals being blackmailed by con-men impersonating police officers. The actual homosexual characters presented in this episode were believable, serious, and presented positive views of themselves and their subculture.

Prior to this first tentative step, homosexuals and Lesbians had been the subject of occasional documentaries and the butt of no small amount of humor by television comedians from the early days up to the present.

Following this first presentation, except for comedy routines, a four-year gap occurred before we next saw homosexuals on television. In that year, ABC presented *That Certain Summer*, and, in the same year, the producers of *Medical Center* presented Lois Nettleton, in a positive portrayal as a Lesbian psychiatrist, and Paul Burke, as a homosexual research scientist, dealing with prejudice in the professional community. These small gains caused homosexuals to believe that they would be treated with fairness and honesty on the small screen.

In 1973, they were proved wrong, when, on *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, an episode entitled "The Other Martin Loring," which explored, in negative fashion, the emotional problems of a man dealing with homosexuality in his life while he was, at the same time, married with children.

The negative comparisons drawn in this production raised the ire of Gay men and women throughout the country. Despite numerous letters to the network and to the producers, the following year, on this same show, *The Outrage* was presented. In this episode, child molestation was equated with homosexuality and, by inference, the specious conclusion, that all homosexuals are child molesters and vice-versa, was drawn. It was time for gay people to look to their own premises.

Analyzing the situation, responsible representatives of the gay community on both coasts realized that much of the negativity they had seen came, not from a desire to denigrate the homosexual lifestyle, but, rather, from a lack of knowledge on the part of network programming people and

network personnel in the broadcast standards areas. Educational efforts were mounted in New York on a network, corporate level and in Hollywood on a programming, creative, and production level to make networks aware of those areas that were particularly sensitive to gay people.

In this fashion, the Gay Media Task Force was born, not as a censorship organization, but rather, as an information and research group that has the long-range goal of putting itself out of business by raising network consciousness to the point that GMTF is no longer necessary. It should be noted that, at no time, does GMTF attempt to make artistic or creative judgments. That area, we believe, belongs to the writer, producer, and director. In-put is limited to the Gay Media Task Force's area of expertise, which is a fair and balanced portrayal of gay people.

The first steps were tentative and hesitant. At best, the relationship was uneasy. Network and production people really did not believe that this group did not wish to censor, and GMTF members believed that they must watch every move and perhaps even look for controversy where none existed.

Illustrative of this initial uneasiness was the mutual experience of NBC and GMTF with an early episode of their Emmy-Award-winning *Police Story* series. Producer Stanley Kalis, presented a script to the network that they realized, following meetings with GMTF personnel, would be, in the form submitted, extremely offensive to gay men and women.

Following a lengthy meeting with GMTF representatives, Kalis had the script rewritten, and, in eliminating the areas he felt were insensitive or derogatory to gay persons, he took the life out of his script. A second meeting resulted in many of the important points he had eliminated being restored at GMTF's suggestion, and he became the first of many production executives to realize that, when the Gay Media Task Force said, "We want your product to be better for our involvement," that it was sincerely meant.

As time has passed, each of the three networks have developed their own policies for working with GMTF. As GMTF representatives have worked with each network, a feeling of mutual respect has developed. It is important to note that, in no case have any of the three networks abdicated any of their programming responsibilities. In all cases, GMTF recommendations are exactly that, since GMTF recognizes that the ultimate responsibility for everything which goes out on the air belongs to the network. At the same time, procedures have been developed to eliminate potential problems before they ever occur.

Producers are encouraged to consult with GMTF personnel when they are developing product that is either gay-themed or involves gay characters. Oftentimes, in the resultant dialogue, the changes and adaptations which are required are small but highly significant in that they affect the perceptions of the homosexual individual held by millions of television viewers.

Looking back over the 1973-74-75 seasons, each year has seen a greater involvement of gay characters in the television product. In the upcoming 1976-77 season, in addition to the syndicated *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*, ABC will have a continuing gay character on the *Nancy Walker Show*. On CBS, the *Bob Newhart Show* will add a gay member to Newhart's therapy group. On NBC, *Snip* will also feature a continuing gay character. In addition, individual shows, exploring various gay concerns will appear on *Alice, Phyllis, Maude*, (all on CBS), on ABC's *Family* and NBC's *The Practice*.

