

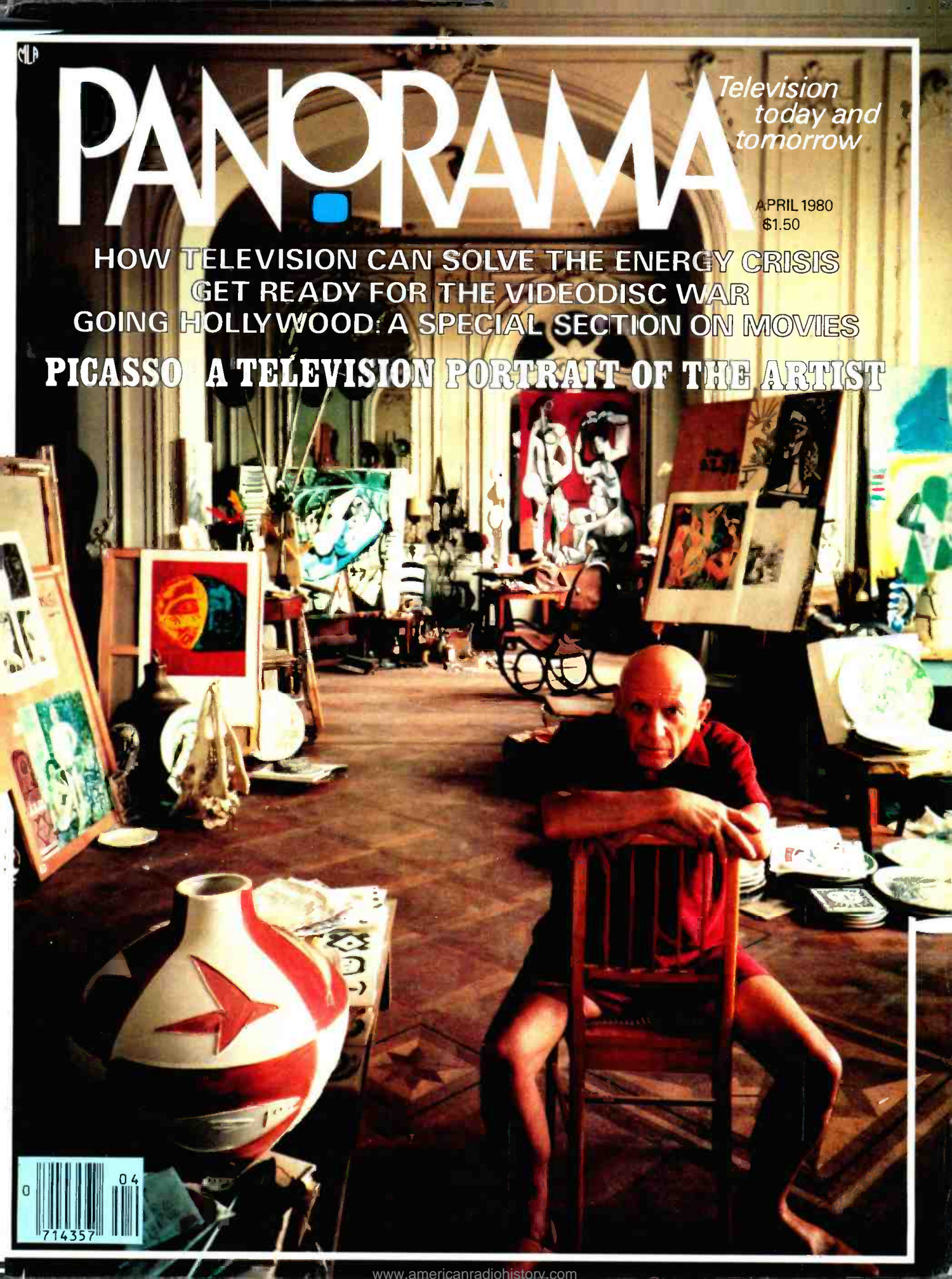
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# PANORAMA

Television  
today and  
tomorrow

APRIL 1980  
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# PANORAMA

Television today and tomorrow

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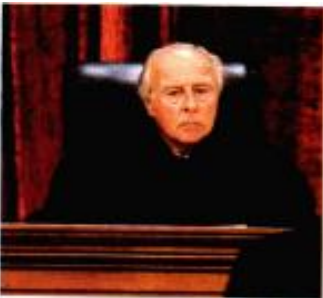
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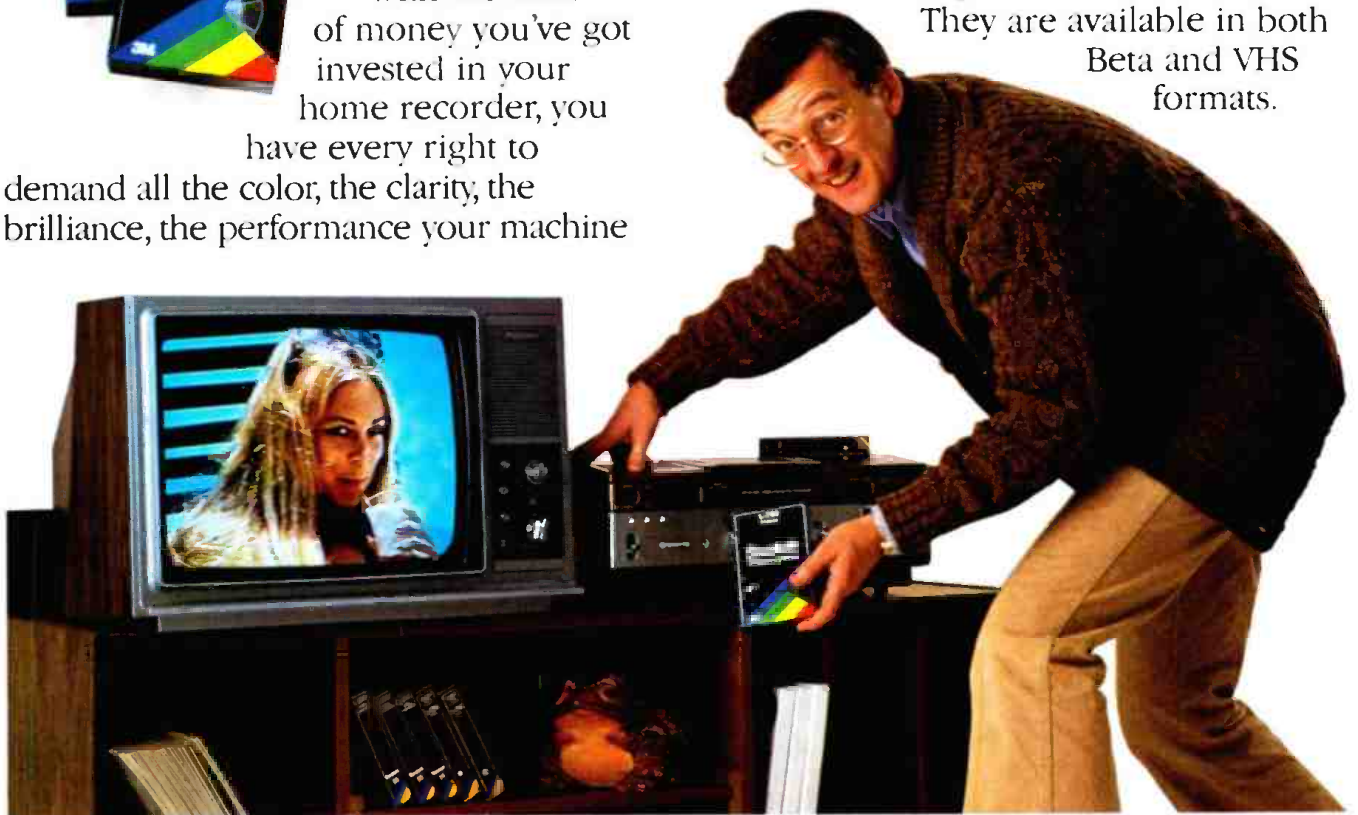
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# 3M

# THIS MONTH

APRIL 1980

## Cronkite Moves into Public TV... Networks Mobilize for Fall... Broadcasters Take Aim at Comsat... Russian Invades BBC... Quiz Shows Flood Japan

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

NEW YORK

Doug Hill reporting

**Cronkite's curriculum.** One would imagine that when Walter Cronkite wants to start a new public-affairs program, plenty of people would be willing to back him up. Not necessarily so.



Walter Cronkite

Cronkite and several partners have been trying for more than a year to find financial backing for a half-hour news background series for high-school students—a longtime dream of America's best-known anchorman—and they are still far short of their target, despite support from GM and other corporations.

But enough money has been raised to make a start on the project. There will be a week of pilot programs on the Los Angeles PBS station KCET in early October. They will feature academicians from a variety of subject areas discussing—live via satellite relay—a single event from the previous night's news.

"I launched it because for years I've been concerned about the fact that teachers did not tie current events into the various disciplines they taught," said Cronkite. "I thought they could add considerable rele-

vancy to what they were teaching as well as inspire students to be involved in current affairs by tying the two together." How does he know teachers aren't doing this already? "My own children were in school—very good schools—and still weren't living in the world outside them," he said.

Cronkite's own involvement in the show will be in an off-camera, advisory role, at least until he retires from CBS. The program's budget has been set at between \$1.5 million and \$2 million per year, modest by TV

standards.

Cronkite blames the tight economy for the scarcity of backers so far, but says he is "reasonably certain" that enough of them will be found to keep the project rolling. "I'll probably make a few more phone calls," he said. "I'm very anxious to see it go, and I'll do what I can to make it work."

**Commercial PBS.** Some of the larger PBS stations around the country, continually frustrated in their efforts to fund program production through government

and corporate grants, are taking an increasingly businesslike approach to the problem, and in the process are blurring traditional distinctions between public and commercial television.

One example of what many believe will be a growing trend is the current Julia Child series, produced by WGBH-TV in Boston. WGBH first circumvented the usual PBS program-selection process—a complicated series of votes by all the member stations—and offered to sell the 13-week program directly to individual PBS stations. Then it was offered to commercial stations in cities where the local PBS outlet couldn't or wouldn't buy the show.

Behind the marketing is Doug Auerbach, appointed last fall to the new position of director of sales for WGBH-TV. "I'm basically a businessman, which is unique for PBS," he says. "A lot of projects are going down the drain because traditional sources of funding are dying. No one's sure that PBS is even going to exist in five years, and we've got a job as an institution to perpetuate ourselves. So we're looking to other markets to produce for—commercial television is one, pay-cable is another."

Auerbach was in New York recently to meet with pay-cable executives, trying to make a co-production deal for an ambitious series of TV-movies about working people called *Made in U.S.A.* If he succeeds, the series would be presented first on cable, then on PBS.

Another station planning to move in a similar direction is WNET in New York, which recently hired Tom Johnston as its director of market development. In a comment that pretty much sums up the developing attitude, Johnston called WNET "essentially a production com-

### WHAT'S ON

Some of the noteworthy programs and events that are scheduled for television this month. (Check local listings for dates and times in your area.)



Liza Minnelli



Ann-Margret

#### COMEDY AND VARIETY

**Baryshnikov on Broadway.** The great ballet star performs to the beat of show tunes, with Liza Minnelli as his principal guest. ABC.

**Fridays.** ABC's answer to *Saturday Night Live*, featuring a cast of promising unknowns. ABC.

**Ann-Margret—Hollywood Movie Girls.** She sings, dances and acts in vignettes, with George Burns, Dom De Luise, Danny De Vito and Roger Moore helping her out. ABC.

#### NEWS AND DOCUMENTARIES

**Odyssey.** A 13-episode series on anthropology and archeology, embarking this month, includes a Boston family's three-decade filmed record of an African bush tribe (see page 54). PBS.

**ABC News Closeup.** The uranium industry investigated. ABC.

**The Superliners: Twilight of an Era.** A National Geographic special recalls the great oceangoing luxury vessels. PBS.

**Coupling: Sexual Lifestyles in the '80s.** Adult documentary examining traditional and group marriage, cohabitation, and swinging. Home Box Office (cable).

continued



# THIS MONTH

pany that happens to run a TV station." Both stations plan aggressive pursuit of the home-video market as it develops.

**Collar it blue.** Is today's TV superhero wearing a blue collar? Despite the fact that the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (which has recently launched a TV monitoring project) believes the medium portrays workers negatively, proletarian characters seem to be enjoying a growing prominence on the tube. Karl Malden's *Skag* is one recent example; ABC's new *When the Whistle Blows* is another.

Since the networks usually have opinion surveys to back up just about any programming move they make, PANORAMA asked ABC's head of research, Marvin Mord, what he knew about it. "There's no question there's an increase in network activity in that area," he said. "There's a clear social phenomenon occurring [in attitudes toward blue-collar jobs], partly out of a strong desire to return to the kinds of satisfactions gotten from doing things with one's hands.... It's no longer a come-down for a college girl to be dating a construction worker, which is a lot different from the way it was a generation ago."

## HOLLYWOOD

Don Shirley reporting

**Spring crops.** The networks' fall schedules probably won't be announced for another month, but an analysis of the spring crop of pilots may offer a few clues to what's in store.

CBS is searching for fresh cop shows, and some of its pilots also look at women on the World War II home front, at a doctor in Depression-struck Arkansas (from *The Waltons* team) and at high-school students in a university town (from the *Dallas* team).

Hot items at ABC include *Breaking Away* (adapted from last year's hit movie)—another examination of local youth in a college burg—and *The American Dream*, in which a family moves from suburbia to the city.

NBC is developing a number of pilots about the lives of writers and—taking a cue from *Skag*—blue-collar workers.

In comedy, network executives say the fashion for the fall is less fantasy and more realism. "The world is becoming a little more real. We're not going to use talking horses," says ABC's Paul Hunter. "There won't be anything sophomoric," pledges NBC's Michael Zinberg. CBS has ordered a comedy pilot about a blind man.

However, realism goes only so far—CBS also has ordered a

pilot about a man with a pet elephant.

**Saint Kate.** Kate Mulgrew—who was last seen sniffing out murderers and exposing prostitution rings on NBC's *Kate Loves a Mystery*—will soon be seen as a saint in an ABC movie. She'll play Mother Seton, the only American-born saint.

Now scheduled for viewing some time next season, the film was originally intended for Mother's Day—on the grounds that Elizabeth Seton was a mother of five before she became Mother Seton. Mulgrew,

who grew up in a Catholic family in Dubuque, says that it was her own mother who taught her about Mother Seton.

The producers and director of "Mother Seton" are also Catholic. But Mulgrew says the film's appeal will extend beyond Catholics, pointing out that Mother Seton was born and raised as a Protestant before converting to Catholicism.

Henry Denker, who wrote the script, is Jewish, but it wasn't unusual for him to write about a Christian church leader. For 10 years he wrote, produced and directed *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, a radio series about the life of Christ.

**We are family.** Television's top teen siblings, Kristy and Jimmy McNichol, will be acting together for the first time in a CBS movie that is based on a novel about a religious cult. Jimmy plays a devoted member of the cult whose sister (Kristy) is torn between her parents' attempts to rescue their son from the cult's clutches and respect for her brother's independence.

In the book, the cult is led by a white American businessman. But when Lane Slate wrote the script for "Blinded by the Light," he changed the cult leader into a Manila-born Asian businessman and provided him with some Oriental cohorts. "By having an Asian, it says more than if you made him an American," said Slate. "Most of these cults were led by Asians."

However, fearing that Slate's character might provoke a lawsuit from the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the producers changed the character once more, from East Asian to South Asian. "Now they say he's Pakistani," said Slate. "Who knows? He may wind up as a white Arkansas farmer."

**Fall fallout.** The atomic bomb will fall on next season's television schedule—three times. CBS is planning a four-hour film, "Atomica," focusing on the Manhattan Project scientists in Los Alamos, where the bomb was born.

One of those scientists, J. Robert Oppenheimer, will be the subject of a seven-part BBC

## WHAT'S ON

continued



Phil Donahue



Ciaran Madden in *My Son, My Son*

**Look at Me.** One of America's most watched fathers, Phil Donahue, begins a seven-part series on parenting. PBS.

**Cover Story.** A new series of occasional programs produced with the assistance of Newsweek magazine. The first installment gazes into the future in a show titled "Beyond the Year 2000." PBS.

**Here's to Your Health.** Last year's acclaimed series on self-care returns to deal with such subjects as headaches and teen-age sex. PBS.

**No Maps on My Taps.** A segment of a diverse documentary series called *Non-Fiction Television* looks at jazz tap-dancing and some of its tappingest practitioners. PBS.

### DRAMA AND MOVIES

**The Oldest Living Graduate.** The first presentation of an ambitious NBC project: live, prime-time dramas—several annually—using the resources of America's regional theater companies. Henry Fonda stars in this comedy-drama, part of the late Preston Jones' "Texas Trilogy," which ran on Broadway in 1976. NBC.

**The Shakespeare Plays.** The Henry plays conclude with "Henry IV, Part II" and "Henry V." PBS.

**Gideon's Trumpet.** A TV-movie based on Anthony Lewis's book about a landmark Supreme Court case. The cast includes Henry Fonda (again) and John Houseman (see page 37). CBS.

**My Son, My Son.** Another British import, on *Masterpiece Theatre*, tells in seven episodes the story of the ambitions of two fathers in Manchester between the 1870s and 1920s. PBS.

**Heaven Can Wait.** The 1978 smash fantasy/comedy starring Warren Beatty as a football quarterback who makes sports' greatest comeback. Home Box Office (cable).

**Haywire.** Brooke Hayward's searing book becomes a TV-movie, with Deborah Raffin as Brooke, and Jason Robards and Lee Remick as Leland Hayward and Margaret Sullivan (see page 66). CBS.



miniseries, starring Sam Waterston, which probably will be carried on PBS next year.

And NBC is working on a three-hour film about the pilot who dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. The film's title, "Enola Gay," is taken from the name of the plane he flew. Frank Levy, an executive producer, says the project began "well before Three Mile Island." But he adds that the debate over nuclear energy and recent international tensions have increased interest in the bomb: "There's no doubt the world is nuclear-conscious right now."

**WASHINGTON**

Steve Weinberg reporting

*Can they do it?* Congress is entering the fray over whether the Communications Satellite Corp. (Comsat), a Federally chartered company, should be permitted to send television programs directly into homes via satellite, bypassing TV stations. Hearings on the proposal began in March in the House Communications Subcommittee.

Comsat was created by Congress in 1962 to develop America's satellite communications; at that time there was no active commercial presence in the field, and Comsat was expected to act as an advance guard. But is it now forging ahead too far?

Ever since Comsat's intentions were announced last August, traditional broadcasters have been agitated. "There's no question that this service would have the effect of diverting programming from the traditional broadcast system," said Erwin Krasnow, general counsel for the National Association of Broadcasters. "It would change the very character of this country's broadcast system."

Broadcasters are taking their stand on a legal issue. They say the 1962 law creating Comsat doesn't give the corporation the authority to send programs into American homes. Legalities aside, Comsat does not have all the resources it would need for such a venture. Earlier this year, it announced talks with Sears,

Roebuck and Co., which might join Comsat as a partner to market the necessary hardware.

When the plan was first unveiled, House Subcommittee chairman Lionel Van Deerlin (D-Cal.) gave it his blessing. "It's a beautiful area of competition," he said. "It's precisely what we've been talking about. The fact that it might impair the viability of local broadcasters shouldn't be a consideration. Let the consumer decide."

But, since then, the overall role of Comsat has become the

object of the Subcommittee's scrutiny, and the satellite-to-home proposals have been swept up into the review. "Congress created Comsat," Van Deerlin now says, "and Congress should make sure that the corporation continues to reflect Congressional intentions."

**Boasters beware.** Television advertisements that make use of product endorsements by "average" consumers or by celebrities may mislead the credulous, so the Federal Trade Commission has issued some new

guidelines aimed at stopping possible deception.

Though the guidelines don't have the force of law, they do tell advertisers what the FTC might judge illegal. Advertisers must be able to show that the product performance claimed in the ad is typical. If they can't, they must disclose what can generally be expected of the product or openly declare that the endorsement has limited applicability.

"We want to inform and deter the industry," said W. Benjamin Fisherow, deputy assistant director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection. "It uses the endorsement technique a lot, and it wants to know where the FTC stands—it wants certainty."

**Watch that set!** Two pressure groups are trying to get the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to open its files on 7620 television-related accidents. And a dozen TV manufacturers are trying to thwart their efforts. Their struggle has come before the U.S. Supreme Court, which might decide the case this year.

The accident data were collected by the CPSC in 1974, as part of an investigation into TV-set safety. The accident reports, passed on by the complaints departments of large manufacturers such as General Electric, GTE Sylvania, RCA and Admiral, tell of fires, electric shocks and other accidents—enough to fill nine file cabinets.

Consumers Union of the United States and Ralph Nader's Public Citizen Health Research Group asked to see the reports, and the agency agreed, but the manufacturers went to court. The case has now been tied up for nearly five years.

The Federal agency has said that releasing the accident data "would assist consumers to better evaluate the safety of TVs." The makers complain that the agency definition of "TV-related accidents" is wide enough to include a hernia sustained while carrying a set. They also accuse the agency of failure to verify the reports.

CPSC spokesman Carl Blechschmidt says there has

**WHAT'S ON**

continued



Game of the Week



James Michener

**All the President's Men.** Oscar-winning film version of the book on the Watergate scandal, with Redford and Hoffman as Woodward and Bernstein. Showtime (cable).

**Gauguin the Savage.** A TV-movie about the life of the great painter, with David Carradine in the title role. CBS.

**Same Time, Next Year.** Alan Alda and Ellen Burstyn in the film version of Bernard Slade's Broadway comedy about a tender two-decade, one-night-a-year adulterous relationship. Home Box Office (cable).

**Condominium.** John D. MacDonald's best seller about a hurricane threatening a housing complex. With Barbara Eden, Dan Haggerty and Dorothy Malone. Home Box Office (cable).

**The New Season.** John Ritter is a washed-up ballplayer and Susan Dey is the girl who loves him in a TV-movie timed for the opening of the baseball season. ABC.

**Portrait of a Rebel.** Bonnie Franklin plays birth-control pioneer Margaret Sanger in this made-for-TV film. CBS.

**SPORTS**

**The Masters.** The final two rounds of the Augusta, Ga., golf classic will be telecast April 12 and 13. CBS.

**Major League Baseball Game of the Week.** Baseball's back (see page 34) and so are Joe Garagiola and Tony Kubek, on Saturday afternoons starting April 12. NBC.

**Women in Sports.** Author James Michener's *Sports in America* series takes a historical look at female athletes from Alice Marble to Dorothy Hamill. PBS.

**The Sunday Games.** A pilot for a prime-time series focusing primarily on average Americans enjoying athletics. NBC.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Academy Awards.** "The envelope, please...." It's Oscars time again on April 14, with Johnny Carson as the M.C. (See page 62.) ABC. [ ]

been a "substantial decline" in TV-related accidents, though the problems haven't disappeared. Recent data, says the agency, indicate "11,000 annual residential fires and 160 deaths that appear to be associated with TVs."

Eugene Holloway, senior counsel at GTE Sylvania, is skeptical about those figures: "Fire marshals often say TV sets cause home fires if the fire started near the set. It's an easy culprit. We have a high batting average in disproving that."

LONDON

Richard Gilbert reporting

*Afghan phrase book.* The BBC caused itself some embarrassment earlier this year by launching a 20-part Russian-language

course within days of the Soviet takeover in Afghanistan. Its unfortunate timing provoked questions in Parliament, where one M.P. fumed: "I doubt whether we will hear much about the Russian custom of invading de-

*continued on page 89*

THE RATINGS RACE

DALLAS IS THE TREND-SETTER FOR 1979-80 SEASON

By MICHAEL DANN

Every year TV critics look for a show to ballyhoo—the trend-setting series or special that they can say characterizes that particular television season. As late as this past Christmas, however, no such show had emerged. Then, around the middle of January, a groundswell began developing. *Dallas* was the show, and adult family drama—what network programmers refer to as "night soapers"—was the trend.

Certainly we've had examples of such series before (*Peyton Place*, for example), but one show doesn't make a trend. Now CBS has launched *Knots Landing*, a spinoff from *Dallas*; ABC has *Family* back in its schedule; and NBC will have some similar series coming up shortly. There are at least 35 pilots being developed by Hollywood producers along these lines.

The trend is even more noticeable in the made-for-television movies. Such recent films as "Seizure: The Story of Kathy Morris," "The Family Man," "And Baby Makes Six," "The Kid from Left Field," "Aunt Mary," "The Miracle Worker," "The Tenth Month" and "My Old Man" have been ratings successes. Meanwhile, action melodramas like "S.O.S. Titanic," "The Death Of Ocean View Park," "The Concrete Cowboys," "Vampire," "11th Victim" and "The Last Ride of the Dalton Gang" are getting a cold shoulder from most viewers.

The accompanying tables illustrate this point. They contain a selection—a representative cross section—of TV-movies in these two categories. This will

give you a fair idea of their relative ratings this season.

It would seem, therefore, that for this season, the public has decided it wants "ordinary" people, in situations that the average viewer can identify with.

Once a trend starts, network programmers join the parade more quickly than the children who followed the Pied Piper. In the early Fifties, after *Philco-Goodyear Playhouse* and *Studio One* set the trend, 14 dramatic-anthology series were added to the networks' schedules. After *Gunsmoke* became a hit in the mid-Fifties, 15 more action

Westerns rapidly followed. The success of *The \$64,000 Question* spawned a dozen giveaway shows. And, more recently, Norman Lear's blue-collar comedies started a new situation-comedy trend.

For a network programmer, the trick is to be first. The show that sets the trend almost invariably achieves and maintains higher ratings than its imitators.

Soap-opera drama is, of course, one of television's most familiar forms. There are nine rules that programmers generally try to follow when they use this form:

1. Avoid using well-known stars in the cast: they make it hard for the audience to believe it is eavesdropping on a real family.

2. Be prepared to make a lot of pilots because this is a more difficult form to create than, say, action melodrama (*Hawaii Five-O*, *Barnaby Jones*).

3. Write the shows so that they have very strong appeal to women. Men prefer action and comedy.

4. Because of the mature content, be prepared to schedule the show late in the evening.

5. Be aware that they can be costly. Because one episode leads into the next episode as in a daytime serial, they must run in sequence, which complicates schedules during rerun time. (This is one of the reasons *Soap* is taken off prime time periodically.)

6. Be careful in selecting the children for the cast, because if the series is successful, cast members can grow too old and have to be written out.

7. Build a stable of writers—specialists who know how to write interesting dialogue for the many talky scenes inherent in this kind of nighttime drama.

8. Caution cast members making public appearances to act in a way that does not alter the viewer's perception of them in the TV roles.

9. Make sure you have long-term contracts with the stars of the show, because people will tend to follow the hero figures to a spinoff series without any difficulty. They did that in *Trapper John, M.D.*, *Knots Landing* and *Lou Grant*.

FAMILY DRAMAS

MOVIE	RATING	HOMES
"And Baby Makes Six" (NBC)	25.3	19,300,000
"Aunt Mary" (CBS)	24.9	19,000,000
"The Miracle Worker" (NBC)	23.9	18,240,000
"Seizure: The Story of Kathy Morris" (CBS)	23.6	18,010,000
"My Old Man" (CBS)	22.3	17,010,000
"The Tenth Month" (CBS)	21.9	16,710,000
"Friendships, Secrets and Lies" (NBC)	21.8	16,630,000
"The Kid from Left Field" (NBC)	21.4	16,630,000
"The Family Man" (CBS)	21.3	16,250,000
"Young Love, First Love" (CBS)	19.8	15,074,000

ACTION MELODRAMAS

MOVIE	RATING	HOMES
"Stunts Unlimited" (ABC)	12.3	9,380,000
"Mind over Murder" (CBS)	12.9	9,840,000
"Valentine" (ABC)	12.9	9,840,000
"S.O.S. Titanic" (ABC)	14.4	10,990,000
"The Death of Ocean View Park" (ABC)	14.6	11,140,000
"When She Was Bad" (ABC)	14.8	11,290,000
"Act of Violence" (CBS)	15.0	11,450,000
"The Concrete Cowboys" (CBS)	15.2	11,600,000
"11th Victim" (CBS)	15.5	11,830,000
"Golden Gate Murders" (CBS)	17.7	13,500,000





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# An Antidote Strong Enough for Wretched Excess

By JOHN SCHULIAN



**T**hey ought to write a song about Wrigley Field. They ought to use three-quarter time to tell how a baseball park can transform a drab Chicago city block into something special. Sinatra would have to do the singing, of course, for this would be a number in need of a craftsman's feeling and phrasing. And who but Sinatra could stand there with tux and microphone and make the rest of the world understand that a pile of bricks can be graceful, elegant, even precious?

Hard by the el tracks, in a North Side neighborhood that has gone from German to Latino to rehab-fashionable, Wrigley Field is everything the right words and music would make it out to be. A simple truth, perhaps, but one that now, with Opening Day fast upon us, becomes the next best thing to magic. Once again we will see that, in a world of change, the home of the Cubs is one of the few blessed things that remain the same.

The ivy will still caress the outfield wall. A crew of lucky phantoms will still roam inside the scoreboard, posting scores by hand. And the wind, the dread wind, will still tinker with pop flies, one day using them to choreograph a herky-jerk ballet in the infield, the next day hoisting them over the fence, over everything and out onto Waveland Avenue.

Lord, how the bleacher dwellers will love that. They will sit out there in sunshine and in rain, full of warm beer and cheap pizza, and they will recall the day last summer when their heroes scored 22 runs while Philadelphia, alas, was scoring 23. A desecration? A dirty, crying shame? To the contrary, it was so much fun that the Chicago station that televises the Cubs' games played it again this winter. That way, the city had one more chance to marvel at Dave Kingman and the Phillies' Mike Schmidt matching home runs, one more chance to fret that the pyrotechnics might not be over before sundown.

Oh, yes, that's another of Wrigley's rare charms. The House That Chewing Gum Bought doesn't have lights. The late P. K. Wrigley thought baseball was meant to be

played in the daytime, and though his last ally vanished three decades ago, he hasn't been proven wrong yet. Never mind that the Cubs crack prime time only when they hit the road. Never mind that they eschew the at-home nighttime TV revenue that so many ball clubs deem as precious as body fluid. If more of the game's moguls had emulated Wrigley's stance against alleged progress, baseball wouldn't be stuck with those domed disasters in Houston and Seattle. Nor would there be an epidemic of plastic grass that gets so hot under the summer sun that athlete's foot has been supplanted by parboiled feet.

**B**ut purity obviously means little in an era when the next thing in bullpens probably will be microwave ovens for warming up relief pitchers' hot dogs. The only antidote strong enough for such wretched excess is Wrigley Field. It possesses all the fine touches that escape modern architects, starting with the green scoreboard that hulks above the center-field bleachers and serves as a touchstone for so many good times.

In the scoreboard's shadow lies a place to get in the proper mood for a game, a saloon called Ray's Bleachers. At the scoreboard's base is a refuge for the septuagenarian gamblers who bet on everything from pitches to which way the wind will be blowing in the seventh inning. Above the scoreboard flies a flag that tells commuters rumbling past on the elevated whether the Cubs won or lost.

Most often, of course, the Cubs lose. Their plight seems a rejection of all they have going for them. Where else, for example, can the home team rest secure in the knowledge that the visitors must go to and from their dressing room via a catwalk that hangs over a sea of screaming Cubs fans? And life is even tougher out on the field, where the bleachers are packed with trivia experts who can haunt an enemy outfielder by chanting the name of a one-night lady friend.

Still, the Cubs' last National League pennant was in 1945, a sad state of affairs

that becomes easily understandable when you consider the strange creatures who have blighted the team's payroll. There has always been a pitcher who wore a gold earring or an outfielder whose eyelid kept sticking or a young slugger nicknamed "One Flew," as in "...over the Cuckoo's Nest." Small wonder, then, that the Earth almost stopped spinning in 1969 when the Cubs stormed into first place.

The player who held Wrigley in thrall that season was Ernie Banks, who had served the Cubs so long and so well. He needed only stick his head out of the clubhouse door down in the left-field corner and batting practice turned into a love fest.

You can imagine the dreams that took flight when Banks loped in from first base to hit two home runs on Opening Day. And damned if those dreams didn't almost come true. Only the improbable New York Mets could puncture them and spoil the best chance Banks ever had at the World Series, the chance that meant as much to him as his 19 honorable seasons, his 512 career homers and his niche in the Hall of Fame.

**I**t is a sad story, yet one that helps capture the essence of Wrigley Field. All you need know beyond it is that Banks still works at Wrigley, spreading good will and wondering why his old team doesn't play two games a day instead of just one. The new Cubs look at him in disbelief, then shrug off his ceaseless happiness as an aberration. They are too busy stewing over long-term contracts and perfecting their surly-cool personas to enjoy the place where they dwell. It is their misfortune.

Ernie Banks said as much without ever opening his mouth one summer day when he was getting ready for an old-timers' game. He'd had a uniform made specially for the occasion, and now he was pulling the top on over his white shirt and striped tie. He zipped it up and turned around very slowly, modeling the big blue 14 on his back and wishing perhaps that he could go back to the time when the number and Wrigley Field were new to him. It was the kind of scene there ought to be a song about. ■



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# Where, Oh Where Has Satcom III Gone?

By SETH GOLDSTEIN



Kirk, Spock and the crew of the starship Enterprise have a better chance than any Earthbound investigators of finding the RCA satellite, Satcom III, that mysteriously disappeared just days after its launch last December.

The loss, whether to forces ordinarily restricted to *Star Trek* or to an errant orbit, was no sci-fi fantasy for RCA or for the cable program suppliers who had booked every one of the 24 communications channels on the satellite long in advance.

The Satcom III mission was insured for \$77 million, but RCA wasn't covered for all the revenues lost in space. They would have been substantial. RCA had planned to shift the cable services now on Satcom I to Satcom III, along with some new offerings, and sell the vacated Satcom I channels to another set of customers. (Satcom II is devoted almost entirely to voice and data.)

The satellite's vanishing act prompted a mad rush to find room on Satcom I and perhaps other satellites for the displaced cable services, which included three in pay-television (Home Box Office, Showtime, Warner's Movie Channel), three in religion (National Christian Network, Christian Broadcasting Network, Trinity Broadcasting), two in sports (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network, Madison Square Garden Sports) and one in news, Ted Turner's Cable News Network (see page 44).

Turner was perhaps the most distressed refugee, with a multimillion-dollar investment up in the air. But CNN says it will begin operations on schedule, and an intricate juggling act by RCA seems to have guaranteed every service affected by the loss the satellite time it needs.

RCA plans to launch a replacement satellite in 1981.

## Union Dues and Don'ts

"The work's terrific; the money isn't." If the Directors Guild of America wanted a motto in its battle with pay-TV, that could be it. The DGA, which represents most of Hollywood's big-name directors in movies and television, has been boycotting pay-

TV, telling its members not to direct made-for-pay productions until the producers agree to better terms—perhaps a piece of the action.

The primary targets are pay-TV's big guns, HBO and Showtime, who say that as big as they are, they're still peashooters compared with commercial television. One top executive at Time Inc. says its HBO subsidiary, governed by its own "economic dynamic," can't afford what DGA asks. The dispute unquestionably has restricted pay-TV's choice of projects but producers have made other deals with non-DGA members. HBO and Showtime are still spending record amounts for programming, with HBO budgeting \$20 million to produce and acquire 90 events in 1980.

## Pay Finds a Way

Pay-TV still needs the movies every bit as much as the movies need pay-TV, but the pay-TV services are feeling a growing need to differentiate their output. Feature films are expensive, and there just aren't enough good ones to go around, so HBO and Showtime have been forced to duplicate a large portion of each other's schedules. Both are seeking exclusives by taking preproduction licenses from smaller, independent producers who need the financing. HBO, for example, has invested tens of millions of dollars for more than 100 such movies to be released between 1978 and 1983. Among those seen so far are "Meatballs," "The Wild Geese" and "The Bell Jar."

Another way is to play broadcast network by commissioning specials and series the way the Big Three do. The pay-TV distributors have done that with nightclub acts, Las Vegas spectaculars and even a six-part history lesson for HBO called *Time Was*, with Dick Cavett as host. But financing is a problem, since neither HBO nor Showtime can spend like the networks. So why not get a pay-TV preview of productions destined for "free" television and let the major broadcasters foot most of the bill? It's a cheeky proposition from a TV-industry upstart, but it has

been done once and will be again.

Last summer, HBO showed its subscribers a two-part, four-hour epic entitled "The Seekers," produced by MCA-Universal for a consortium of independent stations and network affiliates known as Operation Prime Time. Few of the independents, who are beginning to feel the competition of cable, were happy with the deal, but in the end both OPT and HBO got their audiences while MCA got its additional revenues.

HBO still faces broadcaster resistance, but a second OPT presentation is likely, and there are similar deals simmering among public-television broadcasters and commercial-station groups. Not coincidentally, HBO formed a Programming Co-Production Department last fall to bring off such ventures.

## The MDS Route

You might think that cable and over-the-air subscription television would be sufficient for pay-TV, but you would be wrong. Communications technology has provided a third route—multipoint distribution service (MDS). It is the small businessman's entry into the market. For between \$250,000 and \$500,000, including the price of a satellite Earth station, the experts say an MDS operator can pick up pay-TV signals and send them via microwave to single-family residences, apartment houses and office buildings in a 25- to 30-mile radius.

Of course, as more areas are wired for cable, MDS may lose out, and will shift perhaps from pay-TV programming to data and teletext. But for the moment at least, MDS is doing nicely. It had 300,000 to 350,000 pay-TV subscribers at the end of 1979 and should reach twice that number this year.

Possibly the biggest change for MDS, which was originally approved by the Federal Communications Commission in 1963, came three years ago with the development of an inexpensive receiver that could cost the MDS operator as little as \$85. This allowed installation fees to drop to a level affordable to the private homeowner. (Earlier models cost \$1500, limiting MDS reception to apartment houses whose tenants could share the cost.) Now that the new units fit a homeowner's budget, rooftops in Anchorage, Phoenix and elsewhere have sprouted a forest of MDS antennas, recalling the early days of television. ■



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# Q&A

SUSAN HARRIS



Three years ago, when ABC announced its fall '77 lineup, little attention was paid to the impending debut of a half-hour situation comedy called *Soap* until it was revealed that the show would touch upon such topics as adultery, homosexuality, impotence and sex-change operations. At that point, protests were quickly organized by groups ranging from the Catholic Church to the PTA, and, by the time *Soap* was ready to go on the air, ABC had already received more than 22,000 letters demanding the show's preemptive cancellation. To make matters worse, many of the Nation's leading corporations were successfully pressured away from sponsoring the series. So fierce and widespread was the opposition to *Soap* that 19 ABC affiliates refused to show the series.

In spite of all that, however, *Soap* instantly became one of the most popular shows on TV. One reason for that is the series' superb cast, which includes Richard Mulligan, Billy Crystal and, until recently, Robert Guillaume, whose *Soap* persona of Benson this season became a hit spinoff series. The major reason for *Soap*'s success, however, can be traced directly to the comic brilliance of its creator, writer and producer, Susan Harris.

Born Susan Spivak in Mount Vernon, New York, Harris was raised in a comfortable, upper-middle-class home. A cheerleader and straight-A student in high school, she studied English literature at Cornell and New York University and began her writing career in 1970, when her marriage to actor Berkeley Harris ended in divorce. She sold the first TV script she ever wrote, and soon established herself as TV's brightest young comedy writer, effortlessly turning out scripts for shows ranging from *Love, American Style* to *Maude*, for which she wrote the controversial abortion episode.

Talented, wealthy and attractive as she may be, the 37-year-old Harris is an oddity by Hollywood standards. She studiously steers clear of L.A.'s celebrity circuit, and although she can easily afford a Beverly Hills glitter palace, she chooses to live with her 12-year-old son Sam in suburban Sherman Oaks. She's clearly a woman who goes her own way.

## "There's Still a Lot of Doris Day-Type Thinking in Television"

The creator of *Soap* speaks of the fun and frustration of writing a weekly series—and of why she wants to get out of TV

To interview the creator of *Soap* and *Benson*, PANORAMA sent free-lancer Lawrence Linderman to meet with Harris at the Hollywood studios where both shows are taped each week. Their edited conversation:

**PANORAMA:** When *Soap* went on the air three years ago, it was accompanied by an unprecedented amount of publicity, almost all of it negative. Were you aiming for controversy?

**HARRIS:** No, all I really set out to do was a series that would be a saga. By that, I mean I wouldn't have to tell a complete story every week—the series itself would be a continuing story. That was the starting point. I decided to make it revolve around two sisters and their families, and I added characters after that. But the main

thing was to make it a continuing story.

**PANORAMA:** Aside from the structure of the series, what did you think *Soap* would accomplish?

**HARRIS:** Nothing. It really was not intended to shock. It was intended to entertain, simply that. If along the way I could move people and make a few points, terrific. But it isn't an issue-oriented show like *All in the Family*. It's simply entertainment.

**PANORAMA:** You really didn't think that a sizable group of viewers would be offended by it?

**HARRIS:** There was that possibility, of course, but after the first few episodes, it wasn't all that shocking. I don't think we do things on *Soap* that people haven't seen on television before, especially when you think about the combination of daytime TV, nighttime TV and the news.

**PANORAMA:** If that's true, how do you explain the furor that *Soap* caused even before its first broadcast?

**HARRIS:** That began with a Newsweek article that was full of misinformation. I was interviewed by a Newsweek writer who wrote that we were planning to do a show in which an attempt is made to seduce a priest inside a church. Well, that never happened, and was never intended to happen, but I guess you can always expect something like that when you talk to the press. They take things out of context or they just outright change things. A lot of people read that article and got very excited, and the whole thing snowballed. *Soap* became a kind of dart board for everyone, and it still had not been aired.

**PANORAMA:** Were you unprepared for the opposition the show received?

**HARRIS:** I was *totally* unprepared for that. We were all really shocked that people were up in arms and clamoring for *Soap*'s cancellation before it had ever been on the air. It was frightening and I was very disappointed in the press, because I would



have expected them to react in a very different way. I mean, they were talking about pre-censorship, a very dangerous precedent—and if any one group of people should have been upset about that, it should have been the press. But no one seemed to pick up on that aspect of it. *Soap* very easily could have been canceled before it went on the air.

**PANORAMA:** How close did that come?

**HARRIS:** Well, there was certainly enough economic pressure applied to the network. Networks are notorious for running scared, and I could easily see how ABC could have succumbed to the pressure, but it didn't. ABC took a stand and decided to wait it out. But we couldn't get sponsors for the longest time. A sponsor would come on for one week, and then would be inundated with phone calls and telegrams warning them they'd be boycotted, and the next day the Catholic newspaper would print the names of *Soap's* sponsors.

The result was that sponsors would pull out, and the next week ABC would have to look for new ones. That happened week after week. One result was that ABC couldn't sell the time at full rates, and *Soap* is an expensive show to do. So they were hit where it hurts: ABC was taking a loss on that half hour. Now it's true that ABC makes a nice living, but its executives have to answer to the stockholders. They were really quite courageous about it.

**PANORAMA:** How long did the move against *Soap's* sponsors remain active?

**HARRIS:** Oh, well into the series' second year. Although the opposition to *Soap* was mostly church-related, we managed to get almost everyone crazy—the PTA, the AMA—just about every group and religion you could name wanted to keep *Soap* off the air. We had sponsor problems for quite some time, and I could understand it. If a company could buy time on some other hit show, why fool around with *Soap*? The pressure on our advertisers remained constant long after we stopped receiving hate mail.

**PANORAMA:** How soon after *Soap* was on the air did the viewer furor die down?

**HARRIS:** It happened very quickly. I think people looked at the show and said, "My God, is *this* what the commotion was about?" I think they were disappointed because *Soap* wasn't all that shocking. People had been expecting God knows what, and they didn't get it.

**PANORAMA:** What *did* they get?

**HARRIS:** A good laugh. *Soap* is a funny

show. I think people tune in week after week to find out what happens next, and I also think people like the characters and get involved in their lives. And occasionally the audience is moved, so I think *Soap* works on a whole lot of levels.

**PANORAMA:** Given the failure of the pressure groups to cancel *Soap*, do you think the networks may have learned not to lend much credence to them?

**HARRIS:** I hope so. But what's frightening is that there really is a fairly democratic way to decide what stays on the air and what doesn't. That's the reason for ratings: if you don't like a show you don't watch it, and if enough people do that the show is going to die. You're entitled to the choice—and these pressure groups didn't want people to have that choice. In any case, by the second year the complaints had stopped, *Soap* wasn't in the press any more and we had good ratings.

"I used to think that television wrote down to people, and that the audience was ready for a lot more than TV was delivering. I'm not sure that's true."

**PANORAMA:** Enough of the trials and tribulations of doing *Soap*. What are the good parts of it for you?

**HARRIS:** Oh, the fun is at the typewriter and on the stage and also hearing audiences laugh. But that first year was very exhausting. I practically lived at the studio and I wrote every script, and that's debilitating. I don't think anyone's written all the shows for a series. Most series have staffs of five or seven writers, so I was always exhausted. In fact, I was almost certifiable by the end of the first year.

**PANORAMA:** Why didn't you hire a couple of people to help you out?

**HARRIS:** Because I couldn't find any. There's a paucity of good television writers and I didn't hire one until the middle of last year. I still have one writer, and it took a long time to find him. Maybe I should put all this more diplomatically, because I'm always saying things that come back to haunt me. If I were diplomatic, I'd say that I couldn't find the people who could write this particular show.

**PANORAMA:** But you're not diplomatic.

**HARRIS:** No, I'm not. There are not a lot of good writers around, which is why I

couldn't find good writers. I think I wrote 25 scripts during the show's first season, and I was so tired toward the end of the year that it just didn't seem worth it. I wasn't spending nearly enough time with my son Sam, and that hurt. But it didn't cause any major problems between us because we talked about it beforehand. I told him what I thought the year would be like and he understood it and the reasons for doing it. And I tried to make him as much a part of everything as I could.

Sam comes to all the shootings and very often he comes to the office after school. That helped. And we really have fun doing the show. It's terrific to go to work and get paid a great deal and laugh a lot. It's much harder to write *Soap* now than it was that first year, when it was new and fresh and there were lots of things I hadn't said. This is the end of *Soap's* third year, and it's getting more and more difficult to come up with fresh new things.

**PANORAMA:** Are you thinking of leaving?

**HARRIS:** I'll stay for one more year, because the fourth year of a series is really important: you need four years—about 100 negatives—to go into syndication. But next year I hope to be more of a supervisor and do more rewriting than original stuff. I want to step back some.

**PANORAMA:** Do you watch much television?

**HARRIS:** I've never been a big television watcher.

**PANORAMA:** Do you find that to be unusual among the people you work with?

**HARRIS:** Not watching television? I don't know if the people I work with watch television because I've really never asked. A few weeks ago, I read an article about how the average person spends something like six hours a day watching television. I don't know where people find the time to do that. If that's true—and I hope it's not—I think it's extraordinary. And frightening.

**PANORAMA:** Why frightening?

**HARRIS:** Six hours a day? That's incredible! There's so much to do and so little time to do it in, and to spend so much of it watching television?

You know, I used to think that television wrote down to people, and that the audience was ready for a lot more than TV was delivering. I'm not sure that's true.

**PANORAMA:** What makes you feel it isn't?

**HARRIS:** The popularity of a lot of what's

on the air—shows that are really almost unwatchable. You look at them and you just can't believe they're on the air and that millions and millions of people watch these shows. Now millions and millions of people watch *Soap*, so I don't know.

**PANORAMA:** Do you feel that when TV strives for excellence, its productions can stand up to critical scrutiny?



writing for television is like. Once you work in it, you know what TV is, and it's at best a compromise. There are restrictions and you have to live with them if you're to write for television and not go crazy.

**PANORAMA:** How do those restrictions affect you?

**HARRIS:** I cannot write freely. I don't even

“I went crazy the day they canceled us, and I let NBC know in no uncertain terms how I felt.”

**HARRIS:** Oh sure, once in a while television *does* come up with something terrific. But those things are so few and far between. I just would expect it to come up with that stuff much more often, and it doesn't. Now a lot of it has to do with the time element, because you don't have a hell of a lot of time to make anything very good. The money is there, but I don't know if the talent is.

**PANORAMA:** Isn't some of the problem attributable to producers searching for the lowest common denominator in terms of programming that children and adults alike can watch?

**HARRIS:** Well, that's certainly what the results would indicate. But again, I really don't think there can be an awful lot of tremendously talented people around when the level of what you see on TV is what it is. I'm going to get clobbered for saying this, but in most areas I think there's a lot of mediocrity. It's really quite appalling. But film is like that, too. And in movies there's even more time and money involved, yet how many times do you go to a theater and come away really disappointed?

**PANORAMA:** For a writer, however, television certainly is far more restrictive than movies. Do you find those restrictions difficult to live with?

**HARRIS:** I have no illusions about what

know what word to use except to say that the work can't be as adult as I'd like.

**PANORAMA:** You didn't begin writing for television until about ten years ago. Up until then, did you suspect that you possessed a talent for comedy?

**HARRIS:** Oh no, I didn't consider myself funny, and I still don't, although I am on paper. I only started writing when my husband and I split up. I had an infant son and had to think of a way to earn a living. I was living in Los Angeles at the time, and I remember my father coming out to visit me from New York and saying, "You have a baby son. You don't work. You have no means of support and absolutely no money—what are you going to do?" I said, "Don't worry, Daddy, I'm going to be a writer." And he gave me a look like, "Jeez, would you listen to her?"

Soon after that I was watching some junk on television one night and I thought, "Anybody can do that." So I sat down and wrote a teleplay for... *Then Came Bronson*, because storywise, it had the loosest kind of construction. The producers bought it for \$4500, which was an absolutely terrific surprise. I then called up my father and said, "Guess what? I sold my first teleplay." That was one of the nicest telephone calls I ever made. He was delighted, and I was too, of course. It meant a certain kind of freedom for me. The money was good and it left me available to my son, because I could stay home and

write. It couldn't have worked out better.

**PANORAMA:** How long did it take before you sold another script?

**HARRIS:** It was about a month later—I did the first of about eight *Love, American Style* teleplays. And a few months after that I did an *All in the Family*. After that I wrote for whatever half-hour comedy shows were around.

**PANORAMA:** *Soap* is the second TV series you've written. Your first, *Fay*, written in 1975, was canceled by NBC after only three episodes—and many TV critics felt it died prematurely. Did you feel that?

**HARRIS:** Absolutely. *Fay* came on about the same year the networks invented the family hour—and since no one seemed to really know what that meant, everyone was overreacting. *Fay* was designed to be shown no earlier than 9 o'clock, but NBC put it on at 8:30, and because of that, NBC wouldn't let us air our best shows first. They felt those shows were just too full of sex and too sophisticated, and they wanted to wait for the family-hour thing to cool off. And really, the shows were quite innocuous.

**PANORAMA:** Can you describe any of them to us?

**HARRIS:** Well, I remember one in which *Fay's* husband thinks he's having a heart attack. He actually has a bad case of indigestion, but he thinks he's dying and admits to all the affairs he's ever had. NBC really wanted a kind of 1950s burn-the-pot-roast situation comedy, but *Fay* was an adult show and NBC wouldn't let us be adult. We shot nine episodes and eventually they were all shown, but only after NBC had canceled the series.

**PANORAMA:** Lee Grant, who starred in *Fay*, publicly lambasted NBC for canceling the series. Were you as upset as she was?

**HARRIS:** We both felt the same way about it. She's more visible than I am, and that was the only difference. I was *devastated*. I went crazy the day they canceled us, and I let NBC know in no uncertain terms how I felt. How I behaved in NBC's office that day kind of became legend.

**PANORAMA:** How *did* you behave?

**HARRIS:** Rather well, I thought. I let them know how angry I was and what I thought of them all. I wasn't violent or anything, I was just very, very honest in a town where most people aren't. It wasn't just

*continued*



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the fact that *Fay* had been canceled, it was compounded by the brutal way they did it. They were really lousy about it.

**PANORAMA:** In what way?

**HARRIS:** They told us the night before that we were going to be moved to another time slot, which was good news because we were really in a *suicide* slot. *Fay* had been scheduled opposite *The Waltons*, which at that time was a real institution, and so we weren't doing very well in the ratings. We'd been on for three weeks when they told us, "Look, don't worry, we're going to give you a good time slot—9 or 9:30, which is when you should be on." Well, when we came to work the next day, they'd struck the sets and told us we'd been canceled. That was a really ugly thing to do.

**PANORAMA:** Is there a pretty way to cancel a show?

**HARRIS:** For starters, you can be straight about it. NBC could have given the show a real shot, because three weeks is no chance at all. You also have to understand that if they put you in a great time slot, it's really hard to miss. If you're hammocked between hits, you almost have to be *terrible* before people will turn you off. Anyway, I let them know how angry I was and what I thought of them all.

**PANORAMA:** Do you think you would have been treated differently by ABC or CBS?

**HARRIS:** It was just that particular regime at NBC, that's all. And in television, regimes don't last very long. If Fred Silverman had been there at the time, things might have been different, because Freddie is a man who'll take a stand, as is Fred Pierce at ABC. Marvin Antonowsky was at NBC at the time. He's not there now.

**PANORAMA:** The success of *Soap* and *Benson* have made you one of the most important women in television today. Since you started working in TV about nine years ago, have you seen the industry open up more to women?

**HARRIS:** Yes, but I think it's just a reflection of the progress women are making in all fields. For instance, in the film business, Sherry Lansing recently became president of 20th Century-Fox. I think you'll be seeing more women getting high-level jobs in all kinds of professions.

**PANORAMA:** What do you do for *Benson*?

**HARRIS:** I created it, and that's all I have

to do with it. If I had anything more to do with *Benson*, *Soap* would suffer, and *Soap* is where I put my energy. The only writing I've done for *Benson* happened when they were desperate for a script at one point, and I wrote a show in a week-end.

**PANORAMA:** Are you planning to do other TV series in the future?

**HARRIS:** No, I don't want to do any more television. There's just no reason for me to do it. Money certainly isn't a reason. I have two hit shows on the air; I don't need any more money. If there's something I really wanted to say, that would be a reason, but I can't think of any other one. I don't want to have another series and stay with it the way I did with *Soap*; it's too exhausting. I would much rather have a life now. I want to see my kid grow up, and I want another kid. I want to sit home and read. This is probably very un-American, but I don't want an empire. And I *don't* want any more television shows. I'm not looking for that kind of work again.

**PANORAMA:** What kind of work are you looking for?

**HARRIS:** I think I have to stretch myself and try something new, like a play or a book. It scares me, but I think it's time for me to do that.

**PANORAMA:** You're not interested in writing movies?

**HARRIS:** Right now, I would most like to write a play. I care about what I write, and I don't want it taken away from me. If you write a movie, they may send in 14 people to rewrite it, or hire some horrible actress and destroy it that way. In the theater or with a book, I would have some control. I couldn't have that kind of power in films. There's a real elitist attitude in film, and TV people are not really taken seriously. I wouldn't have any power until I'd proven that I was a talent.

**PANORAMA:** Isn't that true of TV as well—and doesn't it often work to the detriment of television?

**HARRIS:** If you mean that TV sticks with the same talent, the answer is yes. They go with who and what's worked before. If a producer or a writer has had hits, the networks will go back to them. If the new show fails, network executives can always say, "Jeez, she's had three hit shows; how were we to know?" In that way, it's not their fault. They play it like that because they don't want to be blamed for

failures. If they are blamed for a failure, they quickly lose their reputations and their jobs. So if you've got a track record, they'll keep using you because it's safe to use you. And that's really what this business is all about: playing it safe.

**PANORAMA:** How do you think that can change in the near future?

**HARRIS:** I'd like to see television grow up and expand its consciousness. In a lot of ways, TV is where films were maybe 10 or 15 years ago—there's still a lot of Doris Day-type thinking on television.

I'd also like to see TV become less of a ridiculous ratings race. I find it absolutely ludicrous that when a show can get 25 million viewers, TV executives will say, "That's not an audience." You can have millions and millions of people watching, and networks won't consider that an audience and will cancel a show because of it. You know, all the networks are making lots and lots of money. It's not like NBC and CBS are going bankrupt—they *all* show incredible profits. So calm down, relax.

**PANORAMA:** Do you think it all comes down to wanting to be number one?

**HARRIS:** More than being number one, I think it's about not wanting to be number three. And I just don't see how something like *that* changes. But since I started working in TV, I have seen a lot of changes in the medium's content. Norman Lear changed TV a great deal, and I think we have a lot to thank him for. I'd like to see TV change some more, that's all. It's not changing fast enough. ■



●● That's really what this business is all about: playing it safe. ●●



## SURVEYS AND STUDIES

# Rate-an-Ad

By DICK FRIEDMAN



likely to recover and 'bad' characters deserve their fates." Till tomorrow...

When you see Mr. Whipple on TV hawking Charmin would you like to squeeze his neck—hard? Do you hope that—just once—the husband will vote for potatoes instead of Stove Top stuffing? Or, on the other hand, when Shelley Hack sashays through the Cafe Carlyle, are you prompted to run out and buy a lifetime supply of Charlie perfume? Do you get so many yocks watching old-timer jocks hamming it up for Miller Lite beer that you guzzle it by the case?

If you take more than a passing interest in commercials, then Shep Kurnit wants to hear from you. Kurnit is chairman of DKG Advertising in New York. Last year he began the Television Advertising Perception project. Its goal is to gauge whether ordinary consumers agree or disagree with admen on the creativity and persuasiveness of commercials.

The project, which isn't being conducted in a rigidly scientific manner, started when Kurnit asked 27 ad agencies each to submit their 10 best 30-second spots. Then he invited industry people and the public (the latter in groups like civic organizations and school classes) to view up to 80 commercials in a sitting. (Mercifully, no one has to see all 270.) As they watch, viewers rate each commercial on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is high) in the categories of "creative" and "convincing."

So far, Kurnit has been soliciting volunteers. He hopes eventually to have each ad seen by at least 2000 people, and expects the process of data collection to take until next fall. Kurnit is understandably mum on the early returns for fear of biasing the later ones. But he does say that, in general, humor is doing well and a Bounty towel commercial with Nancy Walker is given low marks for creativity but seems strong on selling power.

"Maybe there's something to be said for annoying people to death," muses Kurnit.

If your group wants to agree or

disagree and if you have access to a ¾-inch VCR or 16-mm. movie projector to accommodate a reel's worth of commercials, you can ask to participate in the survey by writing Lillian Gerring at DKG Advertising, 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10020.

### Get Out Your Handkerchiefs

Warning: Being a fictional character on a soap opera can be hazardous to your health. Just how hazardous is statistically revealed in a report in the *Journal of Communication* by Mary B. Cassata, Thomas D. Skill and Samuel Osei Boady. They have provided a detailed accounting of accidents, suicides and illnesses on daytime serials that will make you weep.

Cassata, who runs Project Daytime, a daytime-TV research program at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and her colleagues analyzed 13 soaps that were on the air in 1977. They found that of a total of 341 characters, 144 had at least one accident, were involved in a violent act or suffered a bodily illness or psychic disorder. Homicide was the soap-opera world's number-one killer in 1977; the murder rate of 2.9 homicides per 100 characters dwarfs the FBI's figure of .009 per 100 people in real life. One third of the homicides were on *The Edge of Night*; the authors add that *The Doctors* and *The Young and the Restless* "tempered their homicides with mercy. In both cases, life-support systems were unplugged."

Among illnesses, cardiovascular disease was the most deadly killer on soaps, as it is in real life, but, strangely, there were no cancer fatalities. Psychiatric problems were heavily the province of women between 22 and 45 and pregnancy was invariably traumatic.

Lest viewers despair, however, the study's authors leave us with this comforting thought: on soaps, "characters get what they deserve; 'good' characters are

### PTV's Big Chance

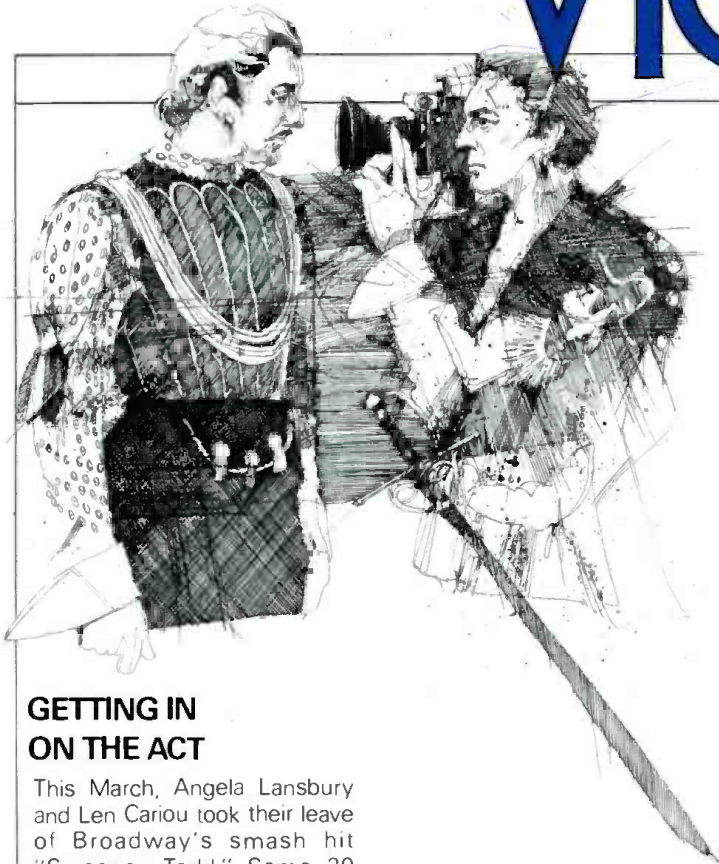
Elsewhere in this issue (page 84), 35 prominent Americans discuss the future of public television. A recent study essentially asked some common folk to do the same.

The study, "A Survey of Attitudes Toward Public Television," was made by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. for PBS and was released late last year. Hart surveyed 1845 people in New York, Minnesota and Florida and found a growing dissatisfaction with television—especially commercial television, which, respondents claimed, "doesn't care about their needs or tastes."

By contrast, the respondents' image of PTV is high. Sixty percent felt that it has their best interests at heart; 80 percent rated it as informative, as against a 36-percent figure for standard TV; 78 percent felt PTV was in good taste, while only 13 percent felt the same way about commercial TV. Unfortunately, says Hart, viewers' "allegiance to PTV does not run deep." On the average, respondents claimed to devote only 14 percent of their viewing time to public TV.

So, recommends Hart, PTV's strategy should be to "turn the occasional PTV viewer into the regular PTV viewer" and "establish itself as an innovative alternative to commercial broadcasting." PBS might increase its audience, for example, by recognizing both light and heavy PTV viewers' desire for more how-to programs and more humorous shows. But even while trying to exploit the general dissatisfaction with TV, adds Hart, public TV should keep in mind that "our respondents draw a fairly clear distinction between shows that are informative and those that are educational. The distinction can be subtle, but it is critical. Viewers want to know what's going on...but they don't want to be lectured about irrelevancies by pretentious intellectuals who talk down to their audiences." [■]

# PANORAMIC VIEW



## GETTING IN ON THE ACT

This March, Angela Lansbury and Len Cariou took their leave of Broadway's smash hit "Sweeney Todd." Some 20 blocks north of New York's Times Square, at the Library of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, Lansbury and Cariou's devilish performances in the Stephen Sondheim musical thriller had only just begun, and could run forever—on tape.

Likewise, at the same locale, a gregarious Zero Mostel is still alive as Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof," Anthony Hopkins continues to wage psychological

battles with Peter Firth in "Equus," and a striking young Meryl Streep still sparkles in a New York Shakespeare Festival production of "The Taming of the Shrew."

These and more than 100 other Broadway, off-Broadway and regional theater pieces are tenants of a unique preserve—the New York Public Library's Theatre on Film and Tape Collec-

tion. Virtually a state secret, despite annual public funding of \$75,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts, the collection has been recording, collecting and telescreening theater productions since 1970.

Without its low profile, cautions director Betty L. Corwin, the collection simply could not exist, "and there would be no way to preserve so many wonderful theater moments. We negotiated with the stage unions for two-and-a-half years before they would allow one camera into a Broadway house," says Corwin in explaining why the general public does not have ready access to the tapes. "Our agreements are very strict. Assurances have been given that tapes will not be pirated or reproduced for commercial use. The prints cannot even leave the building, as much as we'd like, say, the kids at UCLA to see them. They must come here.

"And we require that people requesting a tape viewing have a serious reason to do so, be they students of the theater or theater professionals. The collection is not here for people who just want to go to the movies." In keeping with the high-mindedness of it all, those who gain entry pay no fee.

An advisory panel of industry representatives quickly tips the collection's staff of three to the worthy new shows in town (and

out). Thus, this season's hottest drama on Broadway, Bernard Pomerance's "The Elephant Man," was videotaped during its pre-Broadway run downtown at the Theater of St. Peter's Church. And "A Chorus Line" was captured during its gestation at the New York Shakespeare Festival.

Also in the Theatre on Film and Tape Collection is an assortment of made-for-TV plays and documentaries, the latter offering backstage passes to such places as Bil Baird's puppet studio or The Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. Information as well as entertainment is served by the collection's growing library of videotaped dialogues: director George Abbott with writer Garson Kanin, playwright Neil Simon with critic Gene Shalit, performer Liza Minnelli with her longtime material-suppliers John Kander and Fred Ebb.

As consolation to collection shut-outs, production values of the videotapes and films often leave much to be desired. The shooting crews are told, "Keep it simple," says Corwin. "This isn't a creative project in itself. We want an accurate record of a stage play."

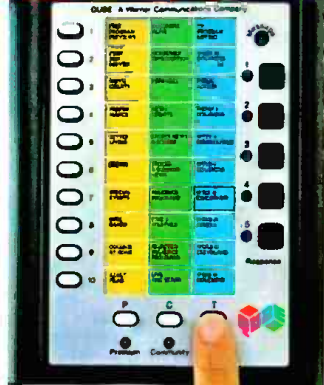
Production costs per taping average \$3000 to \$5000. Less than the coffee and doughnut allowances on some network specials.—Jonathan H. B. Takiff

●● America's talk-variety-information shows, including *Today*, *Tonight*, *Tomorrow*, *The Merv Griffin Show*, *The Mike Douglas Show*, *Dinah!*, *Good Morning America*, *Donahue* and scores of local programs have become not a forum for sharing ideas, but a platform for pitchmen. A 'talking head' on any of these shows is usually a person who is trying to sell a book, an album or a movie ticket.

During 1978, *Donahue* presented a total of 236 hour-long programs, 122 of which had featured guests who were trying to sell something. Fifty-six percent! The greedy hand of hype has extended so totally into television that today's talk-show viewers are dismayed to discover that what they're watching between 'all those commercials' ... is another commercial. ●●

—Phil Donahue, talk-show host, in his autobiography, "Donahue"





## TURN ON YOUR NEIGHBOR

A small suburb of Osaka, Japan, has stolen a march on Columbus, Ohio, in the development of two-way television. While the American city has an "interactive" cable system called Qube, which enables viewers to press a button and answer questions posed by pollsters and quizmasters, the township of Higashi Ikoma has put its residents on the air live from their own homes.

As part of an experiment funded by the Japanese government, 158 families were connected to a cable circuit and supplied with a video camera, a microphone and a computer keyboard that linked them to a central studio. In addition to regular cable fare, viewers were offered a variety of programs produced for the local community, in which they themselves could participate. For instance, in an afternoon panel discussion for housewives, when the subject might be beauty care or aging, any viewer who had an opinion to express could call up the studio by means of the keyboard and await instructions to turn on her camera and mike. She could then proceed to address her neighbors.

The electronic intimacy into which the citizens of Higashi Ikoma were suddenly plunged

*Gathered around the living-room table, the Shibata family learns how to use the subscriber home equipment for Higashi Ikoma's two-way cable system. The microphone in the foreground provides a direct link with the studio.*



generated an unexpected feeling of togetherness on the streets and in the stores. Housewives found that they were on bowing and speaking terms with numerous other women as a result of the ad hoc discussion group created by TV.

"We have become more neighborly as a result of the program," said Mrs. Mieko Ogaki, one of the women responsible for planning the discussion programs. But she also pointed out that attitudes had to change before this kind of system could flourish. "Some people," she said, "have the impression that television is only to listen, not to participate, so there was some resistance initially."

The question of what the culture shock waves will be when Japan's entire population of 114 million is plugged into interactive TV is academic. The Higashi Ikoma experiment is reputed to have cost tens of millions of dollars—the government is chary of disclosing the exact figures—and could not be reproduced on a larger scale without charging fees that are well beyond the means of the average household. Setsumi Nakazato, producer at the tiny pilot station, summed up the situation. "The system," he said, "is five years too early."

successful show around the country. Qube wanted to use the half-hour programs for a 13-week series, and decided—oh, the heresy!—to let its viewers select which famous faces they'd like to see.

Ryan first presented the audience with a few samples of his work; then a list of possible interviewees appeared on the screen and viewers punched in their choices on their push-button Qube keypads. Instantly, the Qube computer tallied the votes, and the world of dozens of Hollywood press agents began to crumble.

A joint show with Robin Williams and John Ritter took the top slot. Jack Lemmon came in second, followed by Henry Fonda, Phyllis Diller, William Shatner, Robert Stack, Andrienne Barbeau, Bob Barker, Ursula Andress, Michael Caine, Anne Baxter, Robert Vaughn and Dyan Cannon. The losers: Eartha Kitt, Sally Kellerman, Trish Van Devere, Marty Feldman, Les McCann, Christopher Reeve, Anthony Hopkins, Rex Reed and—Sophia Loren? Bob Barker beat out Sophia Loren? Just one of the anomalies that occur regularly when the true voice of the people is heard, according to Qube producer Larry Boyle. "Ever since we've gone on the air, we've been surprised at what the audience does," he said. "It makes you wonder about the ratings."

## BALLOT BOX

It's all over, Rex Reed; pack your bags, Christopher Reeve. This could be the beginning of the end of the noncelebrated celebrity. Fame finally is being democratized.