Research and programming personnel at all three networks will be watching with a great deal of interest the acceptance of continuing gay characters by the viewing public. It is anticipated that, within the next two years, one of the networks will present a series built around gay characters. Developmental projects in this area are being carried forward in three major production shops.

It should be noted, however, that all is not sweet harmony; problems still exist. In 1974, executive-producer David Gerber presented "Flowers of Evil" on his *Police Woman* series. This program, which presented Lesbians as psychopathic killers, exacerbated an already unpleasant situation.

As time has passed, networks and producers have grown more comfortable showing the homosexual male in a positive light. Except, however, for the earlier mentioned Lois Nettleton performance on *Medical Center*, Lesbians have always been shown as killers, sexual assaulters, despoilers of children, and presented stereotypically.

Even in 1976, again on *Police Woman*, executive-producer Gerber ordered his line producer to *not* consult with Gay Media Task Force representatives in violation of requirements made by NBC. The result was an hour of film that could have been outstanding, but, once again, patronized and put down Lesbians. In this single area, there remains substantial work to be done. The only bright light on this subject currently on the horizon is a proposed NBC two-hour movie dealing sensitively and warmly with Lesbian relationships.

As was stated earlier in this presentation, Gay Media Task Force has the long-range goal of putting itself out of business. Gay people would like to see themselves on television just as people, and it is GMTF's hope and expectation that the same process of involvement which brought about the honest presentation of Black, Chicano, American Indian and female characters without stereotyping will bring it about for gay people as well.

Mincey, swishy Brucey, and swaggering, masculine Mac-the-Dyke, are just as stereotypic (and offensive to gay people) as Step-n-Fetchit is to Blacks, the Frito Bandito to Chicanos, Tonto to American Indians, and Molly Goldberg to Jews.

The litany could continue with Scandinavians, Italians, Germans, Frenchmen, etc. At one time, each of these minorities accepted the stereo-

type and allowed themselves to be the butt of laughter. As each group developed their own sense of pride, that stereotyping ceased to be palatable, and television has been sensitive to these changing needs.

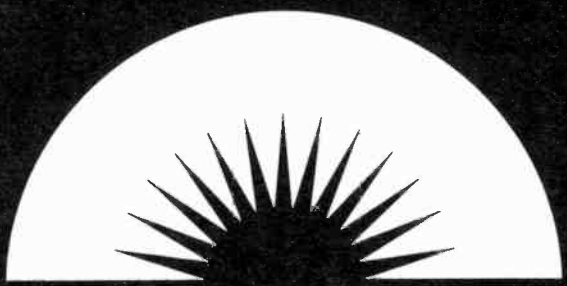
The best research estimates put the total of gay men and women in the United States at over 20 million, a group that has, in the main, a fairly substantial discretionary income. They are consumers, purchasers, voters and, increasingly, molders of opinion. Recognition of the needs and aspirations of this, the last minority, is an expectable result of the television industry's greater awareness.

Dr. Newton E. Deiter is Executive Director of the Institute of Human Concerns, Los Angeles, and a clinician in private practice in that city. He received his doctorate at the University of Chicago.

Quote—Unquote

"A superabundance of TV cameras on the convention floor plays up to the worst instincts of the politicians gathered there. It is hard for ordinary mortals to resist publicity; it is asking too much for politicians to forego an opportunity for national exposure. Yet the purpose of the convention is not to make the delegates look good back home, but for them to make a wise choice where they are."

"Presidential Elections" • Nelson W. Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky (Scribner's)



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ABC Television Network

The Television Black-Out in New Jersey

By JEFF WEINGRAD

Though it's the eighth most populous state in the union, New Jersey—incredibly—has no commercial television station. Only Delaware, fifth smallest in population, is similarly deprived.

What New Jersey has is "Jerseyvision," an enterprising UHF network, operating on a shoestring, and always at the mercy of budget slashing legislators.