It started last December, not in New York, not in Los Angeles, but, appropriately enough, in the heartland: Columbus, Ohio, home of Warner Amex Cable's two-way, interactive Qube cable-TV service. Producers there had a batch of 22 celebrity interviews by Los Angeles talk-show host Paul Ryan, a part-time actor who gave the Merv Griffin routine a try on a free cable-access channel and ended up syndicating the suc-

“Our foreign correspondents are spread too thin these days, forced to go to too many places, to know a little about a lot of places at the expense of knowing a great deal about their primary base. This has resulted in a diminution not only of the amount, but of the quality of the news we get from abroad.”

—Charles Collingwood, CBS correspondent, at an International Radio & Television Society luncheon, New York

## GANGPLANK TO STARDOM

In order to entice you into reading and responding to a mail-order campaign for Montgomery Ward Auto Club membership, the department-store chain is sponsoring a "Stairway to Stardom" sweepstakes that offers America a chance to appear on *The Love Boat*. Entrants who are blessed with one of 10 computer-preselected numbers in the sweepstakes will receive conventional prizes ranging from \$50,000 to "TV pleasure combos" (25-inch consoles plus video recorders and cameras). But all 10 also will be sent to Hollywood, where they—or other adult members of their families—will be screen-tested for *The Love Boat*. One of those tested will be chosen to play a passenger on the love tub as it traverses the ABC schedule sometime next season.

"Everyone's dream is to become a movie star," says Peter Fiorese, a Montgomery Ward vice president. He may be right—at last count seven mil-



lion people had entered the contest. He expects at least three million more by April 30, the deadline for entering. Still, that's

not quite "everyone," considering that 300 million application forms will have been distributed by that date.

The 10 who would be stars will be coached in voice and makeup prior to their screen tests. After one of them is "discovered," a role will be written tailored to the person's age, sex and talent and to the balance of different types of stories required for each episode. "It won't be just a cameo," promises *Love Boat* co-producer Gordon Farr.

What does *The Love Boat* get out of all this? Well, the publicity can't hurt its ratings. And one of its routine episodes next season will become something of a media event.

It's possible (some would say probable) that all 10 finalists could turn out to be klutzes before the camera, but Farr isn't worried: "People [will] realize that the person isn't going to be Sir John Gielgud or Jane Fonda. It'll be like rooting for the underdog." He's looking forward to the experience—"The screen test alone will be worth the price of admission."

## THE WHIRLYBIRD GETS THE NEWS

They used to call television journalism, with its cameras and lights and recording gear, "the 3000-pound pencil"—and that's just about literally the weight of the newest gimmick in local-TV news: helicopters. The idea is to get on the scene fast and first for a bird's-eye view of, say, a spectacular fire or a search-and-rescue operation, not to mention the purely scenic value they can add to less urgent stories.

"It increases the immediacy of our business immensely," says Roger Ogden, news director of Denver's KBTU. A handful of stations have bought an elaborate microwave tracking device that allows live reports directly from the air, while others make do with a portable microwave unit in the chopper, which has a more limited range.

Some stations simply fake it by positioning someone on the ground to point a relay antenna at the chopper as it flies by. Ogden recently conducted a survey that found about 80 stations using helicopters anywhere from five to 25 hours a week, although Ogden says that only 40 or 50 are "hard-core" devotees.

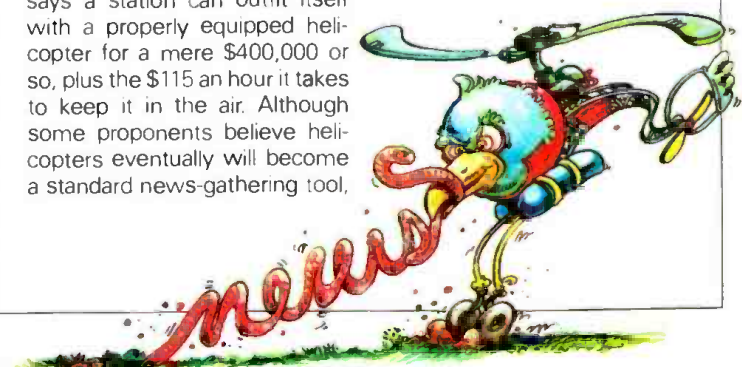
Al Buch, news director of KPNX-TV in Phoenix, which claims to be the first station to use the live microwave system, says a station can outfit itself with a properly equipped helicopter for a mere \$400,000 or so, plus the \$115 an hour it takes to keep it in the air. Although some proponents believe helicopters eventually will become a standard news-gathering tool,

Buch disagrees. "It's the fad right now," he says. "It will probably peak in 1980."

Ogden adds that many stations will get out of the flying business once they discover how difficult and dangerous helicopters are to operate. (A 1977 crash of one of the earliest newscopters killed Francis Gary Powers, the former U-2 pilot shot down over Russia 17 years earlier.) "Things just aren't meant to fly that way," says Ogden.

“ The danger is that we turn our Nation into a nation of tribes. What it comes down to is that a successfully functioning democracy depends on a common data base for its people. The threat to a democratic society is that some of the new broadcast technologies may destroy that common data base. ”

—Richard S. Salant, NBC vice chairman, at a meeting of the Chicago Communications/5 group, Chicago





## PAY-PER-VIEW BLUES

Should pay-TV be thought of as a theater in the living room, where you buy a ticket for a particular show you want to see? Or is it best conceived as a video subscription service, offering a full package of movies and specials for a single monthly fee?

Despite the fact that pay-TV entrepreneurs have long hungered for the pay-per-view approach—why throw a “Grease” or a “Jaws” into a monthly package when such films have already demonstrated their drawing power at theater box offices?—the pay-TV industry has almost unanimously adopted the flat fee. Pay-per-view technology is complicated, and the feeling is that viewers used to plucking their TV out of the air for free will balk at figuratively reaching into their pockets every time a program tempts them. Now one of the two major companies trying to break the pay-per-view barrier, SelecTV in Los Angeles, has given up and fallen in line with the rest of the industry. (The other is

Warner Amex Cable’s Qube service in Columbus, Ohio.)

SelecTV had for the first year and a half of its existence an extremely sophisticated computerized billing system that allowed its subscribers the option of paying only for movies and specials they actually watched (at rates of between \$1 and \$3 each), instead of the usual flat monthly fee of \$26. It worked like this: as do all subscription-TV outlets, SelecTV sends its programs over the air in a “scrambled” broadcast signal, receivable only by subscribers who have a decoding box connected to their set. But the SelecTV box was also connected to the customer’s telephone line. In true futuristic fashion, every 16 days, in the middle of the night, the box would automatically call the company’s computer to tell it what programs had been viewed. In 10 seconds, the computer would take the information, itemize it, and then store it until the time came to send the monthly bill.

Simple, right? For the computer, maybe—but not for the



humans who had to explain it. SelecTV found its sales personnel were spending so much time spelling out the process to prospective customers, and losing so many prospects who apparently weren’t sure they wanted a box using their phone to chat with a computer while they slept, that the company recently relented and started charging subscribers a flat monthly fee of \$19.95 (although some subscribers will still pay-per-view until midyear, when the conversion is complete). “It’s a lot simpler to pitch the package than to go into a lengthy discussion of technol-

ogy,” says George Stein, SelecTV’s marketing and programming vice president. Stein claims an increase in subscriptions of at least 25 percent as a result, though he still believes the pay-per-view concept will come into its own when subscription TV can offer stellar attractions viewers can’t get anywhere else—like a Beatles reunion concert or a big boxing match.

It would seem to be the thrifty, discriminating viewer who is the loser in this tale, but Stein says 70 percent of his customers were hitting the old \$26 monthly maximum fee anyway.

## BANNED IN GOTHAM

Were two sexually explicit cable-television shows banned in New York because of the competition for a cable franchise in Pittsburgh? A jury might vote yes on the circumstantial evidence alone.

First, both *Midnight Blue* and *The Ugly George Hour of Truth, Sex and Violence*, New York City’s most sexually explicit public-access programs, were denied future air time on Manhattan Cable Television when their producers failed to sign their January contracts before the allotted deadline (although both continue to be shown on Teleprompter, the other cable system in Manhattan). Second, Manhattan Cable Television has periodically been under fire for permitting sexually oriented programming, which has made for a stormy relationship with those

same producers. Third, American Television and Communications Corp. (ATC), the company that operates Manhattan Cable Television, was one of four blue-chip companies to enter the bidding for the potentially lucrative Pittsburgh cable-TV franchise—which was to be decided, coincidentally, in January.

“Not signing the contract in time was just the stupid technical reason they took me off the air,” sniffs “Ugly George” Urban, whose show features women undressing in the hallways and alleys of New York. “The real reason is that for ATC to get the Pittsburgh contract, they had to show the up-tight town council just how tough they can be on so-called obscene programs.”

Urban is right about one thing: sex on the cable became a hot issue among the nine Pitts-

burgh City Council members who would ultimately decide the winner in what has been called “the world series of cable-franchise bidding.” All four contenders “romanced” the town council, says councilwoman Michelle Madoff. When asked why she thought those two shows were taken off the air, she replied, “Because ATC was trying to get in good with us.”

It didn’t work. On Jan. 30, by a vote of 8 to 1, the Pittsburgh City Council awarded its cable-TV franchise to Warner Amex Cable Communications. The prospectus does not include sexually oriented programming.

Two weeks later, *Midnight Blue* was back on the air on Manhattan Cable Television, which thus averted a legal battle threatened by lawyers for *Blue*’s producers.

Court is adjourned.

“It is important to the television industry to have a growing constituency of citizens out there who understand the medium and how to use it. The end result, down the road, will be more programs of lasting value. The increased number of discriminating viewers will mandate this. If fluff isn’t watched, it won’t be on.”

—FCC commissioner Abbott Washburn, at a conference of the American Council for Better Broadcasts, Chicago



## SOFT SELL

Four hundred-dollar bills cross the sales counter. Salesman Steve Solomon gives the South American customer \$20 in change and six videocassettes of movies, and rings up another sale for Video Shack, the country's first software-only store.

Ever since Video Shack opened its doors a year ago in the heart of Manhattan's seedy Times Square district, its cash registers have been ringing steadily. Most of the 1400 items in stock are Hollywood movies, with a smattering of instructional videotapes and documentaries, plus some X-rated films.

Since its opening, the store has tripled in size to 3000 square feet and now has 16 employees. Customer demand for prerecorded videocassettes is so great that the store's doors are open 14 hours a day, six days a week, plus 10 to 12 hours on Sunday. Video Shack is one of a handful of such stores in the country—a vanguard of prerecorded-videocassette retail outlets that someday may become as common as record shops or bookstores. (A new and larger branch of Video Shack opened a month ago in a Long Island suburb, Hempstead, N.Y.)

While skeptics of the software industry maintain that not many potential customers are willing to plunk down \$60 to own a movie, the brisk business at the Video Shack belies those

doubts. Most of Video Shack's customers are nearby businessmen or people going to see movies or plays, but the store's corner location at 49th Street and Broadway—an area dotted with cheap novelty shops and peep-show houses—does cause sales-staff jitters. "I look at some guy who comes in my store and think we gotta get him out of here and give him a quarter for a cup of coffee," says Video Shack owner Arthur Morowitz. "But then the guy turns around and buys a few hundred dollars' worth of tapes. How do you figure it?"

He tries to attract affluent customers by advertising in such publications as *The Wall Street Journal* and the *International Herald Tribune*. The street-savvy Morowitz, who once worked in the adult-film business, says his stock of "straight" films moves far more briskly than the X variety.

Although he doesn't like to talk about specific sales figures, Morowitz gleefully recalls his biggest sale. "Well, this Arab fellow came in and a few minutes later he bought over 100 videotapes. It was," he says with a smile and a shrug, "a way-out situation."

●● The promise of public broadcasting will not keep for another decade. The Carnegie Commission knows it. Congress knows it. American television producers know it. The American public knows it. And we know it. It's delivery time. The warm-up is over. ●●

—Chloe Aaron, senior vice president, programming, PBS, at the 1980 PBS Program Fair, San Francisco

## ROLL THE ROCK

When heavyweight rock stars like Bruce Springsteen, Fleetwood Mac, the Grateful Dead, the Rolling Stones and The Who insist on playing a small (3247-seat) theater in Passaic, N.J., one has to wonder why.

"Maybe it's the food," jokingly suggests the Capitol Theater's Len Dell'Amico. "We do put out quite a spread." More likely, the impetus to pop in Passaic is the rock hall's in-house video operation—Monarch Performance Video—which Dell'Amico directs.

The Capitol Theater has been experimenting with video art and technology since 1975, longer than any other concert hall in the country. And by now, rock video is being hailed in some quarters as "the future of the music business," the mixed media turn-on of the 1980s. So for today's top rock musicians, seeking to survive the transition from records and concerts to videodiscs and pay-TV specials, playing for the fans—and cameras—at the Capitol is a painless entree to the big picture.

Concert promoter John Scher's original rationale for

bringing in broadcast video equipment was to serve the customers in the back of his deep, narrow hall with a black-and-white projection-television system; 15-foot screens were raised, flanking the stage proscenium.

"Then the acts started asking if we could make them a videocassette of the show to take home," recalls Len Dell'Amico. "We've continually upgraded our equipment, and now many of the tapes we're making for clients pop up on commercial television—like the Al Stewart and Outlaws tapes used on *The Midnight Special* and *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert*."

Of larger significance, Monarch Performance Video has just entered into an agreement with Warner Amex Cable Communications, Inc., to supply concerts for that satellite-fed system—with a high-grade stereo-sound simulcast, naturally.

"Half the groups don't even notice we're shooting, and when you're working with serious musicians like the Allman Brothers or the Grateful Dead, that's the way it's got to be," says Dell'Amico. "A lot of the 'concert footage' you see on TV is actually faked, done either with a paid audience or no audience at all. But putting three \$50,000 cameras down on the floor, in the midst of some rioting teen-agers, is the risk we must take. The ultimate feel we strive for is spontaneity."

Dell'Amico grins and adds, "And when an artist like 'The Boss,' Bruce Springsteen [left], leaps over the edge of the stage, and you get him in a shot with fans who're going absolutely nuts, that makes it for me. After all, what's rock 'n' roll without the grit?" —J. H. B. T.



●● In small European communities still without television, the old people remain physically active, mixing with the young, venturing out into the real world. Here, like their little grandchildren, they sit immobilized by TV. An American senior citizen once told me that his TV set gave him a sixth sense—at the price of removing the other five. ●●

—Novelist Jerzy Kosinski, interviewed by David Sohn for the magazine *Media and Methods*



# Your videocassette recorder is not just an expensive toy!

Now you can turn your television into a total "home entertainment center."

*If you own a videocassette recorder, you can now see the latest award-winning motion pictures, thrilling sports events, adult entertainment, enchanting children's shows, and other outstanding features... for about 20% of the cost of buying pre-recorded cassettes! Sound unbelievable? Well, it's true — VidAmerica makes it easy for you to enjoy top-notch entertainment in the privacy of your own home... at low, low money-saving prices.*

## See the world's best films

VidAmerica will make available to you the finest films from Hollywood and the best of imports, too. Many of them are VidAmerica exclusives... not available elsewhere, and they're *all* in their original *uncut, unedited* versions, very often never to be seen on network television. They're the movies you might have missed and have been wanting to see... or the ones that you saw in the theater and want to see again in their entirety. And now you can enjoy them on your own television for an amazing 80% less than the cost of purchasing comparable cassettes... films like "Hair," "Last Tango in Paris," "Casablanca," "Coming Home," "Carnal Knowledge," "Oh! Calcutta!"... and so many more.

## Entertainment for the entire family

In addition to outstanding motion pictures, VidAmerica also gives you a choice of other exciting programming, including thrilling nightclub spectaculars, children's films and cartoons, sports events, old-time classic films, and unusual adult entertainment, too. Whatever your tastes and preferences, the VidAmerica Videocassette Rental Club offers you the best entertainment you've been waiting for... at the lowest cost.

## How the club works

As a VidAmerica member, you will receive bi-monthly, a new full-color, illustrated "Program Guide," containing a listing and description of all the new movies and other features available... and the best of previous offerings, too. They're all yours to rent for viewing in your own home for a full 7 days at the Club's amazing low prices... about 80% less than the purchase price

## Easy to order... easy to return

The "Program Guide" makes choosing the videocassettes you want to see very easy... since each program is fully described and illustrated. The order form is simple to use, too. And every selection is delivered right to your door in the very same package that you use for returning it 7 days later. You don't have to search around for a carton... you don't have to put on any postage... you don't even have to address the return package. It's all done for you in advance. When you're ready to return it, just drop it in any mailbox. It couldn't be easier.



For FREE Information & Program Guide mail coupon below **OR CALL TOLL-FREE 800-223-1318** In New York State call 212-355-1505

## Never an obligation

As a Club member you are *never* required to rent any cassettes at all. The choice is always yours. Order as many or as few as you wish... or none at all. There's never an obligation.

## Additional membership benefits

Once you become a Club member, you are also entitled to important savings on blank tapes and many other video accessories. And there's a 24 hour toll-free number that will make ordering even easier.

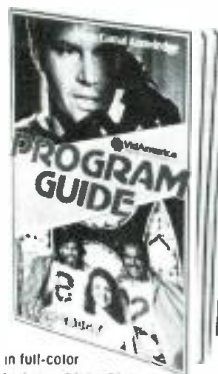
## Send for FREE information now!

We want you to know all about VidAmerica—The Videocassette Rental Club and how it can bring you the best in entertainment at fantastic savings. Just send in the coupon now and we'll send you a complete package of information, including the current Program Guide. Absolutely no obligation, of course!

## FIRST RENTAL FREE

If you send in the coupon now for your **FREE PROGRAM GUIDE** and Membership information, we'll send you a special bonus — The VidAmerica "FIRST RENTAL FREE" Get Acquainted Offer.

# FREE PROGRAM GUIDE



Printed in full-color  
Actual size 5 3/4" x 8 3/4"

Please send me, *without obligation*, complete information about how VidAmerica can turn my television into a total home entertainment center, along with the current issue of the Program Guide — ALL ABSOLUTELY FREE. Be sure to include the VidAmerica — "FIRST RENTAL FREE" Get Acquainted Offer.

Mail to: VidAmerica, Dept. PA-1  
235 East 55th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10022

I own a:  VHS  Beta

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

VidAmerica/The Videocassette Rental Club, Inc.  
is a subsidiary of Video Corporation of America



## OH, NOOOO!

Mr. Bill, the pudgy play-dough character who has spent his entire life being battered, flattened and dismembered in two-minute segments on *Saturday Night Live*, is fast proving that his suffering sells videocassettes as readily as do blockbuster movies. "The Mr. Bill Show," a 25-minute compilation of the hapless character's travails at the hands of the sadistic Mr. Sluggo, is appearing regularly alongside "M\*A\*S\*H," "Patton" and other box-office smashes on the lists of best-selling cassettes around the country.

Video Tape Network, distributor of "The Mr. Bill Show" and other offbeat comedy cassettes, reports that the first seven weeks the \$40 item was on the market, more than 6500 tapes were sold, making it one of the most popular nonmovie videocassettes ever offered to the public. One reason may be the company's all-out effort to promote the tape through distribution of thousands of Mr. Bill posters to stores, at least one of which reports that the strategy paid off. "We had a deluge of orders right before Christmas

and that was just because we had a poster up in front of the store," says Phyllis Millar, video buyer for Nickelodeon, a large record-and-video retail outlet in Los Angeles.

According to John Lollos, Video Tape Network senior vice president, "Our biggest problem was persuading dealers to stock the program. They just didn't know who Mr. Bill was. But their customers sure did." In fact, Lollos is convinced that Mr. Bill is doing so well in the software market because the average age of VCR buyers and *Saturday Night Live* viewers is about the same—37 years old.

Even so, Walt Williams, creator and owner of the rights to the Mr. Bill character, says he's not getting rich—yet. "I don't think I'll make much money on the cassette," he said. "There aren't enough machines out there." Oh, noooo, Walt!

## MOVING PICTURE

The streetcars of San Francisco chugged briefly into the video age this winter, in what was said to be the first time a movie has had its premiere on a public-transit system.

In an experiment designed to gauge public reaction to traveling with entertainment, a San Francisco Municipal Railway car was equipped with two television screens that showed a 40-minute presentation called "Munimovies." Over a period of five weeks, the portable theater was transferred to five different commuter lines. Filmmaker Armin Ganz estimates that 250,000 people saw his creation while riding the streetcar.

"Munimovies" was a collage of images: archival footage including shots taken from a San Francisco streetcar in 1905, new film of contemporary cityscapes seen from the streetcars, tapes of children doing drawings on transportation-related themes, shots of an actress miming the movements of a streetcar driver. The film was financed by a \$4800 grant from the National

Endowment for the Arts and the San Francisco Art Commission, supplemented by private funds.

Officials of the Public Utilities Commission were willing to go along with the scheme—since it didn't cost the city money. As the Commission's James Leonard pointed out, "It was an opportunity to obtain a copy of a film that might come in handy for promotional purposes."

So far, the film has not been used to promote anything, and there are no plans to put "Munimovies" back on the road. But while it lasted, says Ganz, a lot of people "enjoyed the diversion. I watched one woman go two extra stops because she was watching. Children loved it. But some people thought it was intrusive."

"It's making robots of us," was how one dissatisfied passenger put it in the San Francisco Chronicle. Another complained that at home she can turn off the TV set whenever she pleases, but now she was "forced to watch TV" while riding the streetcar.

Nonsense, responds Ganz: "People on the streetcar could still look out the window."

## GOING PLACES

"You," Ardis Ozborn said to Howard Goldberg, "are a drug-gist or a doctor." Ozborn, of Bill Williams Casting Services, was studying a tape of Goldberg, pondering the type of TV-commercial role he could play.

In fact, Goldberg is not even an actor. He is instead the operator of Adventure on a Shoestring Inc., a Manhattan-based organization that exists to give its members a cheap night on the town—actually, more than 300 cheap nights each year. Many of the most popular events Goldberg arranges for his members are television-related: inspecting scenery workshops, sitting in on TV-acting classes, pre-viewing TV pilots, watching re-

hearsals and tapings of shows—and, of course, visiting the casting agency.

At the moment, Ozborn is talking about the intricacies of TV-commercial casting, answering such questions as "How do you tell people that they just don't make it?" (A.: Gently, but directly.) As an exercise, Ozborn then tapes all attending adventurers and type-casts them.

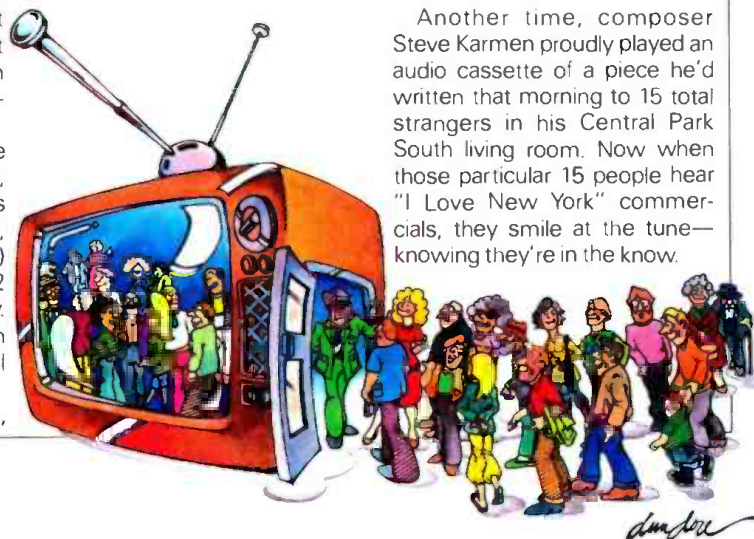
For the privilege of talking like this with people *in the know*, getting to hang out with experts and visit behind the scenes, 2000 members (from 35 states) pay Goldberg \$25 a year, plus \$2 per event and expenses, if any. About a dozen attend any given night, along with the occasional nonmember, who pays \$3.

Members of the organization,

now in its 17th year, have chatted with an ad-agency head about award-winning commercials, toured television stations, visited the Museum of Broadcasting. On one occasion, they

were part of the show—when a local news team went to film Omar's School of Panhandling (product of an inventive prankster's imagination), Goldberg's brigade went along as "the class."

Another time, composer Steve Karmen proudly played an audio cassette of a piece he'd written that morning to 15 total strangers in his Central Park South living room. Now when those particular 15 people hear "I Love New York" commercials, they smile at the tune—knowing they're in the know.





# Your First Baby

By TED NELSON

**H**ere it is. Your first computer. The cartons seem to more than fill the table. So much packing material. Now you take out the computer.

Here's the television unit that will be your computer screen. And the keyboard you'll use to interact with your computer. And this cassette recorder will be the mass memory. But how does it all hook up again? It seemed so easy in the store.

What was it you fell for? You realize now that pure emotion made you buy this supposedly rational instrument; you have to *care* before you put down a thousand dollars. For those of us who have been living with computers for a long time, the hardest question to answer from those who haven't is: "Why would you want a home computer?"

It's not that the question is unreasonable. The problem is that there is such a chasm between the believer and the unbeliever that there can be no simple answer.

To ask only for practical uses is wholly to misunderstand what drives the computer lover. The unified practical uses are not ready yet. Tomorrow's system that will be your typewriter, telegraph, interactive movie-machine, cartooning stand, orchestra, bookkeeper, appointment secretary, and department of purchasing, procurement, cataloguing, upkeep, subscriptions and insurance policies is not quite ready yet. But come it will. True unified home computers, when they arrive, will be like home *radio*—unspeakably easy to use, unencumbered by computerese. But so far the creators of personal programs do not even understand the meaning of Computer Ease.

There is a credo that binds all the home-computer people—the young businessmen, the 14-year-olds, the re-

tirees, the dreamers, the electronics buffs with their one-upmanship and *machinismo*, the music and graphics freaks. We believe that *this is the future*, and that the way to deal with it is to start working on it at home, right now. There are millions to be made and a new world to build, or so the vision goes. It is not that a single particular use is needed, but that *all* things—your entire life of tomorrow—seem transformable.

Look to the past. When there were only dirt roads, did not some foresee limitless possibilities for the automobile? And did not the first telephone subscriber in town imagine there would soon be many others? And here we are again, Day One, the Ground Floor, a new life and a new world. Again, this is not rational. It is a credo.

**B**ut what made you yourself buy this thing? The speed, the thought of its doing a million operations per second, whatever that meant? The sense of precision, that it could take the same billion steps repeatedly and get the same answer every time? The sense of power, that this odd box, now your very own, could outrace all the calculators used in World War II, or even the first Univac? Was it the sense that at last you would be at the center of modern times, sweeping with the new technology, that this box would be your own Mission Control Center? Was it the thirst to know what computers were really about, beyond the ominous, soulless dominators you had seen in sci-fi movies?

Ultimately the decision to get a personal computer is like the decision to have a baby—a commitment of time, money and attention whose justification is, at the last, emotional: it's something

you want to care about and become involved with for a long time.

Now here you stand, the first on your block to have his or her very own computer. Staring at it.

For some this is the darkest moment. There comes the fear that it may never work. (And the fear of that question, "Why would you want a home computer?") But checking it all over *just once more*, you see how it all fits together. And you do it.

And it works. The first message comes up on the screen.

And it feels like the first time in history.

**T**o get started in home computing, with no computer background, start with a simple, prebuilt system. Skip the fancy accessories, like music synthesizers and TV cameras, for a while, and learn the simple things. Get a unit that is set up for screen display, that has a quality keyboard and that offers a good line of accessories for later on.

Where should you buy it? Perhaps the most important deciding point is *service*. Consider most carefully where you will have to take the machine to be fixed; a lot depends on where you live. Some brands need computer stores; dealers for the others have other arrangements. Ask firmly.

Base prices range from \$500 to \$1500. If you must have one accessory, it should be a disc memory, not a printer; otherwise, having to shuffle memory cassettes like a short-order cook makes everything take 10 times longer. With the small disc drive you'll be spending around \$2000 altogether.

Of course, the prices are going down, but not fast, because the demand is going up. Today's \$2000 computer may cost only \$500 three years from now, and \$50 three years later. The question is only: can you afford to wait? ■

*Ted Nelson is the author of "The Home Computer Revolution," "Computer Lib" and numerous magazine articles.*

# WHAT IS AMERICA'S SECRET WEAPON IN THE ENERGY CRISIS?

*"The high cost of gasoline has finally caught up with the Florida Highway Patrol. The Patrol has been forced to cut service because the State Legislature has not allocated enough money to pay the current price of gasoline."—United Press International*

In Washington, legislators, doggedly intent on reading our future as a replay of the immediate past, have sought the "answer" to the current energy crisis in new energy discoveries. In recent months we've looked at natural gas, nuclear, coal, solar and synthetic fuels in a desperate attempt to reduce imported oil's share of America's dwindling energy supply. The \$10-billion-a-year Energy Department—described by *The Wall Street Journal* as "an unworkable mess"—has task forces seriously studying such substitutes for oil as peanut shells, cow dung and corn husks.

Yet as we enter the 1980s, the old American industrial-based economy, which dates back to the 1890s, is rapidly being replaced by information capital, information workers, and information itself. As Peter Drucker notes in "The Age of Discontinuity": "In 1900 the largest single group, indeed still the majority, of the American people, were rural and made a living on the farm. By 1940, the largest single group, by far, were industrial workers. By 1960, the largest single group were what the census called 'professional, managerial and technical people,' that is, knowledge workers." According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, more than half the work force today consists of

*Desmond Smith is with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Toronto and writes frequently on media.*

"information workers" who employ words, images or numbers and use brain power rather than muscle power to earn their paychecks. In the next decade, says Sidney Topol, chairman of the board and president of Scientific-Atlanta, Inc., a company in the vanguard of the satellite revolution, "We'll not get in a car any more to drive to work. A great many of us will go into the next room, turn on our TV sets and hit a button."

Two enormous developments or events have explosively combined to create the catalyst for the switch from energy to information: one is a scientific breakthrough; another is the violent domestic upheaval caused by the energy crunch. On New Year's Day, 1970, Western oil companies were paying less than two dollars for a barrel of oil from OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries). Prices now are about \$30 a barrel, with huge amounts of oil being sold on the spot market for about \$50. Yet against this gloomy backdrop something positive is taking place, although Washington bureaucrats don't seem to realize its significance—it is flight from the old-fashioned wheel. Confronted with outrageous oil prices, the mechanical age is swiftly yielding to electric technology and the ferroconcrete highway is giving way to the electronic highway.

Never before has there been so vast a change in communications. As a recent IBM advertisement noted, "Technology has gone through the roof. The cost of using a computer has gone through the basement." And it is the merging of new technologies—fiber optics, satellites, pay-TV, interactive TV, computer communications—that is going to change our lives dramatically. As the

United States enters the information age, it is the television set—not peanut shells or corn husks—that is the most promising candidate to lick the energy shortage. "Smart" television, which takes advantage of the microelectronic revolution and gives viewers access to immense communication power, is about to replace yesterday's "boob tube."

The familiar video screen is spawning more new products and product uses than any invention since—ironically—the automobile. And it is the American *home*, rather than the office or factory, that is at the center of change. The segregation of work life from home life, a phenomenon of the mechanical age, is likely to be reversed, and a back-to-home movement may well become the single most significant social trend of the 1980s.

When we think about it, going downtown, either by mass transit or in a gas-guzzling automobile, to spend eight hours in an energy-wasteful office has been essentially an organizational response to the *backwardness* of communications. It might have been necessary at the turn of the century, when labor was cheap and office equipment expensive, when communications were rudimentary, when the new vertical office blocks had to be built close to the central offices of the new telephone, telegraph and electric-power companies. Today, with fuel prices skyrocketing and transportation a major headache in most cities, it no longer makes sense for millions of workers to commute to offices. And in 10 years it may not even be viable, because, says Topol, "By the 1990s all cars will have license plates that say 'This car not allowed on the road Mondays and Fridays.'"

In Houston, for example, a city de-

## YOUR TELEVISION SET

By DESMOND SMITH







Will Exxon put a tiger in your TV set by the year 2000? It's an unlikely yet intriguing possibility that the world's biggest oil company could become the world's largest communications company

scribed by one planner as "the epitome of the inefficient city from a transportation standpoint," 86 percent of local travel is in vehicles occupied by a single individual, and the annual per capita consumption of gasoline is a fearsome 670.9 gallons. Houstonians, of course, living as they do in the capital of the old petroleum culture, cannot be blamed for following their noses. Yet it's obvious that a huge component of the oil crisis is energy wasted on transportation. As a letter writer to *The New York Times* recently observed: "With less than five percent of the world's remaining reserves of proven crude oil, the United States now finds itself in the embarrassing position of owning almost 40 percent of the world's passenger cars, and of consuming almost 60 percent of the world's gasoline."

One answer is to begin to substitute communications for transportation. Once we begin to be serious about this task, the "crisis" in energy will become more manageable. The cure lies, therefore, in reorganizing the work process and then tying the process into the new means of communication. The rich individual in 1950 could not have bought the extensions of communication available to virtually everyone today. The new technology now entering the marketplace makes it possible for millions of Americans to perform their jobs at home on computer-linked television or at neighborhood computer-television centers.

Joe Garber, senior project manager of the communications group in the New York management-consulting firm of Booz, Allen & Hamilton, notes that today thousands of office workers commute up to 50 miles from the counties surrounding Los Angeles, and he says, "The economics of communications are such that we can [today] build remote offices so that we don't have to take that 50-mile trip each way." But he does add a note of caution: "We have to do a lot more thinking about full-time employment at home. You're not going to get a lot done with kids on the lap, the dog barking, and someone asking you to paint the garage." (That's to say nothing of the loss of camaraderie enjoyed in the office.) Garber suggests that the immediate beneficiary of the merging computer-television-telecommunications technology will be the senior business executive who will have that much more flexibility to solve problems at home (rather than spending weekends in the office) and the working mother who might

like to spend her time at home. "With a terminal," says Garber, "she can easily work at home on a piecework basis—insurance claims is one example—contracting to perform 20 hours of work in her own time."

Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Communications, is convinced that the new video options "will transform not only the face of broadcasting, but the lives of Americans as profoundly as the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century." To provide those options, some of the biggest names in U.S. business are investing hundreds of millions of research dollars on the new television-computer-telecommunications hardware. At the head of the pack are giants like AT&T, IBM, Xerox, RCA and ITT. Also in the van are innovative electronics firms such as Scientific-Atlanta, Texas Instruments, Intel, Wang Laboratories and Northern Telecom.

As the gasoline culture is pushed aside by the emerging new information culture, the oil companies have begun to sit up and take notice. Exxon Enterprises, for example, a wholly-owned affiliate of the Exxon Corporation, has staked out claims on the information frontier in such crucial areas as microcomputers, word processing, laser products, word-recognition computer systems, computerized test scoring, facsimile transmission and voice/data communications. Will Exxon put a tiger in your TV set by the year 2000? It's an unlikely yet intriguing possibility that the world's biggest oil company could become the world's largest communications company by the end of the century.

Unfortunately, all these promising developments are taking place in chaotic and piecemeal fashion. No major Carter Administration appointees—with the possible exception of the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Charles D. Ferris—show evidence of having given sufficient thought to the powerful role computer-linked television could play in resolving the energy problem in the

1980s. In circles where reflection is being given to such matters, there are a variety of solutions being discussed. Three of them are particularly provocative.

### 1. Abolish over-the-air television broadcasting.

Not everyone will agree with this suggestion, certainly not the \$7-billion-a-year commercial-television industry led by ABC, CBS and NBC, which would promptly lose their quarter-century hegemony over the Nation's airwaves. But the idea's proponents argue that we cannot afford to maintain the spectrum-wasteful television delivery system developed in the Roosevelt era; that this one-way system, dependent on wobbly rooftop aerials for picture delivery, has limited home viewing to a handful of television channels.

Those who would do away with over-the-air TV propose that television services be shifted to cable (which has dozens of channels) and the vacated spectrum reallocated to mobile radio, a medium that can *only* go over-the-air and that, because of its enormous growth, has become a regulatory nightmare in recent years. If the television spectrum is reallocated to mobile radio, it will make way for the cordless telephone that you can carry around in your pocket, an invention that AT&T planners call a "green field" area for expansion (meaning it is ripe to grow). The great weakness of the national telephone system until now has been that telephones have had to be attached to rooms, office areas or poles rather than to users. In the future, providing the telephone company is given access to radio frequencies, you will, literally, be able to place a phone call from anywhere. You won't have to drive to a pay phone in an emergency, and there will be no need to return to the office to pick up your messages.

Shifting the Nation's 76 million TV households to cable would, of course, be a daunting task. Today only one in five homes is wired to cable, and only about half the country has easy access to cable service. Many of the major cities, because of extraordinary capital costs, have yet to be wired up. And there are millions of Americans, living either on welfare or below the poverty line, for whom today's over-the-air television—no matter how imperfect—represents the only source of information and entertainment. So far suggestions such as the provision of "media stamps" to help defray the



monthly costs of cable service have contributed little to resolving the real problem of how to share the benefits of the new technology equitably. New York is one major city that seems to have met this question head on, now demanding that cable operators wire up an entire borough, not merely profitable neighborhoods. And in Atlanta, where a new group, Cable Atlanta, recently won the citywide franchise, similar conditions were imposed.

**I**f and when television is shifted to cable, the most promising new aspect of the home TV set will be "informatics"—a vast range of information and work-related services that can be viewer-activated. Of course, "free" TV, or more accurately, advertiser-supported television programming, would not disappear, and most likely it would still have a prominent role in the new environment. But as the mass audience explores the incredible and useful diversity of 50-to-100 channel cable TV, its interest in *As the World Turns* or *Happy Days* will compete with the new-found ability to shop, bank, talk to a neighbor, or work part- or full-time via television.

## 2. Hasten deployment of videotext and other two-way services.

Videotext is a generic term that describes systems known variously as "teletext" and "viewdata." Both describe systems that allow information to be retrieved from various data banks and displayed on home television sets. The single most important feature of the viewdata systems is that they employ two-way communications, unlike teletext, where the user must wait patiently for the requested information to be delivered. Teletext transmits this information over-the-air using the TV signal and equips the TV set to pick it up. Viewdata systems connect the set directly to the information base by telephone or cable lines.

Videotext has been described by its supporters as the most revolutionary communications innovation since the telephone. Only a few of the Nation's present cable systems possess two-way capability, but more and more cities are demanding it as a condition for the granting of cable franchises. In recent months, New York's Bureau of Franchises has served notice that any company expecting to win the lucrative franchises for Brooklyn, the Bronx or Staten Island will be required to provide two-way services. Two-way cable attacks the energy crisis

As the mass audience explores the diversity of cable TV, its interest in *As the World Turns* will compete with the ability to shop, bank, talk to a neighbor or work via television

frontally by (a) providing the capability for hundreds of thousands of people to work at home and (b) supplying a wide range of viewer-activated services that reduce dependence on transportation for getting things done.

One of the earliest studies of the market potential of two-way TV was done in the early 1970s by Paul Baran of the Institute for the Future in California. Sponsored by the Department of Commerce, Baran conservatively estimated that during the 1980s each household would spend an average of \$20 a month on home information services. He identified 30 services and grouped them in the six major categories listed below.

**EDUCATION:** Baran estimated that this market would provide a huge 34 percent of all two-way service revenues from the home. It would include computer-aided instruction, computer tutoring, correspondence school and adult evening courses on TV.

**BUSINESS:** Paid work at home by managerial, professional, administrative and clerical workers was estimated to account for 23 percent of potential total revenues.

**INFORMATION:** Such services as electronic newspapers, legal information, library access and ticket reservations would garner 11.5 percent.

**SHOPPING:** Another 11.5 percent would come from such services as shopping transactions from catalogues, supermarket shopping, consumer advisory services and cashless-society transactions. Most bills would be paid by electronic-fund transfer initiated from a computer terminal in the home.

**ENTERTAINMENT:** Eleven percent of the eventual total market is broken down into three separate services: plays and movies on a paid subscription basis (with two-way capability informing the central studio of audience response and requests); information about past and future entertainment events; and restaurant information. (Baran now says he greatly underestimated the "fun" aspects of two-way TV.

Pointing out the \$450 million market in electronic TV games today, he believes home entertainment will be of major economic importance in the Eighties.)

**PERSON TO PERSON:** Nine percent of two-way service revenues would be earned from face-to-face videophone communications, teleconferencing, message recording, household mail and direct-advertising mail.

The last category illustrates the savings two-way services might bring. Discussing Picturephone, the Bell System's two-way video system, Joe Garber says, "It is an extremely effective tool. Not only is it an energy saver and a cost saver, it is a *time* saver. When you consider it often takes two hours to get to an airport where you take a two-hour flight for a one-hour meeting and then you have to get back, it's wonderful! A New York-Atlanta teleconference costs around \$270 an hour. [One round-trip ticket to fly between the two cities is now \$254.] So if two people in New York talk with two people in Atlanta, you've recouped your travel costs handsomely."

To improve face-to-face interaction, MIT is reported to be developing expression and answer amplifiers for military teleconferencing. Presumably, if and when it's perfected, the chief of staff will be able to catch the nuance of a facial gesture at the touch of a button.

**C**learly, two-way TV has to be thought of not as a gadget but as a low-cost new utility in the home. Bell Canada plans to launch one of the world's largest tryouts of videotext by early 1981. The \$10 million test in Toronto will use Telidon, a videotext system developed with Canadian government funding. Among companies that will feed information into the computers are two of Canada's largest newspaper chains, Torstar Corp and Southam Inc., as well as Bell Canada's directory subsidiary, Tele-Direct. They will supply users with a choice of up to 100,000 "pages" of on-demand information.

So far most of the suggestions for two-way TV have merely emphasized new ways of doing old things. But in the future, two-way TV is almost certain to come up with new ways to do new things. A poet, for example, could put together a computer program that describes the ins and outs of iambic pentameter and enter it into the supplying computers so that anyone with a terminal would have access to it. If there was sufficient demand, our poet

would collect sizable royalties for use of his commodity—packaged knowledge.

**B**y the early 1990s, instead of the handful of networks that now cross America, we could have thousands of person-to-person or group-to-group networks. The point must be made emphatically that between the cable companies and the Bell System a substantial part of the United States is already wired up. Adding two-way capability could be made a national priority instead of the ad hoc affair it is at present.

### 3. Decentralize the office

Among the Energy Department's contingency plans, should the energy crisis worsen, is the compulsory four-day workweek. This would save millions of barrels of oil every week. But why not save oil during the rest of the week by shifting a substantial part of the work force either to home or to electronic stations near home where they could work on computer-linked television screens? In time this would do away with the centralized office building entirely.

We've already got an example in the White House. The President of the United States has never gone downtown to work. Instead, he walks less than a hundred yards from the East Wing to his office each morning and keeps in touch with the biggest business in the world chiefly through electronics. A new Hon-

eywell integrated information system being installed in the Executive Office can do everything from electronic mail processing and briefing preparation to legislative tracking and correspondence control.

That's what's possible. In contrast, management experts tremble when they consider the inefficiency of the average office. Most of what is supposed to happen inside the office doesn't. As Howard Anderson, president of The Yankee Group, a consulting firm, told *The New York Times* recently: "The office...provides the wrong information to the wrong people at the wrong time and at the wrong cost."

As almost everyone who has ever worked inside an office knows, there is a great deal of goofing off. Recent surveys have shown that while productivity gains by production workers have climbed by about 83 percent in the past decade, office-worker productivity grew by only a miserable four percent. Randy Goldfield, a principal in the firm of Booz, Allen & Hamilton, told a conference of Boston business professionals that her studies showed office secretaries are idle 19 percent of the workday and away from their desks an additional 34 percent of the day.

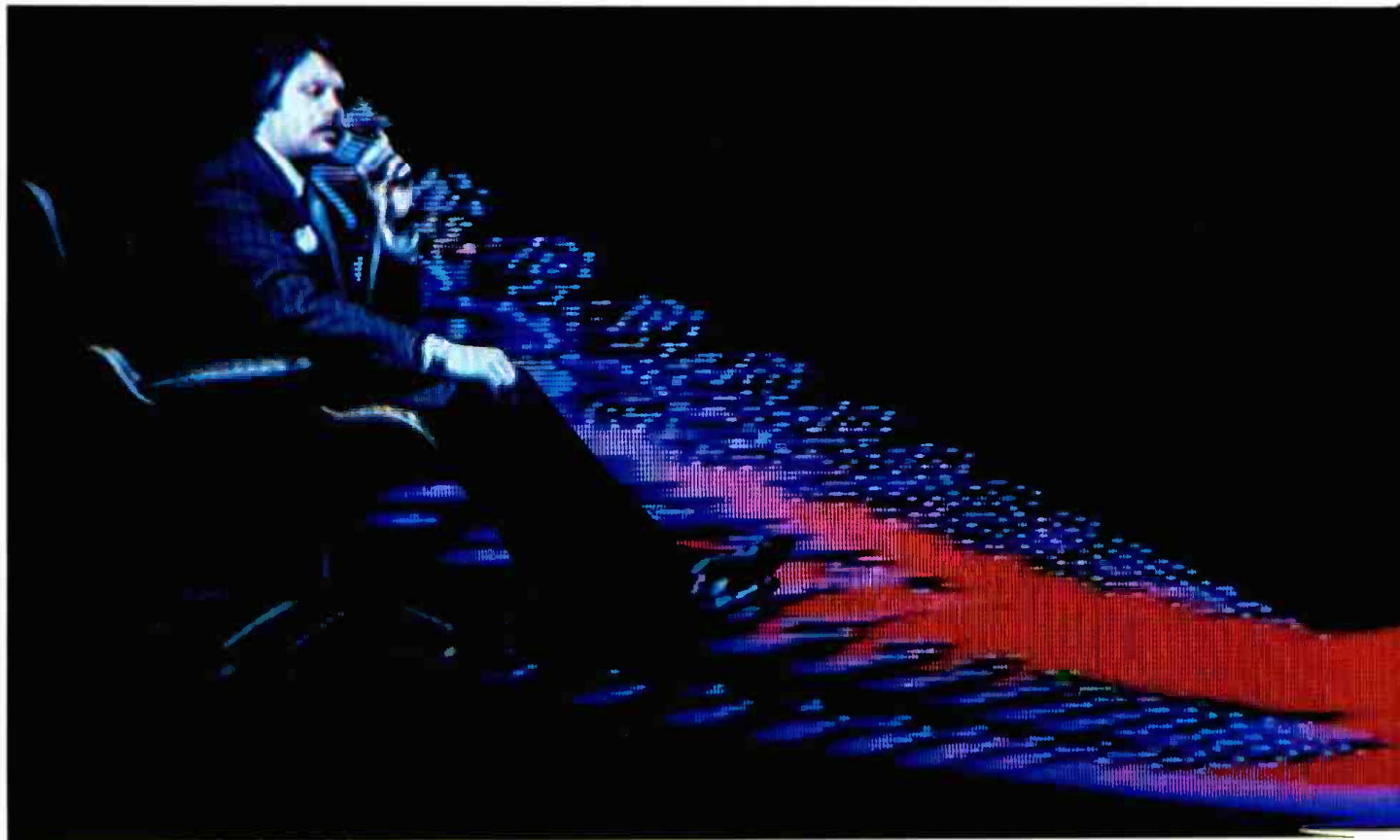
**I**n Waltham, Mass., Carol Weiszmann, an editor at International Data Corporation, publisher of business newsletters, says, "Much of the routine of business is simply spent keeping track of people.

They sign in at 9 A.M.; they lunch between noon and 1 P.M.; they go home at 5 P.M. Today with the computer it's just as easy to keep track of an employee 300 miles away, and, if we can do this electronically by the mid-1980s, we'll see a return to the neighborhood"—because we'll be keeping track of employees working out of their own houses.

**B**ut what about the widespread feeling that most people really don't want to work at home? "It's one of those issues that's going to fade," Weiszmann says. "In the early Sixties people used to say 'Oh, my God!' if you mentioned that money would eventually be replaced by plastic cards. Well, nowadays we use both and the argument has vanished."

Using computer-linked television for access to data-processing and word-processing systems, it should be possible for hundreds of the thousands of employees to work at home. Says John Callahan, a principal with the Concord Consulting Group in Concord, Mass., "That's already happening to a certain extent. Just before last winter's big blizzard in Chicago, one firm gave some employees home-computer terminals as an experiment. So when the blizzard hit, and nobody could get to work, those people with the home terminals still did their jobs."

Not long ago Xerox announced it was entering the business-communications market with its proposed XTEN system, a





satellite-based communications system that can transmit both computer data and business documents, as well as limited video and voice, between cities. With such a system an at-home business person in Los Angeles could, in a matter of seconds, transmit letters, memos and other documents to a factory or branch office anywhere in the United States.

Even the old stick-in-the-mud U.S. Postal Service has moved along with the times. Its Electronic Computer Originated Mail System, or E-Com, allows businesses that generate large quantities of bills and other messages by computer to transmit them electronically to major post offices.

The television-linked computers could become the backbone of a prodigious "cottage industry" for clerical and administrative workers. Husband-and-wife secretarial teams who set their own hours and work for several bosses on a piece-work, contractual basis should see productivity soar as completed work zips from the communicating word processor in the home directly into the electronic mailbox.

**L**awyers are another professional group that will be able to save energy and work faster and better with the new technology. The majority of them have always taken work home with them. Now they can work at home using the television set and a computer terminal

hooked up with a system called "Lexis." Today, simply by calling a combination of key words that appear in his case, an attorney can get a complete library of precedents by date, name and judges; and he can actually zero in on decisions made by the judge who will be hearing his client's case. To date, about 60,000 lawyers and paralegals have been trained to use this system, taught and available at nearly 100 law schools.

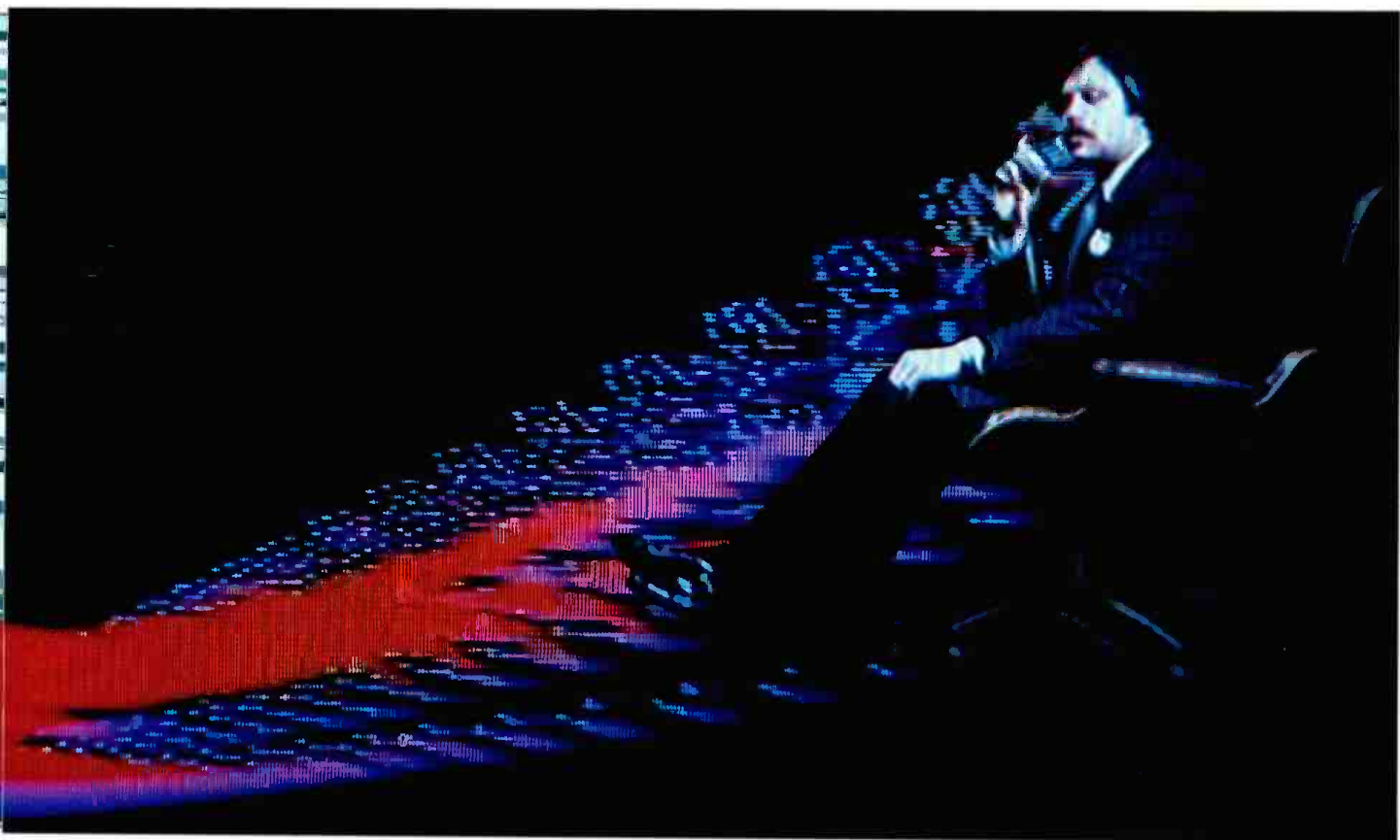
**O**f course, two-way TV and the phasing out of downtown office work are synergistic. The faster two-way TV spreads across the Nation, the greater the increase in the back-to-home movement. This means, in turn, that there will be more effort made to maximize the energy-saving benefits that flow from the investment.

The central question is: when will all this happen? Carol Weiszmann thinks that by the middle of the Eighties we will begin to see significant changes. "If we don't have a major war, if we can maintain oil from the Middle East at present price levels, if the costs of transportation continue to rise, we will start to [rethink] our priorities. Computer systems have been *dropping* in price at a rate of 10 to 20 percent annually, which is awesome, so we will stop trucking around information on paper and start moving information over the wire. Also, as equipment such as word processors enters the office and

nontechnical people get accustomed to it, the questions that we're beginning to ask in our office—"Why can't we move the word processor home and work between midnight and 5 A.M.?"—will emerge."

What is fairly obvious is that the U.S. economic system cannot survive if it continues to depend on the good will of Saudi princes and Iranian ayatollahs. Thus, it seems sensible to give serious consideration to an alternative that would link "smart" television—the marriage of television, computers and telecommunications—to the way we live and work. Such a marriage would take advantage of America's enormous technical expertise in communications and firmly anchor that knowledge to the transportation demands of the typical citizen. All of this must take place within a framework of planning, but at the present time no one in the Energy Department appears to be communicating productively with the bright backroom people at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, or with the FCC.

**A**s we enter the 1980s people may begin to recognize that America—the first nation to enter the high-information society—has something better to offer as an alternative energy source than cow chips. "Smart" television will not solve the energy crisis alone. But it does go a long way down the road to energy self-sufficiency. ■



# Take Me Out to Six Ball Games

This season you may be able to root for a half-dozen home teams at once—if you have cable TV, nimble fingers and an insatiable appetite for baseball

By ROGER DIRECTOR

It happened mysteriously one night about 15 years ago. I was spinning the TV dial at my customary supersonic speed—I had perfected an unerring jab to the tuner with my right toe that enabled me to turn the dial completely, running the gamut of channels, not to mention emotions, in under one second. A crazed New York baseball fan, I was watching an intriguing combination of a Yankees and a Mets game and flipping back and forth rapidly enough to catch every play. Suddenly I flipped too far, into a kind of white-sound black hole on the TV dial where, physicists say, no baseball life can exist. Yet there, miraculously, I found a Phillies game. Fuzzy, unclear, and with raspy sound—but a Phillies game, televised from Philadelphia on a Philadelphia station.

I was amazed. Strange announcers were announcing. Bread and beer brands unknown to me were being hawked during the commercials. I felt imbued with a mystical vision akin, perhaps, to what Balboa felt upon first sighting the Pacific Ocean. It was an electronic fluke, of course, something called "skip": the result of unusual atmospheric conditions that cause TV signals to hop past the horizon and end up in faraway places.

Nowadays, though, that vision wouldn't be a fluke. If you have cable TV and live in New York, the Pittsburgh environs, or many other locales, Philadelphia TV is as easy to dial in as any locally transmitted signal. WPHL-TV games are brought into New York from Philadelphia via cable, and New Yorkers who once could only watch the Mets and Yanks can see Pete Rose, Larry Bowa, Steve Carlton and the rest of the Phils almost as often as they see Lee Mazzilli or Ron Guidry. Not only that, but New Yorkers can also get Red Sox games from WSBK-TV in Boston. In fact, all over the country, millions of baseball fans can now get either satellite or terrestrially transmitted signals of this lineup of stations: WTBS (to almost seven million households), showing Ted Turner's Atlanta Braves; WGN-TV (to around 1.6 million homes), featuring the Chicago Cubs; KTTV (to 933,000 homes), showing

Dodgers games; WPIX (to 704,000 homes), flagship station of the Yankees; WOR-TV (400,000 homes), the superstation that carries Mets games; and KTVU (also 400,000 homes), carrying the San Francisco Giants.

Add to that assortment the nationally televised *Baseball Game of the Week* on NBC and ABC's *Monday Night Baseball*. Then throw in major-league baseball's own cable production, *Thursday Night Baseball*, which recently signed for two more years with UA-Columbia Satellite Services Inc. to broadcast 40-odd games (including several double-headers) a season into well over two million households not near franchise cities, and the screen is filled with as many as three or four games a night. In the Pittsburgh area, for example, this summer fans might be able to see the Braves, Mets, Indians, Yanks and Phils—as well as the home-town Pirates—all in one night. Not since Hannibal crossed the Alps has so much out-of-town competition come knocking on the door. It's made baseball fans delirious—and a mite red-eyed.

It gets a little sick in the summer," said one friend of mine, a Boston Red Sox fanatic who had to move to New York but left his heart in Fenway. "I watch TV virtually every night, especially the Red Sox. With Manhattan Cable you can hold the channel selector in your lap. It has green and red buttons, and you never have to get up. I've watched five baseball games at a time, pitch by pitch—the Red Sox, Phillies, Braves, Mets and Yankees. But I don't miss that much if I flip fast, especially if a slow worker like Don Stanhouse is pitching. Unfortunately, I start to OD at about the same time as the players run down—during those hot days in August—especially if I have to watch the Cubs on daytime Sunday double-headers."

There is a genuine glut of baseball on the television screen. But the glut is a boon to some—especially the common carriers, the middlemen who are free to lift stations' signals and sell them to cable systems. To others, it's a disaster. Major-league baseball, the teams and most of the UHF flagship stations (half of them independents that claim the glut is hurting them financially) feel their "proprietary rights" are being unfairly violated while the FCC stands by cavalierly and encour-

ages the rip-off.

Terrestrially transmitted cable television had existed for roughly 25 years when the airwaves began really buzzing baseball in 1977. Ted Turner created the country's first superstation by broadcasting games of his Atlanta Braves and other local programming on WTBS (then WTCC) far and wide—and cheaply—via satellite to cable buyers all around the country. Other stations have subsequently been "superized" and have increased their audience and advertising reach: WOR-TV, WGN-TV, KTVU and KTTV. What really angers broadcasters, though, is that common carriers licensed by the FCC can take signals from stations without station consent and, for roughly \$1 million a year, buy an "up-link" to a satellite and sell the signals to anyone they choose.

Major-league baseball thinks that is piracy. In his New York office at baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn's headquarters, Tom Villante, executive director of marketing and broadcasting, fumes: "Our problem is not with cable TV—we view that as another avenue to sell and market our product. Our problem is with the superstations and the importation of long-distance signals. We have absolutely no control over them. And there is virtually no payment to the rights owner, us or the flagship station."

Villante has a dream—actually more of a nightmare—that lifts him out of his chair and sets him pacing relentlessly across the floor. "A few years ago," he says, "if you went into a classroom anywhere in this city and asked the kids what teams they rooted for, half of the hands would go up for the Yankees and half for the Mets. But the Mets haven't been doing well lately. What's going to happen in another couple of years with cable proliferating if you go into the classroom again and ask the kids to raise their hands at the same question? You'll get a couple of Phillies fans and a couple of Cubs fans and a couple of Braves fans.

You see," Villante continues, "if you show something other than a home-town team on TV, you start propagating and influencing. You show enough of someone else's baseball in your market and you're gonna destroy your own.

"The backbone of any sports team is its home-town fans. What the hell good is a

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*Roger Director is managing editor of Sport magazine and coauthor of a comedy revue, "Hard Sell," recently produced at New York's Public Theater.*







Yankee fan living in Iowa to the Yankees? He can't increase the local TV audience. And he can't come to the games or contribute to the revenues from concessions, tickets and parking, which are about two thirds of a team's income. Cable is fragmenting our home-town audiences, fragmenting their loyalty and allegiance, and severely undermining the foundation of the home-town franchise. By the time the FCC asks for a demonstration of harm, they'll have to do an autopsy."

Villante warns that as fan allegiance is destroyed and independent stations are crippled by cable, baseball may be left with only one recourse: to stop allowing its games to be televised.

Baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn has offered two examples of cable's destructive effects: Pittsburgh, where the team won the National League pennant and the World Series last year yet had a relatively poor turnstile count; and San Diego, where the Padres aren't as competitive as the Bucs, but where attendance hasn't reached what baseball people think is its potential. Both markets, the commissioner has pointed out, have roughly 40-percent cable penetration. Kuhn claims that fans are staying home to watch other clubs rather than journeying to the ballpark to watch the home side.

**B**ut Kuhn's critics say his argument has more holes than the Padres' infield. The Pirates' attendance problems are long-standing. In 1978, when they battled for the division title until the final week of the season, they failed to draw a million patrons. But in a March 1979 article in Pittsburgh Magazine, when writer Evan Pattak asked numerous team and television officials why the turnstile trauma existed, neither Joe O'Toole, Pirate vice president for administration, nor Harding Petersen, the team's executive vice president, cited cable as a factor. Instead, they pointed to poor promotions as the reason.

In San Diego, 40 percent of the homes receiving cable get KTLA and KTTV, which carry a total of about 60 Angels and Dodgers games. Yet, according to Linda Ebner, director of Congressional relations for the National Cable Television Association, the Padres' attendance has continued to increase.

Ebner also points out that the Seattle Pilots struck out as recently as 1969, when there was almost no cable in that city. Today the three-year-old Seattle Mariners have acceptable attendance even with 25-percent cable penetration.

"There is no correlation between cable penetration and home gate," Ebner says. "The White Sox are hurting in attendance, and there is no cable in Chicago. The Dodgers drew nearly three million fans

last year, and there is cable in Los Angeles."

Of the nearly 1.9 million TV homes in the San Francisco area, 559,500, or roughly 30 percent, have cable. About 125,000 get Braves games from superstation WTBS, while other subscribers see Padres and Angels games. Yet the Giants' overall attendance has increased in the last few years: a result, most observers would agree, of the team's improvement.

"Cable TV is not going to hurt baseball any more than broadcast TV has," says Dave Gaylor, programming operations manager of Los Angeles's Theta Cable. "Cable will probably tend to involve people more, and they'll tend to get excited by races more and buy season tickets. There

I imagine telling my  
friends the complete  
score: 6 to 4... to 3 to 8  
to 1 to 0 to 9 to 5 to 3 to  
11 to 7 to 2



is absolutely no substitute for being at the ballpark. I have guys who work for me and have the cable. They may see three games in one night, but they still go out to the ballpark and they scream like hell—'cause it's the Dodgers."

That's what really seems to be the point. An increase in cable baseball—which has probably reached its limit at around four games a night in some areas—is not so much likely to destroy home-town loyalty as to spark it by cultivating more fan interest in the game, its stars and its pennant hoopla. And that, in turn, should fuel attendance.

**F**or the video fans lingering at home there undoubtedly will be added pressure. For one thing, fans of the home-town team may have more to cry about. Mets fans already can get eyeball blisters watching their erratic shortstop Frank Taveras go into the hole with the alacrity of a rock climber and pluck at the ball as if he were trying to milk an Australian bush snake; then they can flip the dial and see lithe Larry Bowa, the Phils' great shortstop, gobble up grounders as if they were

so many deviled eggs. With cable increasing the number of games, such comparisons will become more numerous and frustrating.

Then there will be the increasing psychiatric syndrome of audio-visual intoxication known as "flip-itis." I admit that in a compulsive effort to get in on all the action, I rarely dally longer than 90 consecutive seconds on any one channel. I further admit to having a crenelated cortex from my mania, but I am a flipping fool with whom it is literally impossible to sit back and watch a game in peace (going to the ballpark may be the only way to do that). For me, the cable glut is a challenge demanding speed, smarts and endurance. I have yet to get the chance, but I vow that, given a quick and sturdy enough channel selector, I could watch six baseball games at once. I imagine telling my friends the complete score: 6 to 4... to 3 to 8 to 1 to 0 to 9 to 5 to 3 to 11 to 7 to 2—not necessarily in that order.

As national in scope as their satellite-broadcast games are, I do not believe the Atlanta Braves—or any other club—will ever become "America's team." For there will always be one constant in sports—the fans' love for the home team. And that emotion is unfathomable, irrational and impervious to most all shocks save, perhaps, the age-old problem of propinquity. When the New York Giants moved to San Francisco, I refused to let my ardor wane, and I followed the team as best I could via the box scores. On many nights, long past bedtime, I would sit in the dark, hunched over a radio, trying to pick up Giants broadcasts. The needle swept back and forth as I wandered across the crackling airwaves in search of the Giants, straining to pick up fragments of broadcasts that might have been swept off course and northeastward in the jet stream up the Ohio Valley from Cincinnati or St. Louis. I longed to hear those small voices in the night, to hear the familiar names of Cepeda, Mays, and the newcomers McCovey and Marichal.

**I**n 1962, while the Giants were making a miraculous run at the National League pennant, I bent over the radio trying to pick up the broadcasts of their final regular-season games against the Cardinals and the Houston Colt 45s (now the Astros). But that was also the year the New York Mets were born. They were a new home team to get excited about, and, try as I might, the Giants' signal—and my love for them—grew too feeble to find. I'll watch the Giants and as many other teams as I can on the cable this season, but I'll go to the ballpark to see the Mets and Yanks. The commissioner need not worry. Home is where, when you have a team there, you root for it to win. □



Henry Fonda and John Houseman, appearing together in "Gideon's Trumpet," exchange some informal judgments on lawyers, television, acting and each other

## A Courty Conversation

**H**enry Fonda and John Houseman met on the mountainside in Bel Air. They had come to discuss "Gideon's Trumpet," their new CBS movie, tentatively scheduled for telecasting this month, and to reminisce about their two very different careers. At their feet was Fonda's swimming pool; beyond it were the rooftops of Beverly Hills and Los Angeles. The view could have been distracting, but the two men held each other's attention. Fonda adjusted his hearing aid in order to catch every word.

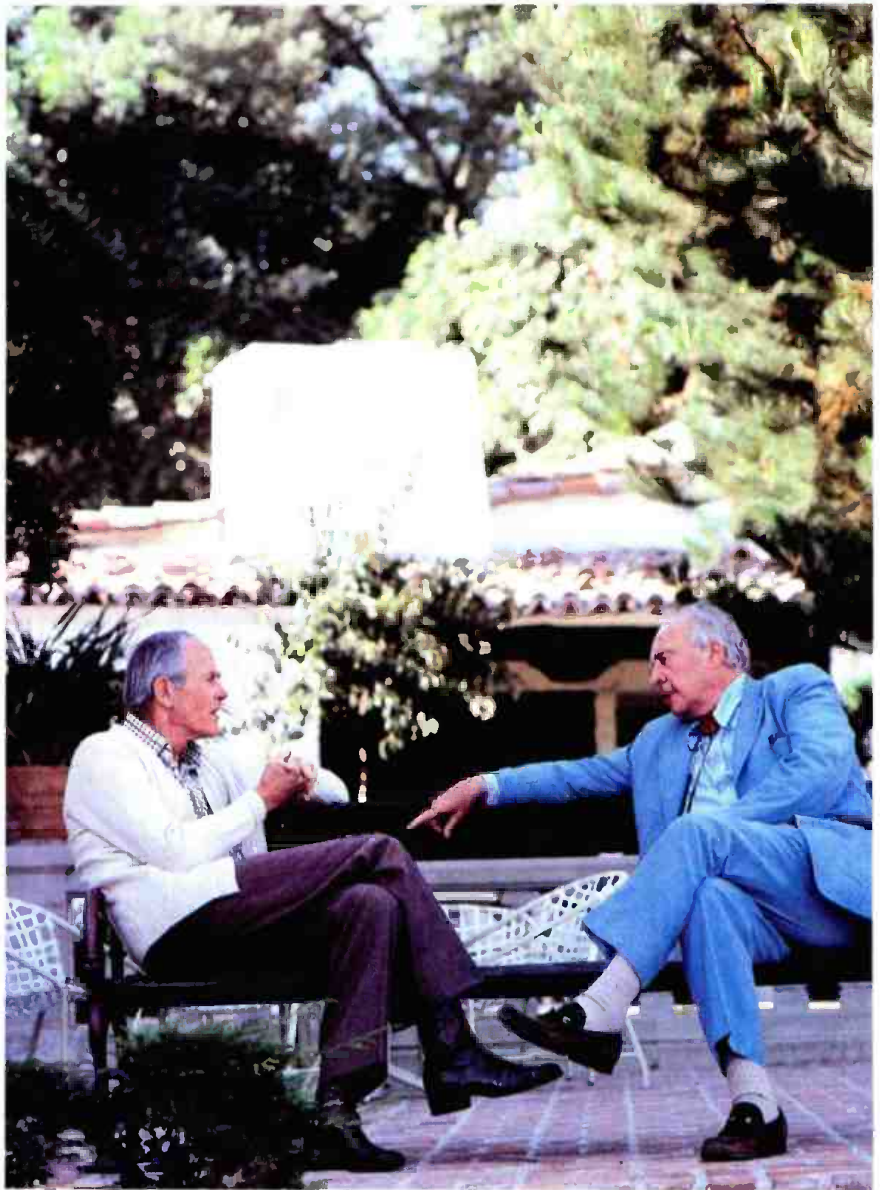
The sounds of their voices could hardly have been more distinctive. Fonda, the gangly guy from Nebraska, had not lost his prairie drawl—even at the age of 74, after many years as an American icon. Houseman, the rotund fellow who was born in Bucharest 77 years ago, still spoke English as it had been spoken to him at a British boys' school—long before he moved to America and became a grain dealer and writer and director and professor and, finally, an actor. Nevertheless, they understood each other well, and they seemed to like each other. They laughed appreciatively at each other's jokes.