Technically, of course, the distinguished PBS station, WNET, is assigned to Newark. But it operates out of New York City, it is national in outlook and it acknowledges its fealty to Newark only in an occasional public affairs program dealing with a New Jersey news event or social problem.

It is just over five years since Jerseyvision's first UHF station, WNJT (Channel 52) began operations in a converted bowling alley in Ewing Township, north of Trenton. With the addition of three more stations, New Jersey's Public Television signal began reaching every part of the Garden State.

To a degree, this satisfied the primary aim of a master TV plan put forth by a blue ribbon citizens' panel in 1968, and approved at the polls by a rousing majority.

News and sports dominate the network's schedule. The nightly New Jersey News is watched by some 500,000 viewers. This 29 minute roundup (compared to 22 minutes-or-less-on commercial stations) is a highly professional presentation, despite an annual budget of $750,000.

This sum must cover four mobile vans, one remote van, four camera crews, six reporters, two anchor persons, (one a woman, preceding Barbara Walters by a few years), a sports announcer and a weather man. All this to cover the state.

In a variety of ways, Jerseyvision fills home-town needs. It broadcasts high school and college athletic events. It carries all the home games of the Rutgers basketball team, (a team that ranked third, nationally, this year).

It is estimated that this loose network of small stations now has 1.4 million regular viewers, out of a state population of 7.5 million. The audience is up about 33 per cent over last year.

What else does New Jersey watch? The network provides gavel to gavel coverage of all important State House proceedings. Cultural events, from symphony concerts to arts and crafts shows, are regularly covered. There are local programs for the black and Spanish-speaking communities.

For viewers who have missed a particular PBS program over Channel 13, chances are it will be repeated on Jerseyvision.

In the fullest sense, this hard-pressed, ever-in-jeopardy network is fulfilling a notable educational function. Every week it broadcasts 40 hours of information and instruction to classrooms throughout the state. The programs reach 200,000 pupils and 9000 teachers, from kindergarten through college. These sessions account for 51 per cent of Jerseyvision programming.

New Jersey residents watch commercial television via New York or Philadelphia channels. Reception is not precisely superb in some areas. It has been suggested that this situation accounts, at least in part, for the grim statistics placing New Jersey residents among the least informed in the nation.

In 1973, a Harris poll found that, on a national average, 59 per cent of the public could name one Senator from their state; 39 per cent could name both. But not in New Jersey.

In New Jersey, 32 per cent could name one Senator, and less than 25 per cent could name both.

At the height of the 1972 Presidential campaign and the Senatorial campaign, only 19 per cent of the citizenry could remember the name, Clifford P. Case. He has been in the U.S. Senate since 1954. A mere five per cent could identify his Democratic opponent.

In October, 1973, while the race for the governorship was at its peak, a third of New Jersey's citizens were unable to name either the Republican or the Democratic candidate. But a surprising number—56 per cent—instantly identified New York's mayor, Abraham Beame.

Now, a commercial station, affiliated with a network but carrying a quantity of local news, might not turn every Jerseyite into an alert, involved citizen. But it would inform a great many people whose ignorance can only depress participatory democracy in the state.

Because of these sorry facts, a petition has been filed each year with the FCC by the Governor or by the New Jersey Coalition for Fair Broadcasting. This amalgam of civic groups has been trying to force some change in the inadequate coverage of the state by New York and Philadelphia stations.

The licensed presence of these TV signals in New Jersey precludes establishment of any VHF (Very High Frequency) station in the state. The response from New York and Philadelphia has been small and not very spirited.

This year's complaint, filed by Gov. Brendan Byrne, proposed three solutions: 1) establish a VHF station in the state that would not conflict with New York or Philadelphia licensees. (This would necessitate a decrease in

the mileage allowances for a station's signals.) 2) force the re-location of a New York station (WABC was suggested) to New Jersey. 3) establish dual responsibility for an existing station, i.e., WABC-TV, New York and Newark.

As expected, the Commission turned down all three proposals. At the same time, repeating an old refrain, the Commissioners called for fuller TV coverage of life in New Jersey. No specific plan was prescribed.