Prior to "Gideon's Trumpet," they had worked together only once—in 1974, when Houseman directed Fonda in the one-man play "Clarence Darrow," about the celebrated lawyer who defended the theory of evolution against fundamentalist attacks in the "Monkey Trial" of 1925. The play was performed on Broadway, on the road, and eventually on television.

"I don't think we would have opened if you hadn't come on [replacing another director]," Fonda told Houseman. "When you came into it, the play was much longer than it should have been, and nobody knew how to cut it. You not only cut it down to size, but ... if choreography isn't the word, I don't know what is. You changed the opening scene and put it in the second act!"

"We reshaped it a little bit," said Houseman modestly. "But really what a director does when he's working with an actor such as you is act as a kind of mirror, because the actor is working so hard by himself on the stage that he appreciates someone in the audience whom he feels he can trust, who in a way reflects things for him."

Fonda agreed and Houseman went on, "You don't direct a one-man show in the sense of suggesting emotions or even suggesting moves. The actor works out his own moves. A one-man show de-



Fonda (left) and Houseman reminisce at Fonda's home in Bel Air, Cal.

pends almost entirely on the personality of the performer. There are perfectly good scripts of one-man shows which haven't had the luck to get the right performer and which really haven't worked."

Since "Clarence Darrow," the two men have had several other brushes with the law—professionally speaking. Yet Fonda claims he has never been in an actual court of law, and Houseman has seen the inside of a real-life courtroom only once—when he was hauled up for a speeding offense in Beverly Hills during World War II. "More and more this Nation is becoming involved over its head with law," com-

mented Houseman. "Half the people I meet have been to law school. It's incredible."

In the 1978-79 play "First Monday in October," Henry Fonda played a Supreme Court justice almost as crusty as the autocratic law professor portrayed by John Houseman in the movie "The Paper Chase" and in its TV-series spinoff. Houseman's Professor Kingsfield is scheduled to make a guest appearance in an upcoming episode of the ABC comedy series *The Associates*, which he filmed last fall. Remarkably, it was the first time that he had ever acted in front of a live au-

Houseman jokingly suggested that Fonda—who has played Presidents and Presidential contenders—should offer his advice on candidates for the next Supreme Court vacancy. “They’ve got to consult you,” he teased. “They can’t do it without you.”



In a scene from “Gideon’s Trumpet,” the U.S. Chief Justice (Houseman, left) and an associate justice (Sam Jaffe) listen to Gideon’s lawyer, Abe Fortas (Jose Ferrer, back to camera).

dience, and he was “terrified,” he told Fonda.

“But the real fun of it,” he said, “was in working with Wilfrid Hyde-White [the actor who plays Emerson Marshall]. I said to him, ‘I’m a little bothered that the audience may laugh. What do I do?’ He said, ‘I’ll tell you what I do. If I get the laugh, I wait. If anybody else gets it, I just walk through it.’”

Fonda chortled at the tale: “What a character.”

Houseman’s nervousness on-stage was not something with which Fonda could easily empathize. “I’m nervous when I’m *not* on-stage,” he said. “When I’m on the stage, I’m not me. It’s the reason I’m an actor. I discovered way back there when I got pushed onto a little theater stage in Omaha that it was real therapy for me. I was terribly self-conscious, but I gradually began to realize that this was therapy because I had a mask on—I wasn’t me. I had a person to play that had been conceived by John Steinbeck or Josh Logan or whoever it was, and I couldn’t wait to get out there—”

“To get those laughs?” interrupted Houseman.

“Not just to get the laughs. To be this guy that had words coming out of him that were brilliant, amusing.”

Nevertheless, Fonda’s recollections of being on-stage for the first time were associated less with acting itself than with the paraphernalia of theater: “I didn’t think about being the actor. What I was learning was everything else about

the theater that was so strange to me—the smell of the makeup, the sounds behind the curtain before it went up ... you could hear the audience. The stage manager would take the houselights down, and the sound would dim down too, till it was deathly quiet. Then the curtain would go up, it would get to a certain level and you’d be hit with the lights that were on the border of the balcony. I remember those things. I don’t remember acting at all.”

Houseman had no youthful memories of this kind, “because I never acted until I was 70 years old. But I know exactly what you’re talking about, because I’ve had an awful lot of kids that I’ve taught, and I’ve seen them go through this same thing.”

His train of thought led him to recall one of his drama students at Vassar: “I had a girl in my class who stuttered so badly she had to write out her answers to questions on a piece of paper. Well, I had the idea of doing Cocteau’s ‘Infernal Machine,’ and among these elegant, clean-looking Vassar girls there wasn’t anybody to play the leading part of Jocasta except this girl. She was broad-faced, big-busted; she was a perfect Jocasta. And the other girls came to me and said, ‘You know, she’s acted, and she doesn’t stutter very much.’ So we took this chance. For three weeks she stuttered and howled her way through rehearsals, and two or three days before the performance she stopped stuttering. She went on, played five performances—never a stammer. But in life she went right on stammering. It’s what you said: she was playing someone else, so she wasn’t stammering.”

Fonda drew the conversation around to “First Monday in October,” a play that centers on a conflict between a Supreme Court justice (the role Fonda played) and the first woman to be appointed to the Court. Fonda wants to tackle the same role in a film version, but he’s afraid that events may overtake him. “We’re going to get a girl in there,” he asserted. “I think the next one will be a woman. They had better make the movie in a hurry.”

Houseman jokingly suggested that Fonda—who has played Presidents and Presidential contenders—should offer his advice on candidates for the next Supreme Court vacancy. “They’ve got to consult you,” he teased. “They can’t do it without you.”

The talk turned to television. Fonda has appeared with some frequency on the home screen in recent years, in made-for-TV movies and miniseries, most notably the sequel to *Roots*, but two unhappy series experiences have made him wary of that form.

In 1971-72 he was the star of his own comedy series, *The Smith Family*. He does not speak highly of it: “It had no place being on the air. Like most of them, the pilot was a wonderful script. It sold me and I did it and it was a fine show—and there was never another one. You know, a writer writes a pilot script and then he gets royalties the rest of the run and he never writes another script, at least in the two I was involved in.”

“Yes,” said Houseman. “They get paid a lot for writing a pilot—four or five times as much as they do for writing a regular



"When I'm on the stage, I'm not me. It's the reason I'm an actor. I discovered way back that it was real therapy for me, because I had a mask on. I had a person to play that had been conceived by John Steinbeck or Josh Logan, and I couldn't wait to get out there."

*Without benefit of counsel, Clarence Earl Gideon (Fonda) addresses the jury in his own defense during his first trial. Richard McKenzie (right) plays the judge.*



show. The pay for series is quite poor. That's why they don't get good writers."

**F**onda's other series was a Western, *The Deputy*, on NBC from 1959 to 1961. "Both years that I did it," he recalled, "I also had a play. I was committed to the plays and I wanted to do them. That meant they had to write all the scripts before we started, and they shot just my scenes in July, August and part of September. And then I am back in New York having my jollies, while they spend the rest of the year, almost, picking up the rest of the scenes."

"Was this an hour show or a half-hour show?" asked Houseman.

"It was a half-hour show, and the reason we didn't go further than two years was that they wanted to make it an hour, and I couldn't do an hour show. We were fighting scripts, and I wasn't that happy." Fonda said he would never do another series. "Compromise is the operative word in a series, as far as I can make out, and compromise is a dirty word to me. But miniseries are something else. Jane [Fonda] has an idea that she has been trying to put into a film, but it would be a \$50-to-60-million feature film, and no one feels they can put that kind of money into a story about the American Revolution."

"Well, there's an old myth about the American Revolution," began Houseman.

"Yeah, baseball and the American Revolution. [The myth is that these subjects bomb at the box office.] Anyway, it could well become a television miniseries."

"That might be more fun," said Houseman. "And in some strange way now, the

miniseries and the two-hour television films are a little freer than feature films. They've got a market. It's like the old days in the studios when no picture ever lost money. No television film ever loses money because they've got the outlet. Features are changing now because television is picking up the slack, buying [television rights to] the pictures ahead of time. So that's insurance. But for a while there, you could make a feature and unless it was a blockbuster, the company preferred not to release it, because it was so expensive to release. That creates a tension on everybody's part which is fatal."

Fonda nodded. "Jane and I both found out that the studios today are not interested in \$2-to-3-million pictures. I suppose it's because in order to make a \$3 million picture they have to spend as much as they would on a big picture to sell it."

"Also," added Houseman, "the fact is, on a \$40 million picture, before they start they've put \$5 million in their pocket already, in terms of overhead. It's a terrible business."

**G**ideon's Trumpet," the TV-movie that has brought the two veterans together again after a six-year interval, is an adaptation of Anthony Lewis's book about a 1963 Supreme Court decision that certified every defendant's right to be provided with a lawyer. Fonda plays Gideon, an indigent convict whose determination to prove that he was unfairly denied counsel when he was tried for breaking into a Florida poolroom is finally vindicated in the Supreme Court.

Houseman plays the Chief Justice and served as the film's executive producer.

**W**hen the prison scenes for the film were being shot at the California Institution for Men in Chino, Fonda met two inmates who had served time with the real Clarence Earl Gideon in Florida. "Gideon was disliked," said Fonda. "The inmates said he was a cranky old guy. He thought he had been railroaded, and he was goddamn mad. When he finally started to read the law books and found out that he had to write to the Supreme Court, he was doing it for himself, not to make a landmark decision. One of the interesting things for me is to play a man who isn't really a terribly nice guy. He's hard to reach, not very friendly. Frankly, he's a character."

"And, of course, from the other side," interjected Houseman, "the very fact that he was not a hero or outstanding is what made the case possible. It's why they chose him. There's always been the assumption that a man, when there are exceptional circumstances of any kind, automatically should be given a lawyer. But the trick of the Gideon case was that he wasn't exceptional in any way. He wasn't stupid particularly; he wasn't really criminal, he wasn't good, he wasn't bad. He was just a rather nondescript loser, and this made a perfect example to take out and make a decision about, to influence the whole course of American law."

Houseman's verdict seemed the last word on the subject. The two men smiled and shook hands. "It's been an agreeable conversation," said Houseman. ■





**P**ainting in the nineteenth century was done in France and by Frenchmen, apart from that painting did not exist, in the twentieth century, it was done in France but by Spaniards."

With characteristic economy of words, Gertrude Stein laid the mantle of 20th-century art at the feet of Pablo Picasso. And in 1938, no less. Picasso, then a vigorous 57, still had a full 34 years ahead of him, not to mention at least a thousand works of art. The feverish creativity that fired his first work would remain with him to his very last. In his 88th year, with a thunderous burst of energy, he produced 165 paintings and 45 drawings, which were exhibited at the Palace of the Popes in Avignon. Asked how he could remain so prolific, he remarked, "Everyone is the age he has decided on, and I have decided to remain 30."

By the time the farsighted Miss Stein had composed her comments, Picasso had already explored and exhausted enough artistic modes to comprise the life's work of a dozen artists. Behind him were the poignantly lyrical neoclassical paintings of his Blue and Rose periods, when his palate was dominated by those colors; the shattered Cubist imagery that would rewrite art history; the brief foray into naturalist portraiture; the sensuously sculpted classical giantesses; the flirtation with Surrealism; the experiments in the grotesque; and the monumental political condemnation of war, "Guernica."

Still to come were mountains of lithographs and linoleum-cut prints; a vast outpouring of ceramics and pottery; the paintings that "paraphrased" Velázquez

*Terry Trucco is staff writer at ARTnews magazine and managing editor of The ART-newsletter.*

and Delacroix; the lovingly distorted portraits of his second wife, Jacqueline; and a wealth of Picasso stories. "What is art?" a visitor once asked Picasso. "What is not?" came the reply from the man who had fashioned a bull's head from a bicycle seat and a pair of handlebars.

Once the artist overheard someone say, "I don't like Picasso," obviously meaning the paintings. Intruding on the conversation, he asked, "Which Picasso?" The fecundity of his imagination resulted in more than 6000 paintings. Even his full baptismal name, Pablo Diego José Francisco de Paula Nepomuceno Paría de Los Remedios de la Santísima Trinidad Ruiz Picasso, was prodigious. "He was a man fortunately composed in terms of excess," wrote the late Janet Flanner. "Even as a genius he had more gifts than he needed."

The prospect of crowding the life and work, not to mention the legend, of Pablo Picasso into a 90-minute television documentary would turn some filmmakers pale. Veteran producer-director Perry Miller Adato, who was tapped by New York's public-television station WNET for that project, readily admits that Picasso's life was not a subject she would have sought on her own. "He lived for so long and did so much," she says, paging through the hefty *catalogue raisonné* (a comprehensive listing of works) from the

Blue and Rose periods. "But," she says, closing the book with a snap, "you don't say no to Picasso." This spring, Adato's meticulously researched documentary on the life and work of art's 20th-century titan is scheduled to air on PBS. The show will coincide with an ambitious three-month retrospective exhibition of Picasso's works at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Film documentaries on art and those who make it are nothing new for the indefatigable Adato, who is perhaps best known for her 60-minute film on American art's most cherished donagenarian, Georgia O'Keeffe. Released in 1977, on the day of the artist's 90th birthday, the film marked the first time the reclusive O'Keeffe had consented to appear before a television camera. It also captured the Directors Guild of America's annual commendation for best directorial achievement in a documentary film. "I liked the fact that I got my award the same year that Woody Allen won the Academy Award for 'Annie Hall,'" Adato observes. Her other documentaries touching upon the world of art have included "Mary Cassatt—Impressionist from Philadelphia," 1975; "An Eames Celebration," 1974; "Helen Frankenthaler—Toward a New Climate," 1977; and the film that has become WNET's hottest rental property with libraries and universities, "Gertrude Stein: When This You See, Remember Me," 1970.

It is no mere coincidence that Adato's films—and sympathies—gravitate toward artists. "I'm interested in creative people," she says. "What I try to do in these films is to give some insight into the creative process." In her film on O'Keeffe, for example, Adato attempted to show why

## Picasso: A Television Portrait of the Artist



By TERRY TRUCCO

*Picasso took a 1962 photograph, shot by David Douglas Duncan, and embellished it with crayon strokes, creating this playful self-portrait.*

# The Cable News Network Sets Sail

Amid storm warnings, the irrepressible Ted Turner charts the course for television's first nonstop newscast

By STEPHEN BANKER

"I'm scared all the time," Ted Turner confided to a Washington luncheon group a few months back, in his customary tone of vulnerable belligerence. The audience smiled; moments before, they had heard him tell how he was about to embark on possibly the most audacious venture in the history of American broadcasting. On June 1 this year, said Turner, he would launch a new television network devoted entirely to news: in his words, "a first-class, in-depth, 24-hour service," designed for the country's 4100 cable-TV operators. He was calling it the Cable News Network (CNN).

At 41, Turner has so far made his flamboyant mark in three careers—as a TV entrepreneur (owner of WTBS-Atlanta), sports baron (owner of the Atlanta Braves baseball team and the Atlanta Hawks basketball team), and, most glamorously, as a world-class yachtsman. He captained the yacht that won the America's Cup in 1977, has been named yachtsman of the year three times, and last August achieved something approaching *macho* sainthood by sailing into a heavy storm off the English coast and winning a race in which 24 other boats were lost and 18 competitors drowned. Subsequently, *Playgirl* magazine selected him as one of the sexiest men of the year.

And he's still scared?

In his latest venture, there could indeed be things that push the scare button—like, for example, the prospect of losing the \$100 million he has committed to CNN over a five-year period. He dismisses this suggestion. "I'm not too concerned about it," he claims, spitting tobacco juice nonchalantly into a styrofoam cup. "I'm more concerned about doing a first-class job."

Turner is confident that his vision of an all-news cable network is timely. He believes that the age of videocassettes and discs will find TV stations gearing their programming more in the direction of live coverage, and that means sports and

news. At the same time, though, the tide of cable will continue to advance and, according to Turner, over-the-air networks and stations will become less significant as providers of such programming.

The latest cable systems include 35 channels or more, a capacity that has created an almost desperate search for new program sources. But in the area of news, many cable operators are delivering their services with the electronic equivalent of the horse-and-buggy: words and figures displayed on the screen as on a ticker tape. These "alphanumeric" bulletins come from the country's two largest news agencies, the Associated Press and United Press International. UPI also offers a more sophisticated service for cable, UPI Newstime, but even this consists of no more than still pictures with voice-over commentary. These services are a poor substitute for the newscasts offered by the networks, which are currently benefiting from a surge in the popularity of news, typified by the success of *60 Minutes* on CBS. Turner thus perceives a news vacuum on cable that he intends to fill.

If CNN is to break even, Turner has said, it will need 7.5 million subscribers and a respectable number of national advertisers; for each subscriber, the network will collect 15 or 20 cents per month from the cable operators. The problem is that there are only 15 million households wired for cable so far, and a number of them employ antiquated systems with no channels to spare. (An adapter that can graft CNN onto some of these older systems will cost the subscriber \$2-\$3 monthly in addition to the \$8-\$10 normally paid for the basic service.)

Can Turner be relied on to get his sums right in his new venture? When he put his Atlanta TV station on satellite and beamed it to cable subscribers as far afield as Alaska, some thought he had struck on a brilliant formula that would bring him untold riches. But business critics point out that performance has not quite matched expectation. Before WTCS

(now WTBS, for Turner Broadcasting System) went national at the end of 1976, it showed pretax profits of \$3.3 million. In its first full year as a "superstation," profits stayed at \$3.3 million and in 1978 they only rose to \$4.2 million.

Skeptics suggest that Turner's thinking, though visionary, is economically askew. And money is the key ingredient in the new project. One network producer laughs off CNN's \$20 million a year as "petty cash," pointing out that his company's news budget was more than five times as large last year, and will be increased greatly this year for election coverage. He also notes that network-news air time is far short of 24 hours a day.

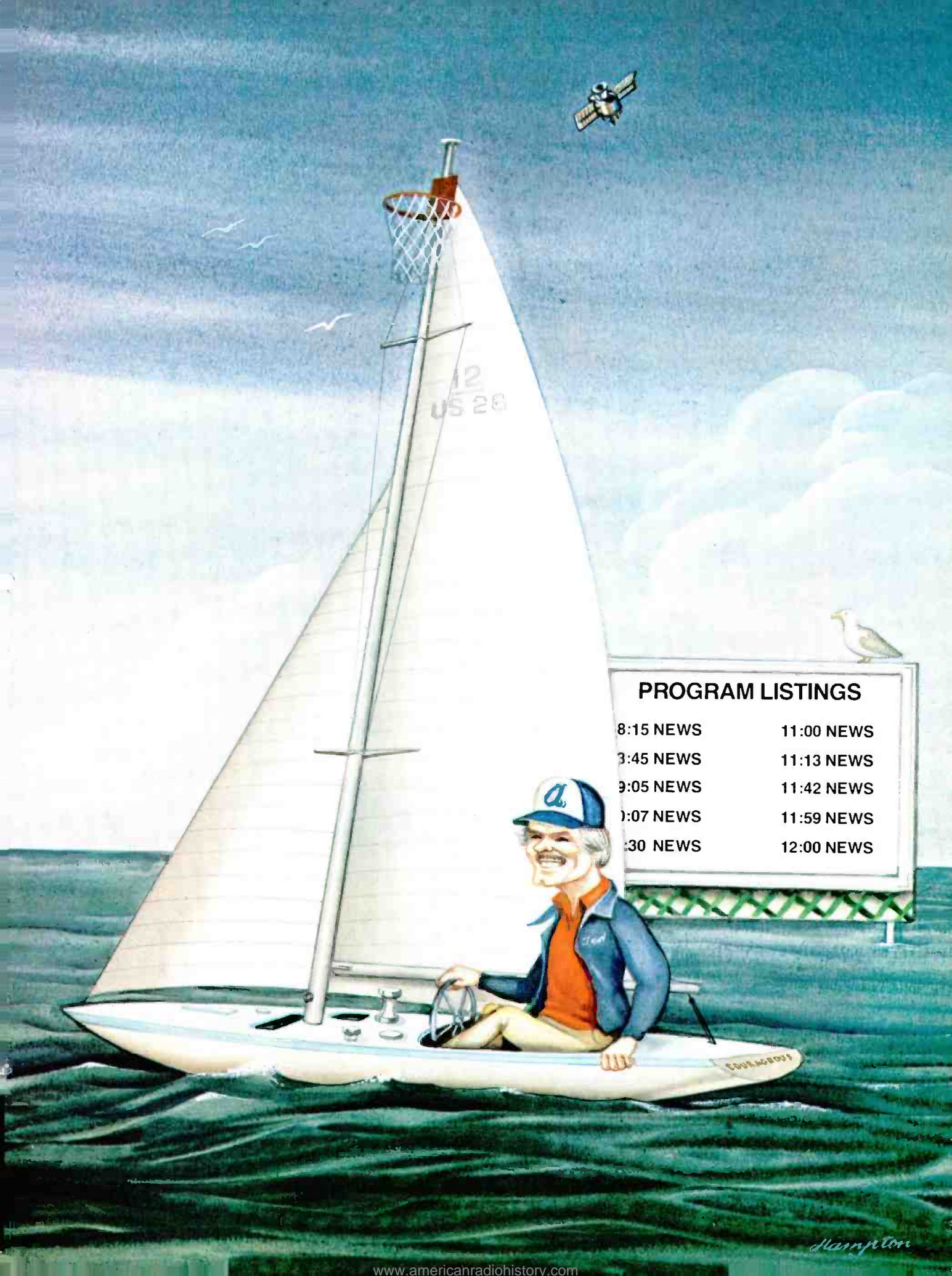
Ted Turner knows this. He also knows that several very sophisticated outfits, including Post-Newsweek and Time Inc., considered the idea of a cable-news service and have rejected it for now. But Turner has sometimes thought of himself as the populist leader in a holy war to break up the Yankee news monopoly. If Jimmy Carter could ride a white horse out of Georgia to stand American politics on its ear, why should Ted Turner not do the same thing with broadcasting?

There are, however, some good answers to that question. "Ted Turner is the last person I'd expect to lead a revolution in broadcast journalism," says an Atlanta businessman who has known him for years. When interviewed about his superstation by *Playboy* in August 1978, Turner flippantly commented: "We even have news. It comes on at 4 in the morning. Our news director gets pies thrown in his face a lot... usually lemon meringue."

"Ted Turner's career has been marked by an unflagging contempt for news," says Ron Alridge, television critic for *The Charlotte Observer*, in the town where Turner is selling another television property to gain operating capital for CNN. Alridge notes that the Charlotte station, before it became an NBC affiliate in 1978, programmed a minimum of news, and put it on in the middle of the night. It was

*Stephen Banker is a Washington reporter who often writes about television.*





### PROGRAM LISTINGS

8:15 NEWS	11:00 NEWS
8:45 NEWS	11:13 NEWS
9:05 NEWS	11:42 NEWS
10:07 NEWS	11:59 NEWS
11:30 NEWS	12:00 NEWS

really radio news, he says—no visuals, just an announcement card, as in the days of silent movies—with remarkably bad sound quality.

One night I was watching a late movie," Alridge remembers, "and the news came on with the usual raspy audio. All of a sudden, they started talking about all this Georgia stuff, and I said to myself, 'Hey, we're in North Carolina!' Then I realized that Turner was having some guy at the Atlanta station call in on a regular telephone—there wasn't even an equalizer—and read the goddamn news. I called the station and they said the regular guy in Atlanta was supposed to cut the Georgia stuff out. But a technician was filling in for him and he just read it off. And that's how we caught it."

With this experience, what does Alridge think of Ted Turner in the forefront of news reform? "It's like Attila the Hun deciding he's going to do a summer camp for the elderly."

Turner's ambivalence toward news dates back to his childhood. His father was in the billboard business, and seemed to be the butt of every newsman's hostility. "I grew up hating newspapers," he says, "because my father used to come home at night with a newspaper tucked under his arm, and editorial after editorial about banning billboards." Years later, after his father committed suicide, Ted was to make that same billboard business the base of his fortune and his springboard into broadcasting—with news far down the list of priorities.

"But Ted has religion now," says one of his admirers. "He's a born-again journalist." And the truth is that Turner has cleaned up his act even at the superstation where the "news" until recently was mostly spoofs and goofy talk delivered by a clever young man named Bill Tush, who received national attention for his kooky news, funny hats, bizarre stories, broad hints at his own use of illegal substances and the electronic trick of turning himself into his hero by superimposing a still picture of Walter Cronkite over his head during a newscast.

No more. If Ted Turner is now going to show the way to the Cronkites of the world, he cannot throw dignity to the winds even on WTBS. Tush is presently delivering the news straight, although he may do a humor column for CNN.

Already signed for brief daily roles are Bella Abzug and Phyllis Schlafly, the left- and right-wing activists for women's issues; former Treasury Secretary William Simon; psychologist Joyce Brothers; financial writer Dan Dorfman; and political columnists Roland Evans and Robert Novak. These people will do opinion pieces while a cadre of newshawks does

## News—Ted Turner Style

*"He's a born-again journalist," says one of Ted Turner's admirers. Until recently, however, Turner's less-than-pious attitude toward news was on display in the morning newscasts on his Atlanta superstation, WTBS (formerly WTCL). They consisted largely of spoofs and broad gags devised by newscaster Bill Tush. Some examples*

*are shown here: Tush delivering the news with Walter Cronkite's head superimposed over his own; a report from a highway construction site by a newsman with a paper bag over his head; a dog, wearing shirt and tie, as Tush's co-anchor; and X-rated actress Marilyn Chambers undressing Tush during an interview.*



the reporting from around the world. Don Farmer, the ABC correspondent, says that when CNN approached him, he was assured that they were looking for people with national news credentials—not "has-beens off local stations, nor young hair-sprayed anchormen who have never been out of the studio."

CNN will be headquartered in Atlanta with probable bureaus in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Dallas and, of course, Washington, D.C. There will be exchange agreements with foreign broadcasters, meaning that American audiences may see entire European newscasts in translation. One person who declined a job says she got the impression CNN is planning "a much too heavy schedule of foreign news, which they can get cheaply."

Ted Turner, who has sailed with Walter Cronkite, wrote a letter to "the most trusted man in America" to see if he'd like to jump ship at CBS when he reaches 65 two years hence, in order to sign on with CNN. Cronkite politely declined.

CNN's early catch was Daniel Schorr, a former front-line correspondent for CBS News who left the network in 1976 after a protracted crisis involving the leaking of Congressional papers. Some CBS people remember Schorr rancorously, claiming that he lied to *The Washington Post*, was evasive to his superiors and tried to shift blame to a colleague. But even those critics add that he was also one of the most energetic and committed newsmen of his time who covered Eastern Europe and Washington with distinction. The irony is that Dan Schorr, at 63, exudes the energy of a cub reporter, and in this interim period is hustling as hard free-lancing for National Public Radio at \$75 a story as he ever did for CBS.

Schorr's two-year contract with CNN is a matter of some conjecture in the industry. The consensus is that his salary will be a bit over \$100,000 annually, which would make it considerably higher than most network correspondents command. Such money obviously was not available for all the on-camera talent CNN has



hired: the opinion columnists and some of the greener reporters are getting no more than \$15,000.

**T**hat amount had to be at least doubled for some members of CNN's Washington bureau, since seasoned capital reporters are reluctant to go with a company that has no Washington outlet. (A cable system in nearby Arlington, Va., has signed on with CNN, however.) The network will also offer free satellite antennas—they're called "dishes"—to the National Press Club, the U.S. Congress and other points where newsmakers gather. Turner was touched to the heart to hear that Dan Schorr's 12-year-old son Jonathan and 9-year-old daughter Lisa would not be able to see their father on television as in days of yore, and he decided to do something about it. Schorr was promised that a \$10,000 mushroom would sprout on the lawn of his Woodley Road home, bringing his family CNN and dozens of other channels, as well as bootlegging some entertainment programs that are supposed to be pay-TV.

According to present plans, the young Schorrs will see their dad as chief correspondent on the Washington portion of a prime-time two-hour newscast, to be anchored in Atlanta. This broadcast will be seen from 8 to 10 P.M. (EST), which means 5 to 7 P.M. on the West Coast. Reese Schonfeld, a law-school graduate and an experienced news executive whom Turner appointed CNN president, gloats, "Our nightly news program will be on in California earlier than the networks', with later news."

"This is," says Schonfeld, "an exercise in counterprogramming." By that he means that CNN will lighten its load when the over-the-air broadcasters are presenting their regularly scheduled newscasts, and present hard news when the others have gone to features. There will be no effort to match the ABC-CBS-NBC practice of delaying programs for different time zones. Seen from the East, for instance, the major newscasts will be at 9 in the morning and 8 at night. Local stations are largely taking network packages or syndication by 9 A.M. and, of course, the evening hours are reserved for the big money-makers of prime time. The West will see those newscasts at 6 A.M.—a wake-up alternative to lectures and sermons—and at 5 P.M., when Pacific stations are doing local news, CNN is into its heavy national block.

"At 11 P.M. Eastern Time," says Schonfeld, "we'll have sports when everybody is doing local news. During West Coast late-news time—2 A.M. in Atlanta—again, all sports." In fact, CNN plans to do news *about* sports beyond the recapitulation of scores and the obligatory replay of

somebody's dunk shot, home run or touchdown plunge.

Twenty-four hours is a long time, and Schonfeld is aware of the opportunity to cover sports and other subjects more seriously and fully than broadcasters have done before. A financial newscast containing more than the Dow-Jones fluctuation will come from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. And farm news, with more than hog futures, may originate at the site of a particular story. Schonfeld sums up CNN: "The look of network news, the format of all-news radio and the content of a good daily newspaper."

Reese Schonfeld is a man with a mission. As head of the Independent Television News Association (ITNA), which supplies news tape to independent stations, he had visions of starting a fourth network. During those years, he demonstrated a surpassing ability to run a television-news operation more cheaply than anyone thought it could be done. Some, including network competitors, say his secret lay in unfairly piggybacking, meaning he went beyond the rules in begging secondhand footage when there had been no arrangement for cooperative coverage (called a "pool" in the trade).

"As a man trained in the law," says one executive, "Schonfeld should know the rules. I can't tell you how many acrimonious conversations he and I had when he would call up and ask for the output of some pool and I would find out it was something like a reception at the [White House] East Room where unilateral coverage was allowed."

But operating on the cheap is not necessarily a sin when committed by a person who must deploy expensive equipment and personnel with a minimal budget. Spread over five years, \$100 million may not seem a great deal to the networks, but it represents the best opportunity ever for Schonfeld. If CNN is going to be something new, he has decided, it must *do* things in a new way. When there is a breaking story of unusual interest, CNN's complex new equipment will split the screen so that you can watch the regularly scheduled program, plus an inset of the developing story. Thus, while watching, say, an interview or discussion program, you can also see on the bottom right corner of your screen that the White House news secretary has not yet begun his briefing or that the students are just beginning to mass in front of a U.S. embassy. When the briefing begins or the demonstration gets under way, the picture wipes to a full screen. The effect, called a "squeeze zoom," was introduced by ABC Sports.

Schonfeld has intriguing ideas about what he calls "revealing the news process." He describes an "open

newsroom," in which the audience can follow a story making its way to air. "If a feed is coming in on the satellite, let them watch the editor and producer receiving it, working on it, let them see it raw. We tell them, 'You'll see the edited version as soon as we can turn it around.' Or we could use it as a tease and say, 'We're just getting this piece now and in our next segment we'll come back with the edited version'."

Schonfeld's major problem may be his employer. Ted Turner is a notorious meddler. He once appointed himself manager of the Braves (for a day), his sailing crew members complain that he berates them constantly during a race, and mischievous employees of WTBS have been known to shut an office door just to see how long it would take for that familiar cleft chin to come poking through, followed by a very inquisitive chief executive who *had* to know what was happening. He has no apologies for such intrusions. "As 87-percent owner of the company, it's my right to find out what's goin' on."

**A**nd Turner, whatever his business sophistication and the brilliance of his technological insights, is a primitive when it comes to news. He had Dan Schorr noticeably wincing during one speech in which he went on at some length about "bad" news and "good" news.

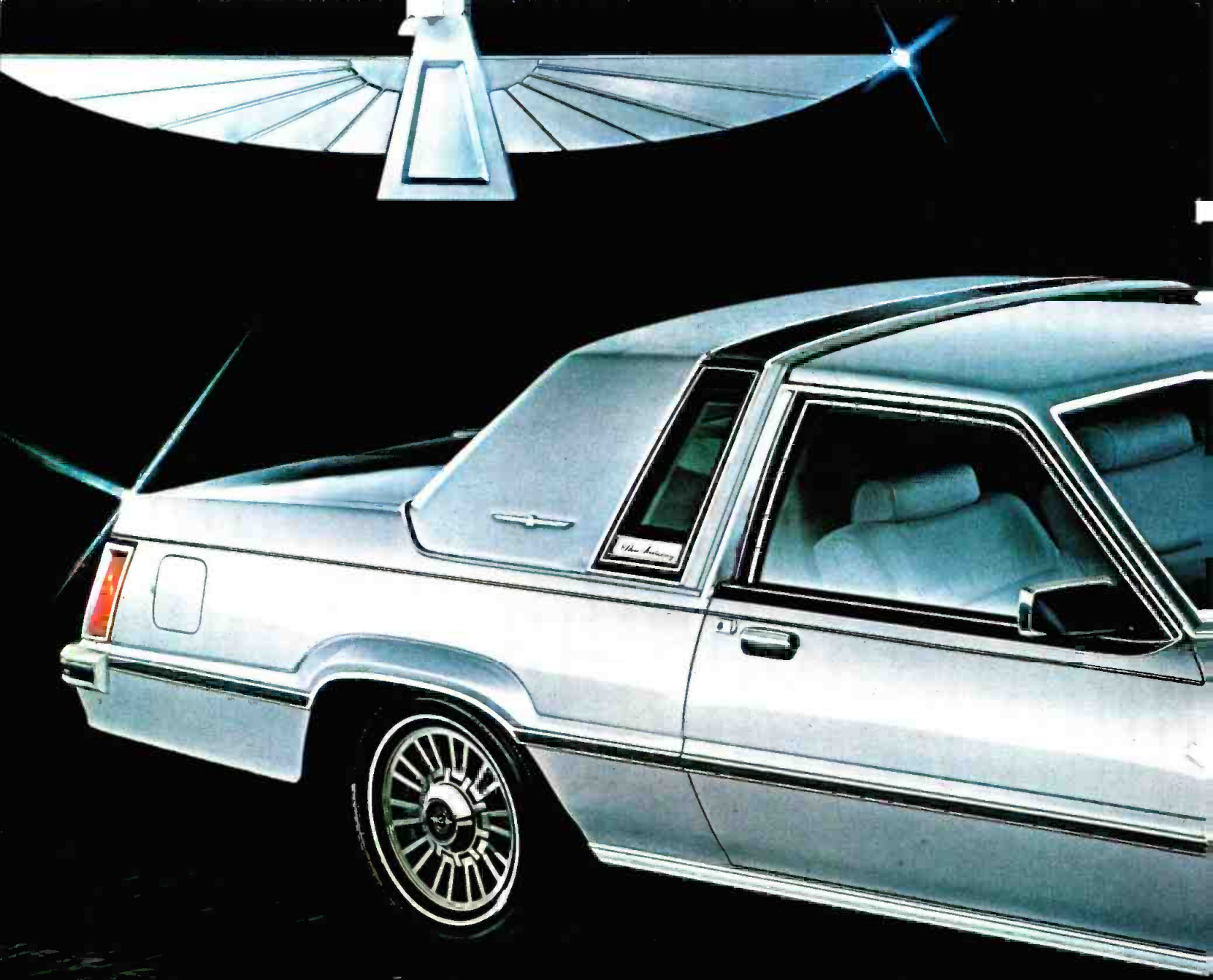
"We're gonna show the bad stuff, too, but we're gonna try and show some good stuff.... The current media, just about all you see is bad stuff."

As if to demonstrate the nature of bad news, Turner went on to refer to Sen. Edward Kennedy as someone who "drove his girlfriend off a dock, drowned her and ran away." Elsewhere, he has publicly made denigrating remarks about Jews and women. While giving testimony in court, he threatened a lawyer with physical assault and only escaped punishment because the judge thought the situation so ludicrous.

To his biographer, Roger Vaughan, he remarked, "Hitler was the most powerful figure of all time. He knew how to use movies and radio. I know how to use TV. I understand the media."

Asked if these attitudes not usually associated with prominent news executives will color the product of CNN, Turner says he has no intention of influencing the people he has hired. "However," he is quick to add, "I have reserved the right to do a publisher's column whenever I wish to do so." Schonfeld says mildly, "Ted only interferes when something isn't going well." Executive producer Sam Zelman, a former CBS hand, says, "If Ted comes to me, I'll say, 'You've hired me for my professional news judgment. It's like going to a doctor

*continued on page 50*



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# THUNDERBIRD

FORD DIVISION



whose authority you respect. You've just come to an authority on news. You're going to have to take my viewpoint—or get a second opinion' "

Asked for his definition of news, Turner seemed flustered and could only answer, "It's what's goin' on." After an uncharacteristic silence, the roguish smile reappeared and he added, "Maybe that's a little simplistic, right? Why don't you wait and see how it works out when we get started?"

**F**air enough. Among those willing to wait and see before making any judgment are the movers and shakers of network news. Sanford Socolow, executive producer of the *CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite*, says, "Of course, I'm interested in watching. The week they start their service that's all I'll watch. I'd be irresponsible not to see what they're doing. If they come up with something terrific, perhaps I can modify it for our use."

Given the people Turner has hired, the equipment bought and the money committed, the ingredients of "something terrific" appear to be present. But there are other questions remaining, chief of which is whether or not the American public has an appetite for news to justify the menu offered by CNN.

Another incipient problem has to do with labor. CNN is setting out to run a non-union shop and although technicians in Washington, for example, may be union members, nonunionism will be the rule wherever possible. This is potential quicksand for CNN, since AFTRA, NABET, IBEW and conceivably even the Teamsters could decide to make an organizing effort at any point along the line.

And what about Schonfeld's fondness for joining every pool in sight? One network producer predicts, "When the unions figure out that every time there's a pool, they're servicing CNN—which is free then to go with its nonunion crews and cover other stories—I would expect the unions to scream and yell and raise bloody what-for."

Meantime, the dominant cable operators are taking a wait-and-see attitude. Teleprompter, the largest with 1.2 million subscribers, is committing only a few of its franchises at first, with the idea of testing the product as it goes along. Teleprompter wants to see what subscriber "lift" CNN provides—that is, how many extra households will sign up as a result of CNN's availability. (Turner predicts 10 percent.) The company also wants to see how easily local advertising can be sold on CNN programs to offset the rather expensive 20-cent cost (15 cents if the operator carries WTBS).

Advertising, of course, will come

quickly if large-scale viewership is demonstrable. But New York time buyers are skeptical. "Look," one agency man says, putting pencil to paper: "19.8% x 33% x 70% x 3% = ?"

He explains: "19.8 percent of the country is wired for cable. If Turner is lucky, he'll have 33 percent of that signed up. Maybe 70 percent of the sets are in use at a peak time. With 35 or more channels on the new systems, let's give him three percent of the audience. What does it add up to? We're talking about very small figures—minuscule! And even so, who are these people? Where are they? What do they do? How old are they? What did they spend on soap last year? Our advertising dollar is a highly targeted dollar."

As if to respond to this analysis, Bristol-Myers became the first commercial sponsor on CNN, with a \$25 million advertising contract over 10 years. To Turner's bafflement, his superstation has not solved the problem of national advertising, but there is evidence that CNN has a better argument to make.

To potential advertisers, CNN says that people who are interested in news are "up-scale"—richer, better educated, more active consumers, and you can bet they are paying attention. Cable itself has already made part of the selection, so the CNN audience is *la creme de la creme* and advertisers are only paying for the people they reach—cheaper per thousand, at that, than they would pay elsewhere. And though the numbers may not be great now, the advertisers who get an early start, such as Bristol-Myers, will have a leg up on how to use cable television, which may reach half the United States sometime this decade.

**T**o cable-system operators, CNN says that they have a duty to the American people to provide information, along with the mix of entertainment already available. They also have a responsibility to the cable industry itself, which intends to be taken seriously as its coverage expands. And if the industry desires continuing favorable treatment from the Federal Communications Commission, which has recently cut some of the bonds designed by wary broadcasters, it makes sense to demonstrate high-mindedness right now. Finally, if cable is really the death knell for the networks, as a few partisans believe, the Nation must have a thorough, reliable, nationwide source of information in time of crisis as part of its civil-defense system.

In response to such arguments, most of the cable applications in recent months have included CNN in their bids. But some of those systems are three years away from start-up. The real fight now is for existing systems, a more difficult battle-

ground because of the need in many cases for expensive system modifications or adapters.

Watching all this with considerable interest are those news conglomerates that studied the situation and decided not to do anything *for the time being*. Joel Chaseman, president of the Post-Newsweek Stations, limits himself to enigmatic remarks about such a venture "not being the best use of our resources."

What Chaseman is not telling outsiders is that Post-Newsweek, along with several other companies, remains very interested in establishing its own cable-news system, and there is no need to do anything now because Ted Turner is apparently going to answer all their questions free of charge: What is the size of the audience? How frequently will people watch? What is the availability of advertising? Is there a potential for political clout? How much money can be made?

**S**ome illumination is provided by J. Christopher Burns, vice president for planning of The Washington Post Company: "We formed some conclusions about the realities of the marketplace. The reason Ted Turner decided to go ahead with it in the form that he's doing may be that he doesn't understand the problem. He's not paying attention. The cable industry doubts that Ted Turner knows his ass from a hole in the ground about news. If he had looked at it carefully, he would have changed his offering. But, in time, his going ahead will help those of us who can do it better. That may turn out to be expensive for him."

Asked how The Post would have changed the offering, Burns replies: "I'm not going to help Turner. It's to our benefit to be selfish about it."

So after two or three years these companies will have the option of conceding the field to CNN, of going into competition with it, or of making an offer to buy it out—backed by a threat of high-powered competition. That is why CNN needs economic success almost from the first. The boss may be a rich man in his circles, but \$100 million is less than one sixth of what The Washington Post Company took in last year and there are several other huge vultures circling in the sky. No wonder Ted Turner is scared. ■



## PROGRAM LISTINGS

IEWS	11:00 NEWS
IEWS	11:13 NEWS
IEWS	11:42 NEWS
IEWS	11:59 NEWS



# Reflections on "The Women's Room" Wall

*ABC is currently shooting "The Women's Room," a TV-movie (planned for telecasting later this year) starring Lee Remick, Patty Duke Astin and Colleen Dewhurst, based on the 1977 best-selling novel by Marilyn French. The book follows a group of women who variously bend, break or discover their self-worth in reaction to what French considers the male oppression in our society. When the novel appeared, French was both lauded and vilified for her uncompromising portrayals and the book's tone of outrage at "the system" (described below by French as "IT"). Since the controversy over the book still lingers, PANORAMA asked French, whose latest novel, "The Bleeding Heart," has just been published, to describe the reactions she has had to the book.*

I have sat, in my time, in many women's rooms. For years I perched on the edge of bathtubs, at bedsides, on shabby living-room couches, and in kitchens, all sorts of kitchens, listening to women. Because I spent a large part of my life doing this, I felt when I was writing "The Women's Room" that I was writing a story that was familiar to all women, a story they knew as well as I did but that had unaccountably never been fully told.

It was not until the book was finished and friends began to read the manuscript that I doubted it. Martha tried to cushion me against the possibility that no one would publish the book: she suggested gently that her mother would find the book unbearable, since it essentially described that woman's life. Lily was angry with me for falsifying her history, leaving

her in the hospital at the end when in fact she was out, divorced and surviving. Mark, an editor of my acquaintance, emitted a shriek of outrage: weren't there any good men? he wanted to know.

All of this distressed me. I could not see why accurate description of a life, told with sympathy, should upset someone. Besides, the book was drawn from the experience of ordinary women; it contained their stories, their disappointments, their anger. It was their book as well as mine. I was sorry to upset Lily, but it is necessary in art to twist reality; to tell what really happened to all the many people on whom my characters were loosely based would have changed the book from a novel into a documentary. And I was confused by the last charge. In the first place, I thought rather highly of Ben, who was done in, as I saw it, by IT. Second, did all books have to contain a "good man" to be publishable? Had anyone ever demanded that Ernest Hemingway or Norman Mailer or Philip Roth include a "good"—or even a realistic—woman in their books?

Well, the novel was published. The reviews were mixed—some excellent, some terrible. Sometimes the mixture—violent distress combined with great admiration—occurred within one review. The book moved gradually. It was, in the end, a word-of-mouth book: one woman told three friends, who told nine more.

Within a month "The Women's Room" was on the American best-seller list, where it remained, in hardback and paper, for over a year and a half. And slowly, the letters came, mounting eventually to



thousands. In time, as the book was published abroad, letters came from many countries of Europe, from Australia, Mexico and South Africa (despite the fact that the novel is banned there). There were requests for appearances, and I met thousands of women in the United States and abroad. Virtually all of the women who write or speak to me say the same thing: You have told my story. Were you eavesdropping in my kitchen? How is it we share the same friends? How is it you feel my anger? I thought I was utterly alone.

**T**hese comments come from women who live in widely disparate cultures—from Scandinavia, where equality for women is supposedly built into the law; from Japan, where women are still seen as property; from Spain and Germany, both of which, different as they are, have a tradition of fascism that obliterates women and gives rise to extremely militant and radical women's organizations separated from, but now reaching, a meek and frightened populace of women.

Many of the letters, the stories, are deeply moving. Reading, listening, I am moved to despair, except that the writers and speakers have survived somehow. And sometimes there is a positive note; sometimes a woman tells me she has managed to gain some control over her life. She says my book helped her to make a decision—to end a marriage, to try to improve a marriage, to enter a love affair with a man or a woman, to speak to her children, to tell them the truth. Young women (the youngest to tell me her age was 14) want to know if there is hope for a harmonious life; older women (the oldest to tell me her age was in her mid-70s) complain that I did not write the book when they were young, when, they say, it could have helped them. Resignedly, grimly, they affirm the novel's grimmest perceptions.

Very few men write to me or come to hear me speak. I find this noteworthy. Writers and thinkers have been deriding women for centuries. Indeed, as we all know, the culture at large looks down on women. But this has not stopped women from reading, or listening to, male authors and lecturers. Some women can even find amusement or an ounce of recognition in a Philip Wylie "Mom," or a Mrs. Portnoy of Philip Roth. But men are *never* attacked in our culture. A man—a Hitler, a Stalin—may be seen as an incarnation of evil. A group of men—blacks, Indians, Vietnamese—may be seen as enemies. But men *in general* are sacrosanct. It was, indeed, this very convention that I was attacking in my novel, and so successful was my attack that even men who have not read the book back away from me when I enter a room. Once upon a time, before "The Women's Room" was published, I got along very well with men, and



it is still disconcerting to me to see them shrink into the woodwork when I appear, or to listen to the one or two who are hauled toward me by their wives defensively insist that they always wash the dinner dishes or "let" their wives work.

However, this makes the letters I do receive from men and the reception of men who speak to me openly all the more important to me. The men's letters are as poignant as the women's. Some ask me to write a "Men's Room." They say: why didn't I see all this sooner, before I ruined my life? Or they write: yes, yes, but what else can I do? There are rules for men, too. And a heartening handful say, yes, the way it is is terrible, for women and men, and I am doing something about it. Boys

are listening to their mothers, really listening, for the first time; men are hearing, for the first time, their wives. Men are starting consciousness-raising groups for men. One man, whose letter I could not answer because it blew from my hand into the sea as I was reading it, wrote that reading "The Women's Room" made him feel lonely in the universe. For the first time in his life he perceived how women feel living in a male culture.

I've received very few—no more than a dozen—negative letters. Three or four of these are crazy letters, full of violence and sadism toward women, but also toward Jews, blacks and other ethnic groups, sometimes with threats, always with vituperation. A couple of sad letters come





In "The Women's Room," Lee Remick (extreme left and right) and Patty Duke Astin play housewives who find that motherhood is not what it's cracked up to be. (See page 66 for a Remick portrayal of a different kind of mother, in "Haywire.")

from men whose women have left them because, they say, of my book. And a few are from women who disapprove of my novel and write, they tell me, as if somehow this would add weight to their words, with the full approval of their husbands.

But certainly "The Women's Room" is not a magical potion. It cannot "make" women leave their men or men understand their women. It is only what it purports to be—a novel showing life as women in general experience it. It includes women's work and their everyday concerns; it excludes the artificial sweeteners deemed necessary as additives in much "women's" fiction. And, although I originally expected women to like it, the reception of the novel has astonished me. The response to "The Women's Room" proves, if this needed proving, how isolated and humiliated and silenced and illegitimate huge numbers of women feel.

**I**n a culture dedicated to power, profit, bigger and better weapons, to the rape of nature, delusions of status, and manliness (however insanely defined) as the highest good, people—whether female or male—who spend their lives learning to interpret baby cries and gestures, the inchoate cries and gestures of children, the frustrated outbursts of hus-

bands and friends; people who work without pay to provide comfort and felicity for others; people who move into the world expecting to find work that can make the world more humane, more livable: such people are seen at best as insignificant, at worst as dimwitted. And women, after all, are raised in the same culture as men; along with men they come to see such concerns as secondary even as they suspect they are what really matter. If a woman criticizes an act of industry or government, her husband silences her with accusations of ignorance and stupidity. Women's unpaid labor is not included as part of the gross national product, even though the GNP would collapse without it. Lack of respect from the world, lack of self-respect for what they do, what they think, what they are, utterly silences women.

Of course, men too have been silenced. Something happens to the bright, sweet, sensitive boys I've seen leaving college to turn them into the hollow, mechanical figures who visit me a couple of years later. But there is an important difference: men have been bribed; women have been coerced. For "going along" with the "system"—which is really a set of values—men are offered a possibility of financial reward, status, and the prerogative of

male supremacy over women. Women simply have been barred from political, social and financial independence, and thus from a voice. Men, then, have more to lose by rebelling—or so it seems. Women, having nothing that cannot be taken away from them by divorce, have nothing to lose but their chains—even though, for a handful of women, those chains may be adorned by diamonds.

And women are rebelling in greater and greater numbers. In the last decades, they have made inroads on the male preserve. Although they still earn little more than half of what males earn, they can now at least live with their children independent of an oppressive husband—in poverty—a choice not available to them 50 years ago. But the response to "The Women's Room" reinforces my sense that this progress is not even a scratch on the surface of what needs to be undone—and done. It is not enough that a few women can now enter some rooms previously labeled "men only"; that although alone they can be seated (at a small unpleasant back table) in a good restaurant; that they can obtain credit; that they can receive promotion to managerial status; that they are less often held responsible for their own rapes.

**F**or what women across the country are responding to in "The Women's Room" is its combination of political feminism and moral values. The novel upholds, in a way many women fear political feminism does not, the qualities *they* have learned to uphold. Underneath, they know that a sense of community, occasional subduing of self in order to understand another, compassion, nutritiveness, mercy, friendship—all of these things as they vibrate in a woman's life—are not worth trading for a credit card, recognition by the maitre d', a seat at a board table where what is discussed is trivial, self-seeking, greedy, power-hypnotized or just downright evil. What women want is a voice in the world not just for themselves but for their values. What they want is a recognition by men that these values are profound and essential to men too. What women want is a harmonious life, one that includes both power and virtue, a voice and an ear. And they want men not to bow to their beliefs, but to share them fully.

These were my feelings before I wrote "The Women's Room." The response to it has convinced me that the climate of this country is fertile for an enrichment, a transformation of values. I felt tired, old, used up, sick of being silenced, hopeless of being heard, when I wrote the book. I don't now. The response to "The Women's Room" has rejuvenated me because it suggests that part of the world agrees, which means that there is a possibility of change. And that is grand. (■)

# African Odyssey

By JOHN SEDGWICK

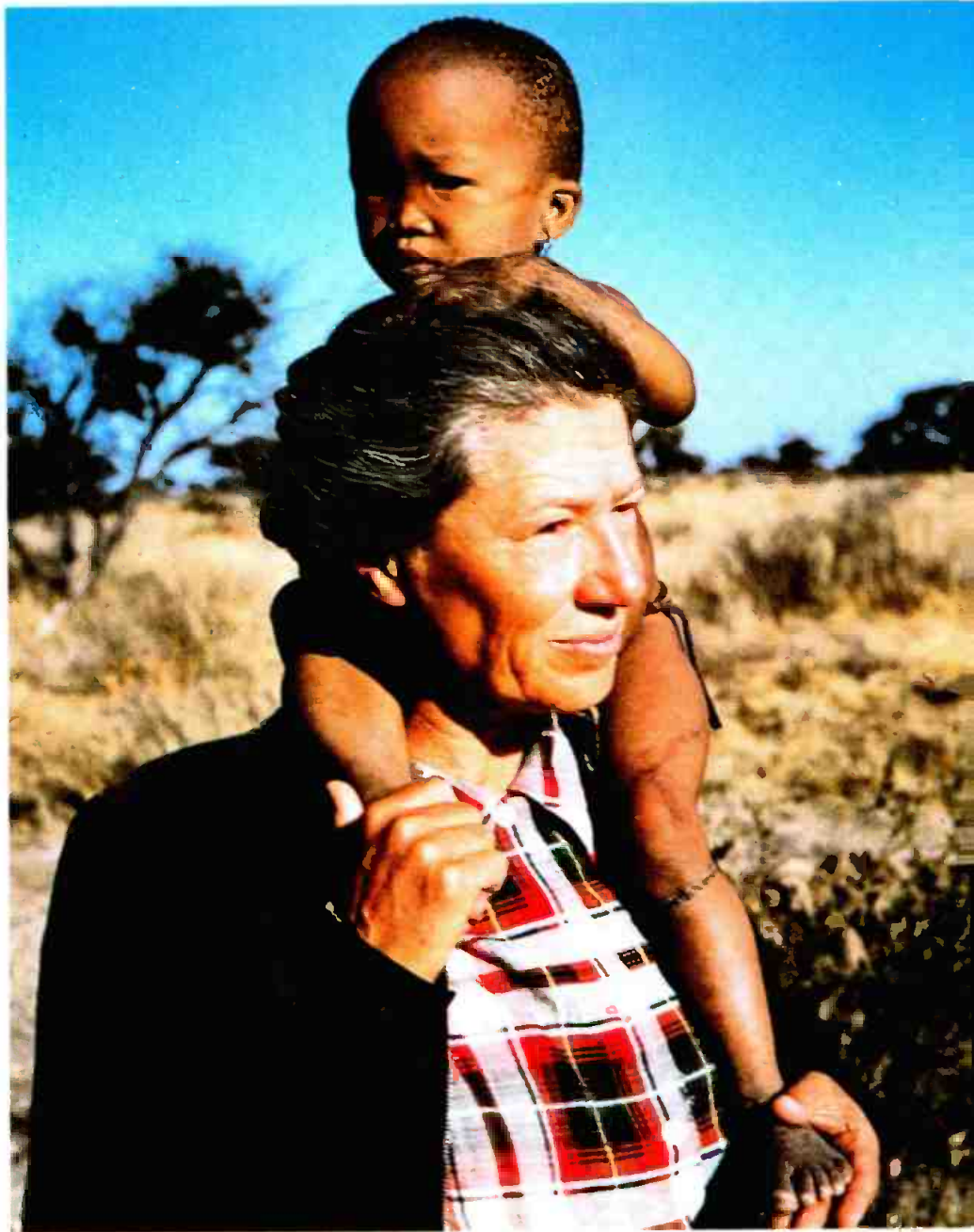
**I**t was June 1951 and the family of Laurence Marshall, the retired president of Massachusetts' Raytheon Company, had just arrived in Africa for a vacation trek in the Kalahari Desert. As the Marshalls prepared to set off on the great plain, the residents of Windhoek (the capital of South West Africa—now Namibia—which borders on the Kalahari) warned them of the "wild Bushmen" who lived there—a treacherous, bloodthirsty lot who loved to sneak up on white people and shoot them with tiny poisoned arrows.

But the Marshalls pressed on. Near a watering hole they encountered a tribe called the !Kung San (the exclamation point designates a clicking noise that is a staple of their language; thus the pronunciation would be roughly "click-Kung"). The !Kung proved to be a gentle people who reserved their poisoned arrows for the wildebeests that were one of the few luxuries of their hunter-gatherer existence. As Laurence Marshall's daughter Elizabeth later wrote: "At first only a few Bushmen were at the watering hole, but as the news spread that we were friendly, more and more people came to visit us and receive presents of tobacco and salt... Also, most of the Bushmen had never seen a European before. None had ever seen a European woman, and they came by dozens to sit together to observe my mother [Lorna] and me."

The Marshalls were doing some observing themselves. And one member of the !Kung stood out—a charming, bright-eyed girl named N!ai (the exclamation point again designates a click). N!ai learned to play "Pease Porridge Hot" with Elizabeth. "She was full of laughter and games," recalls Mrs. Marshall.

Over the next 28 years the Marshalls returned to the bush seven times. N!ai grew up to adulthood; and the !Kung were reined in on a government settlement and "civilized." Throughout, son John Marshall was shooting miles of film. Now, John's filmed record, edited to 58 minutes and featuring N!ai's translated narration as a voice-over, is scheduled to appear on PBS this month as "N!ai, the Story of a !Kung Woman," the second episode of a new series called *Odyssey*. The

*John Sedgwick is a Boston-based freelance writer who has written for Esquire, Saturday Review and other magazines.*



12-week series is the brainchild of independent producer Michael Ambrosino, also the creator of PBS's *Nova*. In other weeks, as its name implies, the series will range far and wide, exploring such topics as the Inca Empire in Peru and the work of anthropologist Franz Boas.

The pictures on these pages suggest the intimacy that grew between the Marshalls and the !Kung. Having lived with the !Kung off and on for a total of three years, John Marshall feels he has taken on some of the !Kung's character, including some of the sense of loneliness instilled by centuries of desert living.

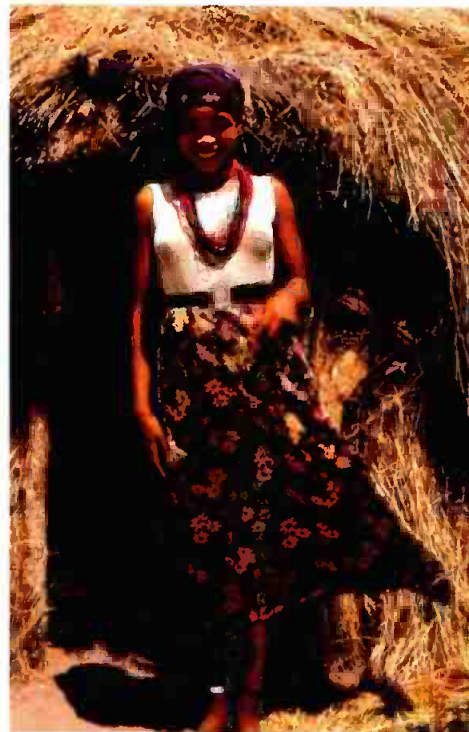
At the start of each visit, the !Kung would fill the Marshalls in on all the tribal news (including divorces, which were quite common). That's not to say that all barriers broke down. Only John really learned the language. As he filmed, John found that the Bushmen expressed little self-consciousness in front of the camera. At first they had little idea what the strange black box on the tripod was doing. And in their view it would have been impolite for them to ask.

N!ai quickly established herself as the star of the long-running production. John filmed her marriage at age 8 to a 13-year-



## Two generations of a Boston family spent three decades filming a tribe in transition

The Laurence Marshall family went from Boston to the bush to compile a 28-year filmed record of their relationship with the !Kung San. That relationship, chronicled in the *Odyssey* episode "N!ai, the Story of a !Kung Woman," became an intimate one, as evidenced by the photo on the opposite page of Laurence's wife Lorna giving a ride to a !Kung child. Right and far right: N!ai (shown here as a youngster and in early womanhood), the !Kung girl who grew to adulthood before the Marshalls' camera and who symbolizes the changes that "civilization" brought to the !Kung. While living with the gentle tribe, the Marshalls coped with the lack of amenities. At bottom right, father Laurence peers from his home in the bush. Below, son John Marshall prepares to film while a Bushman acts as photographer's assistant.



old medicine man named Gunda. Later he filmed her first menstruation dance, during which she was closed up in a grass hut while other women danced outside. (Usually the women bared their bottoms for the ritual, but they wouldn't in front of John.) On John's last visit to the !Kung in 1978, he set N!ai in front of the camera to talk about her life. A confessional stream poured out—about how she had been dead set against getting married, how she refused to sleep with her husband, how she later had affairs with other !Kung but finally came to appreciate her husband and be faithful to him. For the !Kung San,

such candor is not unusual. "They're like a big encounter group," says John.

Using N!ai as the focus, the film flashes back to life in the bush when she was a girl and contrasts it with her existence today. By the early Sixties, the South African government, under its apartheid policy, had begun to establish reservations for the Bushmen. The Bushmen's lands, once 15,000 acres, are now only 3000. The Dutch Reformed Church has built schools that the !Kung children are expected to attend. The Bushmen are no longer hunters and gatherers; their food is an unpleasant "mealie meal" purchased at a grocery

store. They wear Western-style shirts and trousers instead of breechcloths. Rather than calling out N!ai's medicine-man husband to dance the fearsome "half-death" (a rite shown in Marshall's film), which is supposed to ward off evil spirits and cure disease, the !Kung repair to the local clinic. They earn trinket money by bartering handmade bows and arrows.

And what of N!ai now? She supports herself in part by being filmed by tourists—much to the envy of her fellow !Kung. That the tourists are there at all is due to the vacation the Laurence Marshall family took three decades ago. ■







Everything you need to know about...

# The Coming Videodisc Battle

By DAVID LACHENBRUCH

In 1928, Selfridges' department store in London put on sale one of the wonder devices of the turbulent Twenties—a phonograph that played sound pictures in motion, some of them in color. This television gramophone was invented by John Logie Baird, one of the founding fathers of the British telly. Using standard wax disc records with a playing time of a few minutes, it provided a coarse, low-resolution picture, which was viewed through a perforated whirling disc. There's no record of how successful Baird's player was, but it must have attracted some buyers because Selfridges offered it for seven years.

The idea of a phonograph that plays pictures has been an obsession almost since the invention of the first phonograph, and the search was intensified after the development of television. It was relatively simple for Baird to put a few minutes of low-resolution TV pictures on a standard phonograph record, compared with the problems of developing a disc system to play today's high-resolution color images.

The videodisc is an idea whose time has finally come. Videodisc players and discs have been offered in Europe since 1975 (but without much success, presumably because of short playing time), and in long-play form in the United States since December 1978 (in very limited quantities). But the disc is almost certain to blossom later this year and to bloom in 1981.

The videodisc is no small-potatoes, back-room invention. It is being backed by major blue-chip show-business and technology companies in the United States, Europe and Japan. The world's number-one and number-two leaders in the con-

sumer-electronics business—Philips of the Netherlands and Matsushita of Japan—are deeply involved. In the United States, IBM, CBS, RCA, MCA and such other alphabetical giants as GM are making large investments in the videodisc. All four television networks, all major movie companies and many record firms are publicly committed to releasing programs on videodiscs.

But first, to avoid confusion, let's define a videodisc. It's an exact video-and-audio analogue of the sound phonograph record. To answer the question you were about to ask: No, it does *not* record. Like a phonograph, the videodisc player is a *play-only* device—a simple appliance to play already-recorded, mass-produced discs that provide high-quality picture-and-sound programs. Like the videocassette recorder, or VCR, the disc player simply attaches to the antenna terminals of any television set, and its pictures are displayed on the screen.

The modern wave of videodiscomania dates from 1970, when American audio and television engineers were treated to a demonstration of a system developed jointly by Germany's AEG Telefunken and Britain's Decca (no relation to America's Decca Records, an MCA subsidiary). The "TeD" system, as it was later known, reproduced a good-fidelity picture from a flexible disc inserted in the slot of a compact player. A color version of TeD—costing about \$650 each, with records from \$4.30 to \$11—went on the market in Europe in 1975 to unenthusiastic response. It had two major weaknesses: playing time was only 10 minutes per side, and available programming was insufficient and unattractive. As an encore a few

years later, it also bombed in Japan.

TeD actually became obsolete before it was marketed. In 1972 there occurred one of the science world's wildest coincidences—two companies, one in Europe and one in America, demonstrated what essentially was the same videodisc system, each apparently developed without any knowledge that the other was in the works. The globe-straddling electronics giant, N.V. Philips' Gloeilampenfabrieken, demonstrated remarkable pictures using a system that it called VLP (for "video long play"). Each 12-inch disc provided playing time of up to 30 minutes per side. Two months later, the show-business conglomerate MCA Inc. (Universal Pictures, Decca Records)—not previously known for its technology—demonstrated its DiscoVision system, which worked exactly the same way.

VLP-DiscoVision represented a striking departure in disc-playing technology. The discs had absolutely smooth, mirrorlike surfaces with no grooves. In place of the conventional pickup stylus, a low-powered laser beam was used to "read" microscopic pits embedded below the disc's surface and to guide itself along the track. Since no stylus ever touched the disc, there was no record wear at all. And because the disc spun at a speed equal to one complete television picture per revolution (1800 rpm for the American model), any single "frame," or picture, could be held rock-still by causing the laser beam to retrace the same circular track over and over. The system also could play pictures forward or backward at any speed.

To avoid a protracted battle, and to establish a single standard for long-playing videodiscs, Philips and MCA quickly

## Long before the first disc twirled commercially, the battle of words between RCA and Philips-MCA was under way

brought their systems into compatibility—combining them into a single system so that the same records could be played on either Philips or MCA turntables.

**B**ut a single standard just wasn't in the cards. RCA had been working since the mid-1960s on a straightforward, needle-in-the-groove system, which it later dubbed "SelectaVision VideoDisc" and which was designed to do nothing but play long-playing videodiscs with high quality at a relatively low price. Technically, RCA's is called a "capacitance" system, because its stylus reads variations of electrical capacitance (the storage of electrical charges) in the disc's grooves.

Other systems cropped up—all mutually incompatible. The big French electronics company, Thomson CSF, developed an optical system using transparent discs, which is now being sold for educational and institutional use. Matsushita Electric Corp., the Japanese giant, developed its own system called Visc-O-Pac, but after a year of vacillation decided to produce a different system, VHD (for

"video high density"), invented by its subsidiary, Japan Victor Corporation (JVC). Like SelectaVision, VHD is a capacitance system, but, like Philips-MCA's, its discs are grooveless, the stylus being guided electronically along the recorded track. VHD—surprise!—is incompatible with all other systems, including Visc-O-Pac.

**T**he major rivalry has been between the Philips-MCA and RCA systems, the two that from the start appeared to have the greatest chance for success. Their respective backers painted similarly glowing pictures of low-cost players that would provide first-run movies, concerts and educational material for the home screen at a few dollars a throw.

It was clear from the start that the optical system had the inside track on program pump-priming because of the thousands of Universal films in MCA's vaults. RCA countered by naming ex-NBC president Herbert Schlosser as executive vice president in charge of SelectaVision VideoDisc programming, and he immediately set out to tie up videodisc rights to

movies and other materials. The optical system, on the other hand, suffered an early disadvantage because neither Philips nor MCA had a hardware manufacturing or marketing base in the United States. Philips solved the problem by buying Magnavox—primarily as a launching pad for its videodisc system in America. MCA, in turn, established Universal Pioneer, a joint venture with the Japanese hi-fi manufacturer Pioneer, to manufacture players in Japan, mainly for the American market. At the same time, it built a large disc-pressing plant in California.

**L**ong before the first disc twirled commercially, the battle of words between RCA and Philips-MCA was under way. The former proudly announced the development of a super-long-playing disc that could store a full hour of visual entertainment on each side—making possible the recording of a complete two-hour movie on a single, two-sided, 12-inch record. Philips and MCA then announced their own breakthrough: all consumer-model players

### VIDEODISC SYSTEMS AT A GLANCE

NAME OF SYSTEM	TYPE OF SYSTEM	DEVELOPER	MANUFACTURER	FIRST MARKETING DATE	LICENSEES
TED	Grooved; mechanical	Telefunken (Germany) Decca (U.K.) Teldec (Germany)	Telefunken (Germany) General (Japan)	March 1975	Sanyo (Japan)
DISCOVISION/ VLP	Grooveless; reflective; optical	MCA (U.S.) Philips (Netherlands)	Philips (Netherlands) Magnavox (U.S.) Universal Pioneer (Japan) Discs: DVA (U.S.) Philips (Netherlands)	December 1978	Sharp (Japan) Sony (Japan) Grundig (Germany)
TTV-3620 (INDUSTRIAL)	Grooveless; transparent; optical	Thomson-CSF (France)	Thomson-CSF (France)	January 1980	Discs: 3M (U.S.)
SELECTAVISION VIDEODISC	Grooved; capacitance	RCA (U.S.)	RCA (U.S.)	January 1981	BSR (U.K.) Plessey (U.K.) Clarion (Japan) General (Japan) Mitsubishi (Japan) Nippon Electric (Japan) Pioneer (Japan) Sharp (Japan) Toshiba (Japan) Discs CBS (U.S.)
VHD	Grooveless; capacitance	JVC (Japan)	JVC (Japan) Matsushita (Japan)	N.A.	N.A.

N.A.—Not available.



## RCA sent its missionaries to other TV-set makers, hoping to make its system the standard by sheer force of numbers

would be equipped to play two types of discs—the standard 30-minute-per-side ones and a new type, which ran an hour per side but lacked many of the features of the shorter-playing records, such as still pictures, slow and fast and reverse motion.

The stage was set for the momentous American debut of the videodisc in 1978—Philips and MCA having missed their target date by four years, while RCA hadn't even made up its mind to go ahead at all. The grand introduction actually came on December 15, when Magnavox offered the first Magnavision players and MCA the first DiscoVision records in three Atlanta stores, promising a market-by-market rollout toward nationwide distribution by early 1980. The player, originally targeted at about \$500, came out at \$695. The records ran \$15.95 for recent movies, \$9.95 for TV-movies and oldies, and \$5.95 to \$9.95 for such shorter items as sports and educational programs.