Though Gov. Byrne has been sympathetic to the state's video dilemma, he very nearly cut the heart out of the one viable alternative: New Jersey's own public TV network on the UHF dial.

In the fiscal year 1976 Jerseyvision received a little over 3.3 million dollars from the state, about 85 per cent of its budget. For fiscal 1977, the network requested an increase to $5.4 million, hoping to expand operations to Newark, and increase on the air hours from 70 to 100 a week.

In April, Gov. Byrne, caught in an unprecedented financial crisis, allotted the network a mere one million, an enormous cut. In an instant, all plans for expansion were cancelled. A formal request was made for continuation of the former budget.

The wheels of bureaucracy grind exceedingly slow, but they do grind. In mid-July, when the legislature finally passed its first income tax law, the cut of $2.3 million was restored.

Had the funds not been restored, admits Dr. Lawrence T. Frymire, the network's beleaguered executive director, the stations would have been able to function only in the daytime. And on a very limited basis, at that.

With production costs ever on the rise, the old budget isn't stretching painlessly over new problems. The months of uncertainty took their toll; twelve staff members quit. Pennies are being pinched, with the usual effects on morale.

There will be no growth, no expansion to Newark in this fiscal year. In time, should prosperity return, this situation may change. Someday New Jersey may even have a commercial station to call its own. Then its citizens may do better in the Harris poll.

Jeff Weingrad is a resident of Milltown, New Jersey and a graduate of Rutgers. He is a member of the features staff of the New York Post.

Satellite Interconnection

By **WILLIAM D. HOUSER**
Director, CPB Satellite Project

More is better. That aphorism well may be taken as the slogan for public broadcasting's move into satellite interconnection. The first official step in that direction took place August 13, 1976, when the FCC was asked to approve elements for a $39.5 million national satellite interconnection system that is expected to be operational by January 1, 1979.

The satellite system will provide three (and later four) simultaneous network feeds for each and every public television station, giving each more flexibility in choosing programs, as well as greater diversity in programs. It will also permit greater use of interconnection for regional originations for geographic or functional purposes. And not least, it will provide "live" programs to offshore public TV stations that at present must accept tapes.

The FCC filing was made by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Public Broadcasting Service, 13 individual public television stations, and Western Union. Additional individual station applications are expected to be filed in coming months. Within a year, applications are expected to be filed by public radio stations for a national satellite radio interconnection.

CPB is raising the bulk of the $39.5 million total construction costs through an arrangement with a consortium of banks and other lenders, led by the Bank of America, that will establish a 10-year line of credit for $32.5 million. The other $7 million will come from contributions by CPB, PBS, individual stations with the help of the Kresge Foundation, and a grant plus loan from the Ford Foundation.

At present, PBS, the cooperative association of public TV stations, originates its live feeds to member stations over a single, one-way, generally non-reversible terrestrial circuit leased from AT&T. For the use of this line, public broadcasting pays AT&T about $7 million annually.

PBS also operates tape delay centers in Denver and in Los Angeles for stations in the Rocky Mountain and West Coast areas that have time zone differences with the East Coast. In addition, PBS operates a mail distribution system providing tapes and films to member stations not on the live feeds. This includes stations in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the American Virgin Islands, American Samoa and Guam, as well as one station in the

continental United States (KOZK, Springfield, Mo.). This activity costs about $3 million more.

This annual total of $10 million in present operating costs is roughly what the satellite system will cost, including debt service, but there are additional benefits in the case of the satellite system.

The satellite project was not planned as a money making scheme, although over a 10-year span, a significant economy in operations is considered possible.

The fact that the satellite interconnection system will provide live programming to public TV in all but Samoa and Guam, as well as multiple live feeds and regional and functional networking, is considered a significant advantage of the project.

Other benefits of the satellite interconnection include such factors as a substantial improvement in video and audio quality. At present, repeaters are used every 25 to 30 miles on AT&T's terrestrial microwave, causing a degradation in quality that is related to distance. With the satellite system, there is only one intermediate step, the *transponder*, and this has been engineered to such a high degree that the degradation of the signal quality is quite small.