The MCA DiscoVision catalogue listed 202 titles, including 108 movies; 50 of them from Universal, with a smattering of features from Warner, Paramount, Disney and other studios anxious to participate in the great experiment. Many of the features were respectable high-budget pictures, including "Jaws" I and II, "Animal House," "Patton," "House Calls" and "M\*A\*S\*H." Oldies included such classics as the Marx Brothers' "Animal Crackers," "Destry Rides Again," "Dracula" and "Frankenstein."

**T**he Atlanta stores were mobbed on opening day, ultimately taking orders for well over 1000 players—but they had only 37 to sell, and only 72 of the 202 disc programs. The pattern was set for 1979: deliveries of players were slow (some of the players were built in Holland, while others were assembled here from Dutch parts). MCA's disc plant encountered severe start-up difficulties and there was a shortage of records all year, not enough even to support the scant 5000 or so players sold in the first 12 months. By this time Magnavision had fanned out to span not the Nation but a grand total of three markets (Seattle and Dallas having been added to Atlanta). Both players and discs were being sold at a loss, so in mid-1979 Magnavox raised the price of the player to \$775 and MCA boosted its disc movies to \$24.95 and \$15.95.

In short, lack of supply and national promotion, plus high prices, got the home videodisc off to a shaky start in its first year, making its success difficult to judge. While Philips, Magnavox and MCA were huffing and puffing to crank up production,

two other major American companies got into the optical-videodisc act. General Motors bought more than 10,000 specially equipped players for its dealer showrooms, to demonstrate cars and their features to prospective customers, at a cost estimated to be more than \$20 million. These were all delivered in 1979 by little Universal Pioneer in far-off Japan. MCA diverted its attention from movies to automatic transmissions and delivered 70,000 discs to General Motors, taking orders for 250,000 more this year.

**N**ext, the computer giant IBM, which for years had had its own videodisc project, bought half of the entire DiscoVision operation from MCA. A new 50-50 joint operation, DiscoVision Associates (DVA), was established to operate the former MCA disc plant, and IBM efficiency experts and engineers immediately set about improving the operation. Although IBM's particular interest in the disc presumably was for industrial, commercial and data-storage uses, it got into the consumer-products business in a big way for the first time by taking over half of MCA's 50-percent ownership of Universal Pioneer, the Japanese manufacturer.

Then, in the waning days of 1979, RCA made its long-awaited announcement. President Edgar Griffiths, speaking at a meeting of distributors, said that the SelectaVision VideoDisc would be a going product, in nationwide distribution, early in 1981. It would be priced under \$500, with feature-length discs going for \$15 to \$20 each. According to Griffiths, the development of the videodisc involved the biggest program in RCA's history, absorbing more corporate money than color television (on which RCA is understood to have spent \$130 million). He forecast that the videodisc would start a new industry, "bigger than the broadcast industry, two-and-a-half times the record industry."

RCA programming chief Herb Schlosser said SelectaVision's fare would include 300 titles the first year, about half of them movies from Paramount, Disney, 20th Century-Fox, MGM and J. Arthur Rank (but not MCA-Universal), plus music discs such as Don Kirshner's rock concerts and Elton John's Russian tour, to be stamped out like cookies in a giant pressing plant in Indianapolis. RCA cordially invited other manufacturers and programmers to come along on the great adventure with compatible players and discs of their own.

It wasn't long before his invitation was accepted—by a very unlikely prospect. After examining the Philips-MCA-IBM

system and two prospective Japanese competitors, arch-rival CBS signed an agreement with RCA and announced it would be pressing its own videodiscs for SelectaVision players by 1982. Until then, RCA will custom-press the CBS-label discs, which thus can appear on the market from the very start of player sales.

RCA also sent its missionaries to other TV-set makers in the United States and Japan, hoping to make its system the standard by sheer force of numbers. Although at least nine manufacturers have signed RCA-player license agreements (including Britain's Plessey, which manufactured the Baird disc player of 1928), none has actually committed itself to production. The plum would be Zenith, America's leading maker of television sets (RCA is number two). RCA and CBS may be traditional rivals in the broadcasting and record fields, but RCA and Zenith are outright, teeth-gnashing enemies in TV-set manufacturing. RCA reasons that if it can woo and win Zenith, using CBS's commitment as bait, the rest of the industry will fall into line and the videodisc battle will have been won.

**W**hat is the attraction of a videodisc player? The same as that of a phonograph, but with the added impact of a high-quality color picture. The Philips-MCA-IBM optical system has won widespread praise for its excellent picture and high-fidelity sound. The Magnavision player looks like a large, space-age phonograph: a shiny silver disc is placed on the turntable, the lid is closed, the "start" button pushed and you're at the movies at home—without commercials. When 30-minute-per-side discs are used (very few two-hour discs have yet been made), all of the bells and whistles come into play—stop-motion, slow and fast speeds, and instant indexing. In addition, the stop-motion feature lets the player double as a super slide projector. A single disc side could hold, for example, 54,000 of the world's greatest art masterpieces. If you were to look at each one for 10 seconds, it would take more than six days and nights of continuous viewing to see them all. (If you wanted to take a more selective approach, you could locate any single frame by punching its corresponding number—which can be made to appear on the bottom of your screen—on a push-button keyboard which would automatically deliver the proper frame to the screen.)

The sound on an optical disc can be in stereo, and the audio portion can be jacked directly into a home hi-fi system. A special converter, not yet on the market, eventu-

## While the VCR can make its own programming from television, the videodisc player is only as good as the recorded programs available

ally could turn the player (or any videodisc player) into a super-hi-fi phonograph, to play special digital audio discs of the future. Best of all, optical discs are durable; handling doesn't affect them, and, at least theoretically, their life is indefinite.

The system has enormous potential in the education and training field, since it can be made, with a built-in minicomputer (as are those used by General Motors), to perform a number of tricky operations, such as playing various parts of the disc out of sequence, automatically stopping or slowing down, even serving as a complete programmed-learning system.

**A**bout midyear, the second home videodisc player will be introduced in the United States—this one under the Pioneer brand name, built by Universal Pioneer in Japan. It will be even more elaborate than the Magnavision player, but will accommodate the same DiscoVision records. The Pioneer model will have wireless remote control, which lets the user select any segment of the disc for viewing and control all the player's functions without leaving his chair. It will be priced "under \$1000."

RCA's approach is completely different. It aims to introduce a simple player controlled basically by one button—"play"—at a price that appeals to the mass market. SelectaVision lacks the optical system's bells and whistles and special effects, and its discs loaf along at a comparatively slow 450 rpm, but it does have a "pause" button—a sort of video bookmark—so the viewer can answer the phone or go to the fridge without losing his place in the movie. It also has a scanning system for rough visual location of any part of the program. The initial model won't accommodate stereo sound, nor will it even have a jack for plugging into the family hi-fi, although the company says these will come in later models. And RCA discs are more perishable than the optical kind: each one is encased in a plastic jacket or caddy; the entire package is inserted in a slot in the player; the disc is played automatically and returned to the caddy at the end of the program.

Of course, the RCA player won't play DiscoVision records, nor will the optical player accommodate SelectaVision discs.

A funny thing happened while the discs were on the way to market; there was a development none of their proponents had expected—the widespread distribution and popularity of prerecorded motion pictures on home videocassettes. Videodisc boosters insist the two home-video media are completely noncompetitive.

They point out that the VCR was designed to record programs off the air and only secondarily to play prerecorded material, and that the picture and sound from tapes aren't nearly as good as those on discs. The optical system's backers talk about the versatility of their machines, and about their hi-fi or stereo sound. RCA notes that its goal is to keep the prices of players and programs at about half those of VCRs and prerecorded tapes—list prices of VCRs currently average about \$1000, movie tapes \$40 to \$75.

But the Japanese, who currently manufacture all of the VCRs sold in the United States, don't seem willing to sit still for such nonsense. Prices of VCRs are coming down, and there are widespread predictions that simple, stripped-down recorders will be selling in the \$500 range by the time SelectaVision comes to market. RCA, which also markets Japanese-made VCRs under the SelectaVision trade name, warned competitors it would be "suicide" for them to lower VCR prices to compete with disc players, intimating that RCA's disc players can be reduced more deeply and quickly than video recorders, if necessary.

**T**he Japanese seem to be banking on squashing the videodisc player with the more versatile VCR. But they have their own contingency plans. Matsushita and JVC have proposed that the Japanese government choose their VHD system as the single standard for Japan and have entered negotiations with American television-set and record companies to introduce the system here. Since Matsushita owns both Panasonic and Quasar, the United States could wind up with a third noncompatible videodisc system if Matsushita can find or establish a company to press discs here and round up enough programming. At the same time, almost all other Japanese TV (and some hi-fi) manufacturers have taken out licenses to produce either the Philips-MCA or RCA systems, or both, so as to be ready whichever way the American market winds blow. One thing to keep in mind: while the VCR can make its own programming from television or from a home-video camera, the videodisc player is only as good as the recorded programs available. Lacking an abundance of program discs, this scientific marvel is about as appealing as a television set without broadcasts.

Apparently, though, there won't be any shortage of programs. The DiscoVision catalogue now is getting a bit moldy, its latest pictures having been released thea-

trically in 1978 (most have already bowed on commercial television). But MCA now has inaugurated a policy of releasing new Universal pictures on discs as soon as possible after their theatrical debuts—as it's doing, hurriedly, with its two December 1979 premieres, Steve Martin's "The Jerk" and "1941" with John Belushi. Other movie producers, record companies, TV syndicators and free-lance programmers are lining up to sell their programs to disc, and there's general agreement that new films will be released on disc shortly after their theatrical premieres and well before they can be seen on pay-TV.

There will be few program "exclusives" in the disc business. Most shows sold to one disc system will be available to the other, and presumably to the two cassette systems as well. Although initial programming is being borrowed from other media—the movies, television, even phonograph records—it's clear that, if player circulation reaches the mass level, the disc can give birth to entirely new types of programming—the video equivalent of books and magazines. While the TV networks profess lack of concern over any possible inroads into their audience (as they did with VCRs and pay-TV), NBC and CBS already are in the thick of the videodisc business, ABC has established a high-level home-video programming project and PBS plans to offer programs produced by its affiliated stations.

The ultimate success of the disc is by no means a sure thing. After a fast start in Atlanta, Magnavision sales have slowed. The problem of standards could stunt the growth of the new medium, recalling the early battles of RCA and CBS over color-TV systems and phonograph-record speeds (although this time they're both on the same side).

But the videodisc concept has powerful backing, and expenditures on its launch probably have already exceeded a billion dollars. All signs point to 1981 as the decisive year when the videodisc will emerge as America's hottest new visual medium—or electronics' most expensive flop. ■





# MOVIES



The times in which we live and the books and periodicals we read are filled with news of strange and unnatural relationships. The following 16 pages are devoted to one of them—a relationship between two media: television and the movies.

Are they first cousins, mutual parasites, ardent lovers or just good friends? Their interconnections are so complex, there are no simple answers. Only one thing is certain: neither could easily get along without the other these days, as the report beginning on page 73 explains.

As always, however, the past is prologue. To enhance our understanding of the way it is, it is helpful to recall the way it was. You can do that on pages 62 through 72, starting with selected short subjects evoking the glamour, emotion and unpredictability that for 27 years have made the annual telecast of The Academy Awards a mesmerizing experience for the folks watching at home—and sometimes a nightmare for those on- and off-camera in Hollywood.

Then you can visit the old Hollywood—the picture-show world of the Thirties, Forties and Fifties—through two made-for-television presentations scheduled for this spring: “Haywire,” which exposes the chaotic life of a movie-colony family; and *Moviola*, which resurrects Vivien Leigh, Greta Garbo and Marilyn Monroe.

Movies—the way they were and the way they are. Read on. It’s suitable for general audiences.

# MOVIES

# THE GLORY AND THE GAFFES

The 27 years of Oscar telecasts have brought us memorable moments of high drama—and low comedy

For almost a quarter of a century the ceremony bestowing the awards of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences—those little gold statuettes commonly known as Oscars—was the sole property of Hollywood and the film industry. Then, on March 19, 1953, there was a first-time onlooker at the RKO Pantages Theatre watching master of ceremonies Bob Hope, 1952's Best Actor Gary Cooper (for "High Noon") and the rest of the film world's biggest stars. The onlooker was television, courtesy of NBC. Ever since, the Oscar telecast has been one of America's most anticipated TV shows, and the 52nd Academy Awards ceremony will be no exception. It will be seen on ABC April 14, with Johnny Carson as M.C. The theme will be "The Elegant Eighties."

In the TV era, the suspense surrounding who will win has had to share top bill-

ing with political propaganda, last-minute substitutes who have had to "wing it," exposed flesh of various and sundry body parts, and even the clock when the show ran overtime—or once, under-time. To bring back memories of the gaffes and the glory, PANORAMA sent free-lance writer Laura Stevenson Maslon to interview Hollywood veteran Howard W. Koch, 63, who this year is producing his sixth Oscar telecast. Koch has also produced such movies as "The Odd Couple," "Plaza Suite" and "On a Clear Day You Can See Forever," as well as many TV specials. He is currently at work on "Airplane!" a spoof of disaster films to be released this summer.

"When I was first called and asked to do the show," Koch says, "I was so flattered to be asked that I didn't stop to think what an enormous job it was going to be and what a hell of a responsibility it

was. You don't get paid for doing this. Since I've been producing the shows, they've turned into full-blooded spectacles. They used to use only eight cameras. This year we'll be using 17, plus new electronic equipment, satellites and computers." But Koch hopes the telecast, even with all that technology, never becomes pure science. The most exciting parts of the show, he declares, come when the unexpected happens. "When you don't rock the boat," he says, "things can get boring."

What follows are the comments of Koch and other longtime Oscar observers on some of the most memorable moments in the history of the telecast. (The year given marks the year of the telecast; the awards are presented for films and performances from the previous year.)

## 1954



Best Supporting Actor of 1953 Frank Sinatra posed with female counterpart Donna Reed.

Frank Sinatra not only capped one of show business's greatest comebacks by winning the 1953 award for Best Supporting Actor for his role as Maggio in "From Here to Eternity," he also

set a record of sorts. According to veteran Hollywood writer Hal Kanter, who has worked on 18 Oscar shows, "Frank Sinatra and Jack Lemmon [who won the same award two years later for "Mister Roberts"] share the award for getting out of their seats and up to the stage in the fastest number of seconds. Sinatra was in such a hurry to pick it up because he was afraid they might change their minds about the award. It was an incredibly popular win and greeted with great enthusiasm, but Sinatra was flabbergasted to get it and was extremely gracious in his acceptance speech."

## 1958

Rock Hudson and Mae West opened the show with a duet of "Baby, It's Cold Outside." Hudson recalls: "We rehearsed the 16 bars of the song for two weeks. Every time I showed up at Mae West's house she appeared in a long, flowing negligee. Then she'd start to rehearse and we'd both begin laughing. She had a great sense of humor about herself and about sex. She felt it was the only way to treat sex—with humor. The afternoon of the Awards we rehearsed at the theater and I was really nervous. It was my first time in front of a live audience. I went home and decided not to change from my jeans. Instead I just grabbed my tuxedo and drove back to the theater.

"Well, they forgot to give me a parking pass. I yelled at the cop, 'Do you realize who I am?' He answered he didn't care. Finally, it was getting very late. I just drove over curbs onto the



street and parked right behind the theater.

"I raced right onto the stage and they dressed me and put on my makeup right behind the curtain. Right before the curtain went up, I noticed that Mae had turned the couch in such a way that she was in front of the audience and I, lying on the couch, was going to be totally upstaged by her. So I quickly jumped up from the couch, turned it around and lay back down on it. The song was over before it began and all I remember is that the audience laughed all the way through it.

"After that, I went back out to my car and, wouldn't you know, I'd left the lights on and the battery was dead."

## 1959



With 20 minutes to fill in 1959, Jerry Lewis desperately struck up the band and staged an impromptu ball.

"Jerry Lewis was the M.C. for the last part of the show and it finished 20 minutes early," recalls Howard Koch. "They were closing the show with 'There's No Business Like Show Business' and had all the award-winners on-stage. Jerry kept running around like crazy, trying to keep everyone singing, even grabbing some instruments from the orchestra. It was total pandemonium, so finally NBC went to a sports review. It's the last time the show was given an exact time; after that it's always been open-ended. This year, however, we're trying something new. Last year's show ran three hours and 20 minutes, which is much too late in the East Coast for those big awards—Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Picture. So, we're going to start the show at 6 P.M. our time, to keep that New York audience."

## 1969

"When Barbra Streisand went on-stage to accept the award for 'Funny Girl,'" remembers Koch, "everyone thought she was wearing a black pajama outfit that was totally see-through. You could see her rear end. That was all my fault. I was producing 'On a Clear Day You Can See Forever' at the time and that afternoon Barbra pulled me into her dressing room and asked me which outfit I liked best on her to wear that night. She gave me a choice of three and I chose the best of them. One was straight



Then-husband Elliott Gould toted her Best Actress statuette as Barbra Streisand made a cheeky exit in 1969.

and looked awful on her, and the other one was terrible, too. But in those days they had TV cameras that picked you up from behind when you went up the lighted platform to get your award and it looked like she was totally nude. My wife was furious at me for picking an outfit like that."

## 1972

It was the first year that Koch produced the Awards and he says, "The highlight of the show was going to be the tribute to Charlie Chaplin. The day before the show, I went to the airport with the president of the Academy, Dan Taradash, to greet Chaplin. He came off the plane with that funny walk of his and I



The emotional Hollywood homecoming of 83-year-old Charlie Chaplin was 1972's grand finale.

said, 'It's so nice to have you here' and Chaplin answered, 'It's so nice to be here in New York.' I thought, 'Oh, my God, he's not all here.' I'd planned to have him on in the middle of the show, but I got nervous. Suppose something happened? Suppose he passed away or fainted? I decided that would definitely

put a pall on the whole show. So, I quickly decided we'd put him on at the end of the show. In order to do that, though, I had to get the approval of the board of directors of the Academy and the network. I really had to scramble in 24 hours to get their approval and to change the timing of the show. As it worked out, the show built to him and he was great. It worked much better than we'd originally planned."

## 1973



Accepting Marlon Brando's Best Actor Award in 1973, Sacheen Littlefeather publicized Indian causes.

That year's show is recalled for its Indian uprising. "The rule of the Academy is that no tickets are transferable," explains Koch. "Marlon Brando never called for his tickets [he was nominated for Best Actor in "The Godfather"], so we kept calling his secretary and she never called us back to let us know if he was coming or not. Finally, the day before the show, she called and asked for his two tickets, and said that Brando was coming.

"The night of the telecast, I was taking a shower at the Music Center and a reporter banged on the shower door to let me know that the Indians were coming. Indians? I thought. A tribe? One or two? I didn't know what he was talking about, but I alerted security. I always use extras to fill the empty seats in the house so that the TV cameras won't pan to an empty seat—the extras also fill the seats when a nominee goes up on-stage to accept an award, so I had Brando's seats filled.

"We were two awards away from Best Actor and I began to feel very uneasy. I turned to the head of security backstage and said, 'Let's lock the doors. Anyone can go out but no one can come in without identifying themselves.' Just as I say this, the door opens and I see Brando's secretary, whom I know very well, come in with this Indian. I run around to that side of the theater and ask them to please step outside a minute. The Indian shows me a document about 15 pages long that she says she wants to read if Brando wins. I say, 'I'm not going to let you do that.' Meanwhile, my mind is racing—if I don't let her go up on-stage, it'll be in all the papers that I've suppressed things. So, I say, 'I'll give you 45 seconds to make your statement. If you go one second over, I'll have you bodily removed from the stage. I promise you that I'm not afraid to do that.'

"I race backstage with about four minutes to go and I quickly warn the president of the Academy to get to the podium and

announce that 'we're having technical difficulties' and then we'll cut to a commercial if she goes over 45 seconds. (I kept thinking, with all those Indian pictures I'd worked on: 'Indians speak with forked tongue.') I warn security to be ready to grab her when she comes off.

"As luck would have it, Brando wins the award and as Sacheen Littlefeather comes on-stage, we all start looking at our watches. She runs a little over 46 seconds. As bad as that moment might seem, it does make for interesting showmanship. And a lot of interesting talk and press the next day."

## 1974

Koch was in Spain the year that a streaker ran across the stage, right before David Niven was to introduce Elizabeth Taylor. But Koch was told a detailed account of the incident and he says, "Niven's ad lib was brilliant: 'Isn't it fascinating to think that probably the only laugh that man will ever get in his life is by stripping off his clothes and showing his shortcomings?' I later asked David how he could come up with a line like that so quickly and he told me, 'I was sitting in the Music Center the afternoon of the show and I mentally went through all the things that could go wrong—the envelopes getting mixed up, the wrong presenter showing up, and since streakers were in the news, I even thought of a line to handle that.' The director,



Never one to be caught with his wit down, the debonair David Niven took 1974's streaker in stride.

Marty Pasetta, was accused of setting the whole thing up because it got so much press and he retorted, 'I'd have never planned it right before introducing Liz Taylor—a highlight of the show. I'd have put it on earlier, during one of the low points of the evening'."

## 1975

"I've known Bert Schneider for years," says Koch, "but I never expected he was going to read a telegram from the North Vietnamese when his "Hearts and Minds" [a film about the Vietnam War] won for Best Documentary. The lines were flooded with telegrams in protest. Bob Hope pinned me up against the wall



telling me I should do a disclaimer on the air, and Shirley MacLaine was screaming at me, 'Don't you dare do anything!' Frank Sinatra just took it upon himself toward the end of the show to say what he felt should be said: 'The Academy is not responsible for any political references on this program, and we are sorry that they had to take place this evening.'"

## 1976



Louise Fletcher gave her 1976 acceptance speech in sign language, while Jill Ireland looked on.

Remembering Louise Fletcher's acceptance of the Best Actress award for "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest," Koch calls her use of sign language "one of the most moving speeches of any Awards show, but the TV audiences almost didn't see it. We have a set pattern—we shoot above the woman's bosom. Well, that was too tight a shot for Louise because all you could see was a hand going out of the picture frame. In a split second the director was able to go to another camera, have it pick her up and do a larger, wider, bigger shot so you could see her fingers moving doing the sign language for her [deaf] parents.



Liz Taylor could only stand there and smile uneasily when she botched "America the Beautiful" in 1976.

"Liz Taylor was supposed to close that show with a salute to the Bicentennial, singing 'America the Beautiful.' Well, she missed the downbeat totally so we had to quickly cut to the crawl [the list of credits]. I still love to end the show with a big musical number, though. I think the TV audiences love hearing those songs. It's also a good way to get out of the show, to get everyone back on-stage, and to run the credits."

## 1977

Koch wasn't involved with the show that year and Billy Friedkin produced it. "I watched it at home at a pajama party," says Koch, "but I can tell you what happened with Peter Finch's award. Eletha [Finch's widow] had asked Friedkin if she could accept the award if Finch won. Well, ever since that Indian incident, we'd decided that if the winner wasn't there, we'd let the presenter accept the award. It makes for a tighter show and moves much more quickly that way. So Friedkin told her no. Well, Paddy Chayefsky has always been his own man, so when the award was announced, he pulled Eletha up on the stage with him. It was a moving moment."

## 1978



In 1978 Vanessa Redgrave introduced politics into the ceremonies and Paddy Chayefsky deplored the intrusion.

Producer Koch had another political flap on his hands when Best Actress (for "Julia") Vanessa Redgrave made her acceptance speech. "I just had a hunch when Vanessa Redgrave won that she was going to do something controversial. I think if she'd just left the word 'hoodlum' out of the 'hoodlum Zionist' speech it might have been all right because it was a pretty good statement of her point of view. I'd been worried all day about her because I just had a hunch she was going to win. It was left to Paddy Chayefsky to answer her remarks and he got quite a few boos and cheers. I felt sorry for Vanessa, because at the party afterwards she was sitting all alone with just her two bodyguards. No one else would sit with her and here it was her big night in the sun. It was our 50th anniversary, and we had the biggest TV audience ever [over 26 million homes], but we didn't quite get our best foot forward with all that controversy." ■

With the old Hollywood as its backdrop "Haywire" recalls the tragic history of ...

# PEOPLE WHO LIVED AT EXTREMES

By BILL DAVIDSON



In the opening scene of the three-hour CBS-Warner Bros. production of "Haywire" this month, we hear the words of Brooke Hayward, author of the best-selling book of the same title: "My mother was a star, Margaret Sullavan, a shining idol of her generation. My father was Leland Hayward, a producer, agent, glamorous, a legend himself.... We grew up in California in its Golden Era.... This is a story of carelessness and guilt; of people who lived at extremes. My parents failed as they suc-

ceeded—on a massive scale."

The key words of this prologue are "people who lived at extremes"—an accurate summation of the old Hollywood. W.C. Fields doesn't like Cecil B. DeMille, so he shatters the bay windows of the producer's home by hurling a hundred whiskey bottles at them; Clark Gable doesn't like driving around a traffic circle, so he drives *through* it, hitting a tree and nearly decapitating himself; Lana Turner dances until dawn at Ciro's with new acquaintance Artie Shaw, after which they

*In the old fun-and-games Hollywood, flying one's own plane was the thing to do. Here, Jason Robards, as Leland Hayward, and Lee Remick, as Margaret Sullavan, make ready to take the kids for an afternoon spin in the family's "little blue Twin Beech."*

*A tour bus passes the Leland Hayward home in Brentwood, Cal., as Leland and Maggie wait for their limousine to go to a party. In the "merry madcap" tradition of the old Hollywood, they tango on their front lawn in evening dress, to the delight of the camera-clicking tourists.*











With 1940s' pageboy hairdo, Lee Remick (left) is a startling look-alike for the late Margaret Sullivan. In earlier, happier days, the ill-starred Hayward-Sullivan family cavorts in the Pacific (top, left) outside its typical movie-star beach-colony home. Deborah Raffin (top, right) plays the teen-age and grown-up Brooke Hayward, who wrote the best seller that spawned the TV-movie. There was so much pain in remembrance for the real Brooke (above) that she could spend only one hour on the set with brother Bill, the film's producer.

impulsively fly off to Nevada and get married.

**I**n "Haywire," the extremes are more subtly expressed. Leland Hayward flies his own plane—"a little blue Twin Beech." But didn't everyone in those days—James Stewart, Robert Taylor, Danny Kaye? It was the thing to do.

Hayward and Miss Sullivan tango on their front lawn in full evening dress for the benefit of a passing busload of tourists. Why not? Didn't everyone in the old Hollywood find it amusing to act the "merry madcap"?

The family has a beach-colony summer home; a Hayward children's party features hired armed guards, a clown, a magician, an organ grinder and monkey, a pony, a jungle gym. Didn't everyone?

Leland Hayward had four wives, Margaret Sullivan four husbands. Again, that's the way it was.

Only two members of the Hayward-Sullivan family group have survived those so-called happy days. They are eldest daughter Brooke (now 43), who wrote the book; and youngest child Bill Hayward, 39, who emerged from confinement in two mental institutions to become a successful film producer ("Easy Rider") and is the producer of the TV-movie version of "Haywire."

He says: "People did seem to have a lot of fun then—but it was all on the surface. It's the *counterpoint* to the fun that Brooke and I both are concerned with. After all, our mother committed suicide, our father died a lingering and painful death, our sister Bridget went to pieces over the fact that the family fell apart

from not knowing how to demonstrate love and caring. Bridget died, too, at the age of 21. So, if anything, this is a cautionary piece—about the *not-so-good* old days."

Notwithstanding, there was enough of both pain *and* glamour in sister Brooke's book to sell hundreds of thousands of copies in hard cover and paperback—and to impel Warner Bros. to buy it as a film property. Originally destined to be a theatrical feature, the project later was switched to television but still managed to capture a mighty array of talent: Emmy-winning writer James Costigan; Oscar-winner Jason Robards to play Leland Hayward; Lee Remick as Margaret Sullivan (a close enough resemblance, though a head taller); Deborah Raffin as Brooke Hayward; Dianne Hull as Bridget Hayward; Hart Bochner as Bill Hayward; a brilliant young British director, Michael Tuchner, a remarkable group of child actors who had to represent the real Hayward children at three different age levels—all nine of whom incredibly look and act very much like their adult counterparts.

And then, of course, there was the real Bill Hayward as producer. In addition to keeping the film true to his sister's book, he performed some production miracles of his own—such as finding almost exact replicas of his colonial-style childhood homes in Connecticut, in such unlikely places as Bradbury, Cal.

And, most important of all, who knows more than Bill Hayward about the fun and the misery of the old Hollywood, which ensnared and destroyed three fifths of his extraordinary family? ■

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# STARTING AT THE TOP

In *Moviola*, three young actresses become Vivien Leigh, Greta Garbo and Marilyn Monroe

Garson Kanin, author of the Hollywood history "Moviola," on which NBC has based a three-part miniseries scheduled for next month, prudently calls his book a "novel," thus allowing readers to judge for themselves how many of his eye-opening tales are factual and how many concocted. But since Kanin was physically present among the Hollywood greats while they went about their business of creating and destroying each other's legends, his testimony—even when labeled "fiction"—ought to be dependable.

In the Thirties, Kanin observed at first hand David O. Selznick's frantic search for an actress powerful enough to play Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone with the Wind." Joan Crawford, Carole Lombard,





bard, Tallulah Bankhead, Paulette Goddard—all were considered and courted as partners for the swoon-inducing Clark Gable (left), but all were finally jilted in favor of a rank outsider, the English actress, Vivien Leigh.

*Moviola* has had its casting problems, too. The producers and director, David L. Wolper, Stan Margulies and John Erman (who also worked together in *Roots*), had to decide whether they wanted clones or convincing close fits for their leading ladies. Margulies says: "The bigger the part, the more interested we were in the performance rather than the clone. But we're remarkably close in our Vivien Leigh." Morgan Brittany (bottom, left) seems to be making a specialty of playing Leigh: she has done so in two previous theatrical movies, "Gable and Lombard" and "Day of the Locust."

For the role of Greta Garbo, whose love affair with silent-screen star John Gilbert (right) is the subject of another *Moviola* episode, the producers found another striking look-alike in Kristina Wayborn (below). A Swede like Garbo herself, Wayborn is



a protégée of movie director Ingmar Bergman, but has only once before acted in front of a camera—to advertise cosmetics.

**A**nd who could possibly play Marilyn Monroe? One episode of *Moviola* tells the little-known story of Monroe's relationship with Johnny Hyde (left)—the first man to believe in her as an actress, the man who became her agent and her lover, and who died within days of her first major movie appearance in "The Asphalt Jungle." Constance Forslund (below), who has appeared on Broadway, in movies and in several TV series (*One Day at a Time* and *Taxi*), auditioned for the part and was called back five times before she got it. Her performance draws on a painstaking study of the public and the private Monroe, but she doesn't attempt an impersonation. "There can never be another Marilyn," she says. ■







# THE STAKES ARE HIGH

With networks, pay-TV, videocassettes and discs all placing their bets, the long, turbulent relationship between movies and television has entered a new phase

By DON SHIRLEY

## "Films Have Nothing To Fear from Television"

**T**he headline in the Motion Picture Herald on May 13, 1939 summarized the opinions of Major Lenox Lohr, the president of NBC. As he gazed into the future, Lohr foresaw an unruffled era of peaceful cooperation between the Hollywood lions—then in their prime—and the New York lamb that was television in 1939.

"To think that commercial sponsors would pay even the lowest price for making a television film is absurd," he said, pointing out that the costs of making Hollywood films ranged from \$1000 to \$23,000 per minute. The Herald's summary of Lohr's remarks continued: "The use of old films for telecasts is not feasible...for the public interest would probably be very small...The tendency of amusement seekers is to join the crowds and see things along with lots of people. Television sets in the home could not supplant this desire to be with others."

On the other hand, Lohr "expected to see motion-picture producers take a keen interest in television. Motion pictures and television have much in common, and both can profit by coopera-

tion." In this, at least, he was prescient.

As the 1980s begin, the film and television industries profit by cooperating with each other far beyond any extent projected in the speculations of Major Lohr. In fact, the relationship between the two is much more vital than a matter of additional profits: television and the movies are now inextricably intertwined.

Many movies never would be made without money derived from the sale of TV rights; some would languish without extensive advertising on TV. And without television, many films would disappear after their initial release.

For its part, television, always voracious for material, depends on the movies to fill large blocks of time. The networks count on theatrical blockbusters to raise the ratings of surrounding shows, and they commission TV-movies—frequently from the same studios that turn out those hit films. Now two of the networks are planning to produce their own theatrical films. Even more reliant on movies than the networks are most local stations, pay-TV and the home-video industry.

This partnership between television and the movies has been achieved amid suspicion and stress. At first the movie

studios tried to ignore television. Then there were expressions of more overt hostility. But as television spread and it became clear that theater attendance was declining, the studios decided to use the new medium to their own advantage. As a result, television began buying more and more films, and the studios began producing more and more television. And, recently, movies have turned to TV for a considerable chunk of their advertising.

**A**s in any relationship between a seller and a buyer, the two industries remain sometime adversaries. But despite all the griping about high prices charged by the studios, or low prices paid by the TV industry, the sale is usually made. Americans want to watch movies on their TV sets—and that means big bucks for the shrewd trader.

In order to increase those bucks, the release pattern for theatrical films is stratified. A movie is released to theaters, re-released if it's successful, and then released to pay-television, network television and local television stations, in that order. Those who are willing to leave their homes and pay to see Movie X get to see it first. Those who prefer to stay at home but who will still pay to see Movie

X, get to see it second. Those who don't want to pay an extra fee to see Movie X—and who are willing to wait for its appearance on network-affiliated stations—are next in line. Finally, for those who are willing to wait long enough, Movie X will turn up at the strangest hours on local stations.

Of course, the farther Movie X travels along its path the less likely it is to remain intact. Cuts for commercials and potentially offensive content begin at the network level. By the time Movie X shows up at 5 P.M. on Channel 47, it may look more like Movie PG.

There are exceptions to what is known as "the orderly progression." In fact, there are downright threats to the orderliness of it all. Movies on cassettes and discs must fit into the release pattern somewhere, and are likely to usurp pay-television's spot in line. Then there are movies that are made for theaters but released only to TV—usually in a last-ditch attempt to recoup some of the investment in a dud.

**C**urrently the most zealous protectors of "the orderly progression" are the theater owners of America. They want to make sure nothing disturbs that "tendency of amusement seekers... to join the crowds." They are wary of what pay companies, cassettes, discs and giant-size home screens will do to their business, and they want to prolong the period between theatrical release and whatever follows for as long as possible.

"I'm scared to death," said Bruce Corwin, president of Metropolitan Theatres Corporation (and a man who is currently trying to diversify his own exhibition holdings by becoming a partner in a cable franchise). Speaking at a recent American Film Institute conference, Corwin predicted that the theaters likeliest to survive are multiscreen complexes with "big screens, good sound and hot popcorn with butter." He then described the worst fear of theater owners: that 80 million people might watch a new film in one night on pay-television, prior to its theatrical release—and before

the film companies have spent more than a fraction of their current costs for prints and advertising.