A higher standard for the audio portion of TV networking will also be provided through the utilization of digitalized, pulse-code modulation techniques. Code-named DATE (digital audio for television), the system permits four high-quality audio channels to be carried piggy-back on a single video channel sub-carrier. The result not only will be high fidelity audio for video programs, but it lends itself to various uses. The audio portion of a musical TV program, for example, could be broadcast in stereo, although an associated FM station would be needed for listeners to enjoy the two sound channels. Or a TV program could be transmitted to public television, accompanied by a narrative in four different languages. The station could choose which language to accompany its broadcast of the program.

Not the least of the advantages of the satellite system will be the ease with which additional stations can be added. Public broadcast officials estimate that there will be 30 new public TV stations in the next decade. At present, myriad scheduling and complex technical linkages are necessary to add a new station to the terrestrial lineup. In one case, the terrestrial link for a new station was estimated to take two years to install. With the satellite system, a new station can be put on line within a few months, with the building of an earth terminal and installation of associated equipments to receive the satellite signals.

The proposed satellite interconnection has four basic elements: (1) the satellite itself, Western Union's WESTAR; (2) a main origination earth terminal near PBS's headquarters in Washington, D.C., to be licensed to PBS; (3) five regional origination earth terminals within the continental

United States, to be licensed to regional entities or functional groups; (4) about 150 or so receive-only earth terminals to be licensed to associated public TV stations.

The Western Union contract calls for CPB to pay the company an annual rental of $800,000 for each of the first three transponders, and a fee of $750,000 annually for the fourth transponder when ordered.

The principal origination point in the satellite system will be the main terminal to be built somewhere in the Washington, D.C. area. The facility, by far the most advanced privately-owned space ground station in existence at the moment, will include two, steerable 11-meter parabolic antennas, three, 3-kw transmitters, two low-noise amplifiers, and five tunable receivers. The last two pieces of equipment will permit the main terminal to receive satellite signals as well as transmit them.

The cost of the main terminal, including revamping the PBS technical center in Washington to accommodate the new interconnection system, is calculated at about $5.5 million.

William Houser was recently appointed chief satellite consultant to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He was formerly deputy chief of naval operations for air warfare. He retired as Vice Admiral on April 30 of this year.

A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Vice Admiral Houser also received a Master of Science degree in international affairs from George Washington University.

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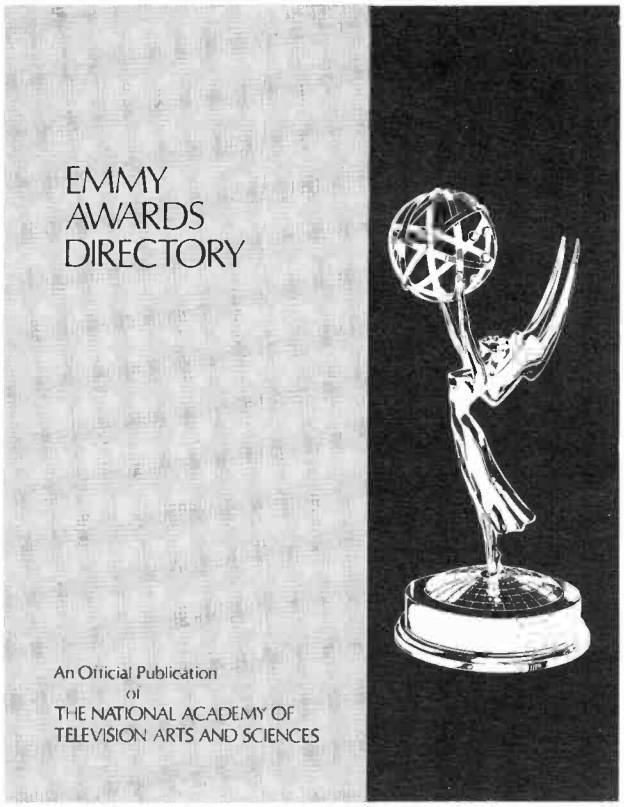

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