On the other hand, Corwin questioned whether any movie would be a smash on television without the sustained publicity given it in its theatrical releases. This is, in fact, widely recognized as an ace in the hole for theater owners: the powers that run television have no interest in shutting down the theaters of America, because the money spent by studios in advertising theatrical releases means less money has to be spent by networks, pay companies and stations in advertising the same familiar goods when they reach television. This is especially true now that studio ad budgets

are parceling out more money than ever to television advertising. Newspapers still snare the largest portion of movie-ad dollars, but according to the Television Bureau of Advertising, the money spent by movie distributors on TV ads increased more than 200 percent from 1973 to 1978, reaching a total of \$130,785,600.

**A**fter theatrical release, pay-television and home video are the next steps in "the orderly progression." Home Box Office, the largest of the pay networks, claims to be the largest movie buyer—in volume and in the amount of money spent each year—in the world. "No one disputes that features are the





most exciting form of entertainment," says Michael Fuchs, HBO's senior vice president of programming. All the same HBO is relying less on movies than it once did and is developing more programs of its own. With this shift has come a decline in the price that HBO and other pay companies are willing to pay for films.

HBO and number-two Showtime have further declared their independence from Hollywood by investing in the occasional film prior to production, locking up the pay rights for themselves. Known as the "prebuy," this technique also is used intermittently by the commercial networks to secure commercial rights at an early stage in the game.

Fuchs acknowledges that HBO has been involved in nearly 100 prebuys. If the movie is a hit, this strategy can pay off big, as a prebuy of "Meatballs" did for HBO. But movies can "pre-die" almost as fast as companies can prebuy them—they can succumb without any theatrical release. Any company involved in prebuys can expect its share of stiffs: "It can be a dangerous game," says Fuchs.

The studios have not been enchanted with the declining prices and other signs of crankiness that have come from the pay companies lately. There have been rumblings that HBO is acting like a monopoly and that perhaps the studios should give it some competition by set-

ting up pay companies of their own. But they continue to do business with pay companies because an average film sale in the pay market harvests around a million dollars. Some movies are more successful in pay than they were in theatrical release; Fuchs cites "Gable and Lombard," "W.C. Fields and Me" and "Lifeguard" as examples. "The expectations on TV are a bit lower," he explains.

The primary competition for the pay companies may come from the burgeoning market for movies on cassettes and discs. Both Paramount and Warner Bros., among other studios, have released films on cassettes and discs prior to releasing them to pay-television. They say they make more money per customer from home video than they do from the pay networks. And they fear that if films appear on pay-TV before they appear on cassettes, VCR owners will simply tape their own copies of the films. This would diminish the studios' take from the home-video market, and it could encourage the illegal sales of pirated versions taped from pay-TV.

**B**ut Fuchs discounts the talk of competition from the home-video market. "I don't think people are going to be collecting 200 movies a year, and I'm someone who collects movies," he says. "The LP didn't put the radio out of business. We are a big check right now to [the studios]. They're not going to do something that would upset the apple cart."

The commercial networks wouldn't mind if the pay apple cart were upset—they have begun to feel the effect of pay's consumption of movies. CBS Entertainment president Robert Daly says that "Oh God!" which scored a high rating for his network, "probably would have done better" if not for its prior pay-cable release. Former NBC Entertainment president Mike Weinblatt—now head of NBC Enterprises—says that heavy pay exposure of "King Kong" (the remake) and "Airport '77" cut into the ratings for those movies when they were shown on NBC.

As of now the networks don't buy as many films as the pay companies or the





local stations do—the networks' top priority is the prime-time series. But when a series fails, movies often are rushed in as shock troops. For one thing, they are not as risky as a new series—frequently they are known items, and each movie will play only one night anyway. Also, compared to series, movies are said to draw a younger, more urban audience—good tidings for advertisers. And more commercials can be fit into a movie than into a series episode since there is no need to pause for credits every half hour. It is at the networks, then—with their formidable resources, audiences and competition—that the stakes on individual movies are the highest: \$3-8 million is the normal range, but CBS paid \$35 million for the privilege of broadcasting "Gone with the Wind" over a 20-year period. Industry gossip says that ABC paid at least \$20 million for its current rights to "Jaws."

**L**ike the pay systems, however, the networks no longer lap up as many routine movies as they once did. The primary reason for this is the rise of the television movie, also known as the vidpic, the telefilm, the telefeature and the MFT (made for television). In the year from Sept. 4, 1978 to Sept. 2, 1979, the MFTs (including miniseries) scored an average rating of 18.9, while theatrical movies achieved an average rating of 16.6. The reliance of the networks on MFTs was never stronger: of 317 first-run movies appearing in prime time that year, 222 were made for television.

Studio executives have been known to grouse that the average MFT is more heavily promoted than the average network telecast of a theatrical movie, and that network censorship bureaus are more liberal with MFTs than they are with other films. CBS Entertainment vice president Steve Mills disagrees: "Standards are much more restrictive" with MFTs, he says. And he adds that theatricals don't need to be promoted as much as MFTs do, for theatrical films already are known to much of the public.

The key argument in favor of MFTs, as far as network accountants are concerned, is that they usually cost less to make (on average, \$1.5 million per fea-

CBS paid \$35 million for the privilege of broadcasting "Gone with the Wind" over a 20-year period. Industry gossip says that ABC paid at least \$20 million for its rights to "Jaws"

ture) than theatrical films cost simply to be licensed. Indeed, CBS's Robert Daly says that most major theatrical films shown on the networks are "loss leaders"—they don't bring in enough revenue to pay for their licensing fees, but rather they are considered to be worthwhile because they might very well boost the ratings of more profitable shows that surround their time slots.

Daly does not expect his fabled \$35 million "Gone with the Wind" deal to wind up as a loss leader. Assuming 20-year projections hold up, he says, "it was a very good business deal." Weinblatt, who let "Gone with the Wind" out of NBC's fold after it made its television premiere in the home of the peacock, questions that assessment. If a movie is to be revived periodically over 20 years, he says, it needs "kid appeal," à la "The Wizard of Oz"—"a whole new crop of kids" should want to see it for the first time. Weinblatt doubts "Gone with the Wind" has this necessary ingredient.

**S**ome whole species of movies are considered problematic for television. Musicals, for one, are approached with extreme caution by TV programmers; long production numbers do not admit commercials gracefully, and the genre doesn't do well in the ratings ("The Sound of Music" is a notable exception). Other lackluster categories in network eyes are science fiction and fantasy. "2001: A Space Odyssey" has appeared only once. Robert Daly, who turned it down, describes it as "a fabulous picture which would be diminished on the small screen." Even the legendary "Star Wars," for which a whopping

price is likely to be paid, is thought by some to be "too big" for television.

Network officials unanimously tsk-tsk the prices of the top theatrical features. "Staggering," says Daly. "Astronomical," says Weinblatt. However, Weinblatt adds that prices peaked in late 1978 and have slightly receded since then due to increased network resistance. The studios retort that high prices are partly a reflection of network selectivity: they now sell no more than two thirds of the movies they produce—so they need to cover the costs of their rejects.

One way of doing this is to sell movies in packages, in order to get rid of some of the less desirable material along with the hot items. For years the networks were willing to buy in packages, reasoning that the average price of a movie was lower when it was part of a package. But now the networks don't want or need the more marginal theatrical films; Weinblatt says he'll buy a package of four or five films, but "I'm not going to take clumps of movies I don't want."

**N**or are the networks anxious to pay more than they have to for movies they do want; and they sometimes can avoid the hefty price tags applied to hits through the practice of prebuying a film. In fact, "the whole concept was designed by us," says Daly of CBS. He also claims credit for introducing an "escalator" device into prebuy contracts, in which the network agrees to pay more money if a theatrical film turns out to be a hit. But Daly now thinks the escalator has escalated too far; he notes that if a movie is a hit, producers want more money, but "if it doesn't work, they don't send your check back."

However, many of CBS's coups and catastrophes in the prepurchase of movies have been relatively untouched by the escalator. The network got "The Amityville Horror" for a mere \$1,750,000, with no other strings attached. And "The Muppet Movie," even at a likely escalated price of \$4 million or more, will show a handsome profit. On the other side of the balance sheet are movies like "Butch and Sundance: The Early Days," for which CBS reportedly paid \$6.5 million; the film died at the box





office. There was no escalator, but Daly admits he would have preferred one.

Once a prebuy is signed, there is only one way for the network to get its money back if something goes wrong—that's if the movie can't pass review by the network's censorship department. This situation was graphically demonstrated last year at CBS, which had pre-bought "The Deer Hunter" but wound up returning it to Universal; the CBS censor ruled that the film's Russian roulette scenes were too violent to be seen and too integral to be cut. Usually, though, a way is found to get a film on the air—even if Burt Reynolds has to be recruited to change 31 lines, as he did for "Smokey and the Bandit."

Frequently it's not changed lines that bother a director. "Most directors can live with taking out a swear word or two, but to go to a dog-food commercial in a moment of high drama is another story," says Don Gold, a field representative of the Directors Guild. The outcry against commercial interruptions, heard from directors and viewers alike, is overstated, according to CBS's Daly. "When you're home watching television, unless it's 11:30 or 12 at night, you are interrupted regardless of the commercials. There are the kids, the telephone and people go to the refrigerator. That's why movie theaters will always be with us. They're quiet and there are no interruptions."

Daly is not the only network executive convinced that movie theaters have a future. Last year both CBS and ABC announced that they were going into the production of theatrical films. This move "poisoned the air," says a source at one of the studios, which don't relish the prospect of competition for air time from the same corporations that control access to it. But Daly denies that CBS-TV will necessarily broadcast the CBS-made films. (And, in fact, questions have been raised about the legality of the networks buying their own films.) He points out that CBS and ABC were in the theatrical-production field in the late Sixties and that "a lot of the CBS movies never played any network. Most of ours that were sold to network TV were sold to NBC. The key to this business is that you

"Most directors can live with taking out a swear word or two, but to go to a dog-food commercial in a moment of high drama is another story."

buy the best movies you can get."

Local television stations, on the other hand, buy as *many* movies as they can get. The result is a huge and lucrative market, in which there are nonetheless wide variations in the prices paid for individual movies—as high as \$150,000, as low as \$500—depending on the size of a station's audience. Randy Reiss, Paramount's head of domestic syndication, boasts: "I am where all the money comes from." But he, like his counterparts at the other studios, has no control over how the movies are edited at local stations throughout the country, where movies usually are carved up more for commercials than at the networks.

**N**ot all local stations are butchers, however. KTVU in San Francisco has a reputation for restrained editing, and KTLA in Los Angeles now runs most of its movies at their original length, having reduced the number of commercial interruptions from eight to two during its two-hour, prime-time telecasts. Ratings have since justified the action, reports KTLA, which has been keenly aware of the success of local subscription-TV stations, with their uncut, uninterrupted movies.

There is, of course, one type of local station that never interrupts its movies for commercials and seldom cuts them—the public-television station (although it may interrupt a film for fund-drive appeals). Within public-television circles, there is a history of opposition to the presentation of movies, primarily on the grounds that the public channels are supposed to offer an alternative to the fare on commercial channels. For years, some public stations would present

only imported movies. Other stations, however, began booking old American movies in an attempt to build audiences.

Now PBS programming vice president Chloe Aaron says she would like to see a regularly scheduled series of classics on PBS. She also indicated tentative interest in obtaining "The Deer Hunter" if all of the commercial networks ruled it unfit for broadcast. Generally, though, PBS couldn't compete for recent American films even if it chose to do so—PBS is a pauper compared with the commercial networks.

There is a school of thought that holds that TV is the worst place to see theatrical films. Though he makes his living telling other people about movies on television, Leonard Maltin—creator and editor of "TV Movies," a paperback compilation of information on some 12,000 movies shown on TV—is a leading professor of this school.

He is particularly disgruntled about commercial television's treatment of theatrical films. "At the base of it all is fraud," he says. "By the time they're done, it's not the same picture. They get around it by flashing an 'Edited for Television' slide on the screen. But if people are going to watch 'Coming Home' or 'Taxi Driver' on network television, maybe they deserve what they get."

Even when pay or public television presents uncut and uninterrupted movies, Maltin isn't satisfied. "Movies were not made to be seen on this little box," he maintains. "They were made to be seen on a large screen—and they were designed for the communal experience of a theater."

Shades of Major Lohr, in 1939. However, the video age may have as many surprises in store for Maltin as the television age did for Lohr. Perhaps someday we'll all have giant-size screens, and most movies will be photographed and composed for the home market, as today's television movies already are. Whatever happens, the May-September marriage of television and the movies—for all its *Sturm und Drang*—does not appear headed for the divorce courts. ■

# My Aunt's Antenna

Wherein a determined octogenarian and an equally determined satellite-dish salesman consider ways to fulfill the former's eternal quest for commercial-free television in Nauset Neck, involving the retrieval of certain signals emanating from a distant point

By JAMES MUNVES

What was I doing at Nauset Neck in Mattapoisett, Mass., on a windy Friday afternoon in late fall, conducting one Mr. Fred Hopengarten from his small green car to the brink of Buzzards Bay?

Basically I was there because, ever since I changed a fuse in her apartment, my Aunt Norma has been convinced I possess a store of arcane engineering savvy that, she was sure, would assist her in dealing with Mr. Hopengarten, who is president of a company named Channel One. Mr. Hopengarten had come down from Newton to discuss his company's installing a one-ton antenna on my aunt's premises. The antenna in question would be large and sensitive enough to grab out of the sky signals emanating from a point far far away, high over the Pacific Ocean.

Why was Aunt Norma going to such lengths to catch these remote signals? Because she was anxious to bring Home Box Office to Nauset Neck. Why did Aunt Norma care so much about HBO? Because her summer place is isolated and she can't stand house guests or—when she settles down in front of her television set with her cat—commercials.

Up until a few years ago, PBS, which comes to Mattapoisett over Boston's Channel 2, satisfied Aunt Norma's sum-

mer need for noncommercial television. (In winter she avoided commercials by watching PBS and pay-television in her Manhattan apartment.) Disenchantment set in, however, when PBS began its marathon solicitations of funds. "All those telephones ringing at once get on one's nerves," is how she puts it. Her short-fuse intolerance—which she admits probably is attributable to her age (82)—of multiple telephones and anything smacking of commercial interruptions even has affected her longtime viewing relationship with her old favorite, Walter Cronkite: "One minute Walter is describing Middle East peace negotiations; the next moment an agitated young man in a business suit is running high hurdles from a rented automobile. It's too distracting."

When I drove her up to Massachusetts last May, Aunt Norma had been happy at the prospect of having cable service extended to Nauset Neck, but she was foiled when Mr. Pitkin, a neighbor, refused to grant an easement across his cranberry bogs. At the time I had thought this just as well when I learned that extending the cable would have cost \$12,000. But I had since learned that Mr. Hopengarten's back-yard Earth station would cost even more: \$13,500 if a 10-foot antenna would suffice, and \$16,500 if a 16-footer was needed—plus \$500 worth of cement work for the antenna's base.

*James Munves is a contributor to The New Yorker and other magazines, and co-author of the book "The Kent State Coverup," to be published next month by Harper & Row.*

To help Aunt Norma, I had looked into the subject and found that the basic equipment needed to tune in to a satellite consisted of a "dish," or antenna; a low-noise amplifier to boost what the dish picked up; a receiver to sort out the different channels coming from the satellite; and a modulator to translate what the receiver got into something a TV set could cope with. Prices for the equipment ranged from \$6,000 to more than \$36,000—depending on the size of the dish, how much one could do for oneself, and what one expected to receive.

I had also learned that plans were afoot to strengthen satellite signals so that, five or 10 years from now, smaller, less expensive antennas would suffice for home satellite reception. Though this prospect of future technological improvement is perhaps irrelevant to the needs of an 82-year-old purchaser, it has not discouraged any number of much younger people from erecting bulky dishes in their yards: Ted





Turner, for instance, uses one to watch his Atlanta Braves from his South Carolina plantation.

**M**r. Hopengarten, a handsome, gaunt, bespectacled young man of 34, extracted a geological survey map of the area and a computer printout from his attache case, and then informed us that the computer had found two potential sources of interference: telephone-company microwave relays in Middleborough and Berkley. Fortunately, he said, neither would affect us because they were northwest of Nauset Neck, in back of where the dish would be aimed. "Now all we have to do," he said, "is see if we have a clear shot at the satellites."

The computer had calculated the direction from Nauset Neck to all 12 domestic communications satellites hovering over the equatorial Pacific like a row of unstrung beads from above the Galapagos Islands to points west. Standing at the verge of the sand, looking up at the vast sky while waves restlessly patted a multitude of rocks and black-backed gulls swooped and keened, Aunt Norma got right to the point. "Which one has HBO?" she asked.

Hopengarten replied that HBO came from RCA's Satcom I, the westernmost satellite. Pointing over the blue expanse of Buzzards Bay, he said that Satcom I was south by southwest of us, its bearing 252° and 10.4° above the horizon.

Turning, and holding what looked like an oversize cigarette lighter to his eye, he proclaimed the site unobstructed. "Those cedars are below 10.4°. Some people have to cut down trees, or at least lop off the tops. You're lucky."

"You're right in the middle of the poison ivy," Aunt Norma noted. "I hope you were careful."

I asked if the 10-foot dish would be sufficient. Patiently Mr. Hopengarten explained that the smaller size worked only in the Midwest, which is nearer the center of the satellites' beams. "You realize," he said, "you are getting much more than the equivalent of cable service. A service will pick up just three or four satellite channels. You'll be getting at least 18. Not only HBO, but Showtime and The Movie Channel, and both their East and West Coast feeds, which means twice the opportunities for seeing all those films and nightclub shows. Also, there are 6000 hours of spe-

cial children's programming, three religious networks and a multitude of sporting events from the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network and Madison Square Garden."

"I loathe spectator sports," Aunt Norma said.

"When Madison Square Garden isn't on, the same channel gives us the House of Representatives."

"At what hours?"

At this point, Mr. Hopengarten faltered. "I don't know."

"In the small hours of the morning," Aunt Norma said, "it might prove an excellent soporific."

"If you're awake real early," Hopengarten suggested, "superstation WGN-TV in Chicago will give you the early cattle quotations."

"With commercials?" Aunt Norma asked.

Hopengarten, sensing her disapproval, told her that by turning the antenna east and raising it, she could lock in on other satellites.

"Why would I want to do that?" Aunt Norma asked.

"To watch Mexican television, bullfights—"

"Bullfights!"

"And other Latin American cultural events," Hopengarten added hastily. "And, of course, the network prefeeds. The networks use the satellites as links between remote locations and headquarters. You might, for example, catch raw news footage planned for the evening-news shows. I also understand that NBC sometimes transmits the Johnny Carson show from Burbank to New York in an unedited version that includes what Johnny does to entertain the studio audience during the commercial breaks."

"That I'd like to see," Aunt Norma said. "How do I move the antenna?"

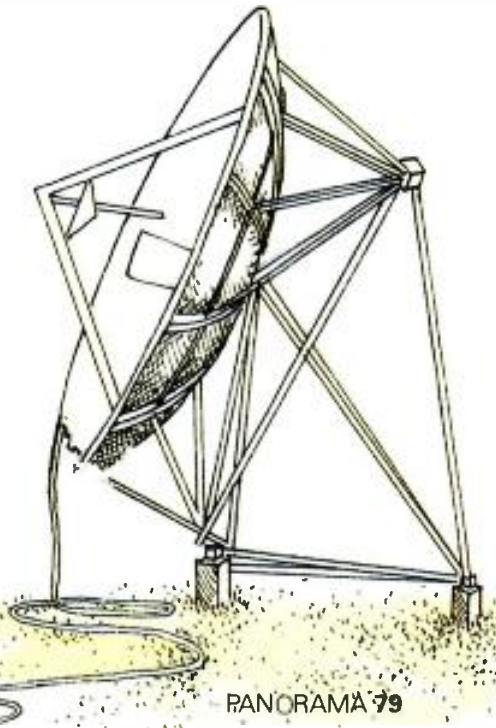
**H**opengarten explained that she would have to go out to the antenna, loosen it on its track, push it around to the desired position, twist the turnbuckles that raise the dish, then fiddle until she got a good picture—a series of maneuvers he thought she could manage after a little practice. He further recommended that when she was alone she take a portable television out on the lawn to watch the reception while making final adjustments.

It seemed to me that if Aunt Norma was going to be shifting satellites, she would be better off with the steerable antenna displayed in the Neiman-Marcus catalogue for \$36,500. "For that price," Hopengarten said, "I can give you push-button steering, too."

**I**t was the steering difficulty, I think, that made Aunt Norma hesitate. She was worried not so much that the forbidding turnbuckles would prevent her from catching unadulterated Johnny Carson, as that a technological breakthrough could make next year's antenna superior to this one in ways as yet unimagined. "It reminds me of the Oldsmobile your Uncle Stanley bought in 1938," Aunt Norma told me. "The next year they came out with Hydra-Matic. Since Uncle Stanley wouldn't trade in the 1938, I had to use a stick shift until after the war."

I personally think that the narrowness of Aunt Norma's interests argued against the purchase. Were she a baseball fan like my Uncle Stanley, the hundreds of additional games and programs from superstations might have helped justify the expense. (On the other hand, if she weren't so set against commercials, the 11 channels available in Nauset Neck without a cable would have satisfied her.)

In any event, when I last inquired as to her plans, Aunt Norma told me that she had decided she would probably be content with tapping in on just one satellite, after all. So what it was finally coming down to was spending \$17,000 for the 16-foot antenna (sans automatic steering) versus selling the Nauset Neck house and spending her remaining summers at a cable-equipped hotel in San Francisco. ■



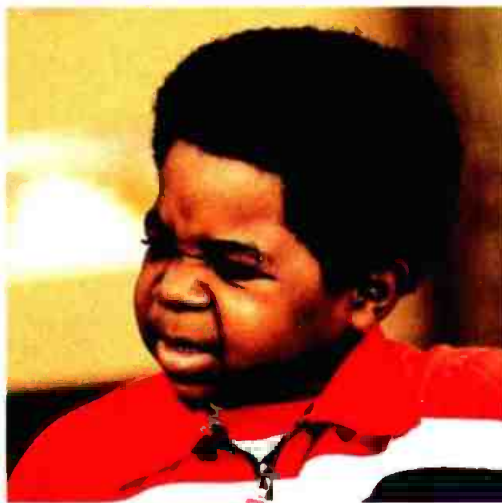
If you look behind the big mouth, big brain, big salary and big ratings, you find that Gary Coleman is...

# Just a Little Boy

As everyone knows by now, Gary Coleman of NBC's *Diff'rent Strokes* is *not* a midget; he is smart enough to trade one-liners even-up with Johnny Carson; he earns a five-figure salary each week; and he's the smallest TV superstar since Howdy Doody, whom he strongly resembles. Off the screen Gary is a mini-conglomerate: his Gary Coleman Productions has already turned out one vehicle for its namesake, last fall's highly rated TV-movie "The Kid from Left Field," and others are in the works. What we all tend to forget is that Gary is a 12-year-old child—with all the foibles and sometimes unpredictable behavior of the 12-year-olds we shelter under our own roofs.

As the photos on these pages show, Gary can be playful, reflective, devilish, cooperative, brash, lovable, and—especially when he's away from the studio—just plain boy. He is kept that way by his father Willie, a pharmaceuticals inspector who works in Illinois, and by his mother Sue, a former nurse, who is with her son at all times and who has been known to administer a spanking to The Star from time to time in The Star's own dressing room.

At 3 feet 10 inches, Gary is smaller than other boys his age because of three crippling kidney operations (including a transplant) that he had to undergo before he was 5 years old. His brain, however, has far outdistanced the growth of his body. Hence his noted precocity, which was constantly in evidence while we were with him on the set of *Diff'rent Strokes*. To director Herb Kenwith he said,







*The now-famous Coleman face is capable of more expressions than a dozen Muppets. It first captivated Chicago in a local bank commercial and later enchanted Fred Silverman and the rest of the U.S.A.*



"Hey, wait up for me!" he shouted. "I'm the star, you know."

"It's not my paranoia, but there's a fly buzzing around here and distracting me." To his on-the-set teacher, Louis Smallwood: "I want to draw a police car in school today, but you won't recognize it because it's undercover."

On the other hand, the little boy in Gary could not be submerged. He wrestled with the other kids in the cast; he kept hurling himself into the arms of the adults in order to be pinched and cuddled. He practiced tightrope-walking on the camera cables; he frequently had to go to the bathroom; he kept raiding the backstage refrigerator until director Kenwith ordered it padlocked. He also kept grabbing at the face of Conrad Bain, who plays Gary's dad on the show and who says, "My wife tells me this kid has become the grandchild I don't have." (Why was Gary so intent on Bain's countenance? "Because," he explained, "I want to see if it's brown underneath.")

The one thing that militates against Gary's being like all other 12-year-olds is the fact that he ranks near the top of Fred Silverman's band of ratings-grabbers at NBC. As befits a personage of such eminence, Gary already is surrounded by an entourage consisting of two lawyers, an agent and a firm of publicists. There was an indication of budding temperament tantrums when the entourage met at the Bel Air home of one of the lawyers, Harry Evans Sloan. As the group gathered for a meeting, Gary, who was occupied with scaling a jungle gym, registered indignation.

*Above: For a small boy, it is impossible to resist climbing a rope, even at the Bel Air home of his lawyer. Right, above: Gary spars with LaShana Dendy, who plays a girl who digs him but whom he hates (for Gary at 12, life imitates art); and Gary attempts a slam dunk but is approximately 7 feet too short. Right, below: Like any youngster, Gary falls asleep when bored, even during the rehearsal of a huge party scene for a Diff'rent Strokes episode; and Conrad Bain, who plays Gary's dad in the series, gets a patented Coleman nose-tweak. Far right: Gary heads for home with a "Star Wars" game his mother gave him.*







"Hey, wait up for me!" he shouted. "I'm the star, you know." Gary's mother was present as usual—and, as usual, a few sharp words from her were enough to remind her son of his status as an extremely minor minor.

To Gary's credit, he does not sulk after such reprimands from his mother. A handsome woman of solid educational background, Sue Coleman is so determined to avoid the pitfalls that have entrapped other stage mothers and stage children, she and her son live in a modest rented house in West Los Angeles rather than in the more luxurious surroundings they could well afford. She also immediately returns Gary to their home in Zion, Ill., whenever *Diff'rent Strokes* is not in production. She knows the strong paternal influence of her husband is needed.

But that afternoon at Harry Sloan's Bel Air estate, her influence was enough to dispel Gary's momentary thoughts of star power. He returned without protest to the wonders that a city-bred youngster discovers on his first day in a semitropical rural area. Chasing lizards, he exclaimed, "These are my first four lizards I've ever seen in my life!" He climbed ropes; he climbed trees; he shot baskets with his agent, Vic Perillo; he kicked a soccer ball around with his mother; he squealed with delight over gophers, red spiders, snails and other creatures he had never encountered before. An only child, he seemed perfectly content to invent games for himself in this wondrous new world.

Watching him was a high-ranking broadcasting executive, herself a mother. She had seen Gary at work but never before at play. "Why, he's just a little boy!" she said. Then, sadly: "If only the agents and the lawyers and the network people would remember that he is just a little boy." ■



# What Should Be the Mission of Public Television in the United States?

## 35 Prominent Americans Give Their Views

*Public television—its structure, its programming, its financing and its future—is currently the subject of a nationwide debate. The outcome of that debate will determine the shape of America's public-television system for years come.*

*PANORAMA asked a number of well-known Americans—from the arts, from industry and government, from academe and from the television world itself—to answer just one question: What should be the mission of public television in the United States? Not surprisingly, their responses constitute a lively debate on the system's goals and how best to attain them. Some of the replies have been slightly edited for considerations of space.*

**John Updike, novelist and poet:** To offer intelligent alternatives to the kind of pap being marketed on the commercial channels. To use the medium's curious mix of aesthetic intimacy and vast accessibility to project anew the classics—musical, theatrical, poetic—of our cultural heritage, and the heritage of others. To instruct as well as entertain.

**Barbara Jordan, former U.S. representative from Texas, now professor of public affairs at the University of Texas:** Public television should enlighten and stimulate the intellect of the viewer. It should serve as a forum for debate of

issues in the public arena. Public television should serve as the purveyor of culture. Intellectual and artistic activity judged to be unprofitable by commercial television should be within the purview of public television. Primarily, public television should give the viewer the opportunity to think as well as to see and to hear.

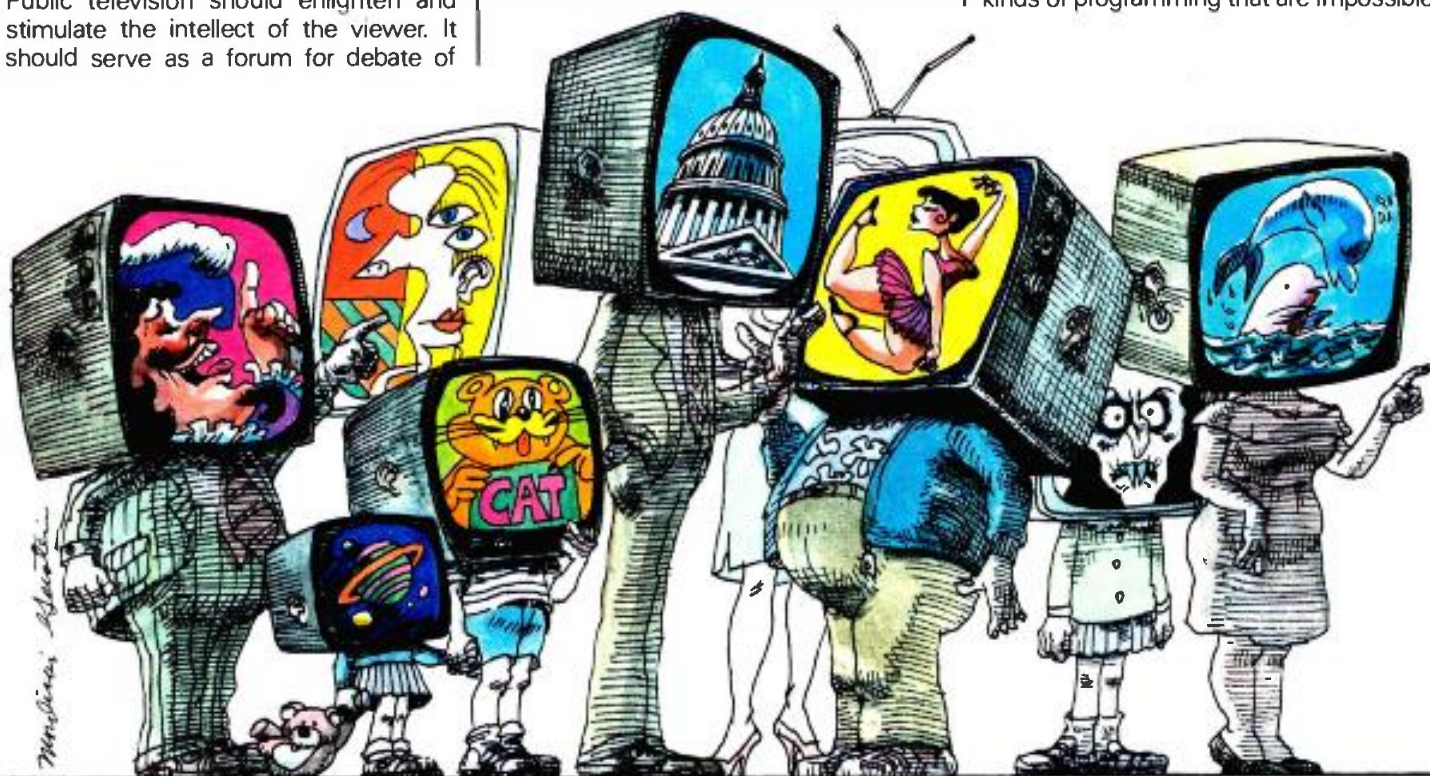
**Osborn Elliott, dean of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism:** To set standards of excellence in all areas, and thus to prove that there is an

audience "out there" thirsting for quality programming.

**Art Buchwald, humorist:** I have no idea how to improve public television. Since I live in Washington, the only way it can be improved is if they give us a VHF signal instead of the UHF one we have now. You have to be a safecracker to get the dial right for Channel 26 in the Nation's capital. Every time I see a show on PBS here, I wonder how public television can afford such an expensive cast; then I realize that I am seeing the same person twice in all the best scenes. My only other thought for improving public television is to turn the entire contract over to the BBC and let them do it for us at half the price.

**Marshall McLuhan, communications theorist, author and director of the Centre for Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto:** The big opportunity for public television is to alert the audience to the hidden factors in the service environments provided by the various media. For example, the natural effect of electronic speed is the reduction of the private individual to an extremely low profile. How this relates to the future of our educational and political establishments could be a theme for many programs. The person of low profile has no goals or objectives because he has no identity. While the banks are inflating the currency, the media are deflating the person.

**John Chancellor, anchorman, *NBC Nightly News*:** To provide alternative kinds of programming that are impossible





for the networks; to service some smaller groups, low-income and high-income, with programs which they would enjoy and find relevant; and to goad, through imaginative ideas and techniques, the big broadcasters to do better.

**Alan Alda, star of the television series *M\*A\*S\*H*, films and the theater:** It seems to me that public television ought to serve the minority audiences that have no clout in the commercial ratings system. These minority audiences include people interested in serious music, art, ballet, plays, non-mass-appeal films, science and politics. They include ethnic groups such as blacks, Hispanics, Armenians, Poles and all groups interested in exploring and defining their cultural background. And they include people who want to hear the case made by feminists, environmentalists, consumer advocates and others who question our present self-defeating arrangements. In short, public television ought to serve the people who want more out of life than giggles and giggles. So should commercial television, of course, but the networks are locked in a stranglehold of a self-inflicted full-Nielsen.

**Archibald MacLeish, poet and author:** This, with all respect, is the wrong question. The real national concern is not with the mission of public television but with the mission of all television. All television, commercial as well as public, uses the public "air" and is therefore affected with a public interest—subjected to a public obligation. The networks, which increasingly ignore that obligation, are no more free of it than the public stations which proudly accept it, and a question so worded that it seems to exempt the commercial giants from concerns of morality and mission prejudices the inquiry. It is quite true that the American people who used to rage against the vulgarization of the American air for profit have now apparently accepted the sad conclusion that the mission of commercial television is to make money. But the acceptance of a sordid proposition does not make it true, and my guess would be that unless commercial television develops a sense of a more honorable mission fairly soon, the American people will be heard from once again.

**Patrick Buchanan, syndicated columnist:** Public television's mission in life should be death with dignity, to "go gentle into that good night." The compulsory contributions of taxpayers should be sys-

tematically eliminated, as advancing technology—in cable, cassette, satellite and pay-TV—provides us with the variety and diversity in programming we do not today receive. A people saturated in "public affairs" should not be required to subsidize more of the same.

**Theodore Hesburgh, clergyman and president of the University of Notre Dame:** Public television in the United States should bring to the public those cultural and educational programs which will most likely never be seen on commercial television. Nothing less will make an impact on the vast wasteland.

**John Cheever, author:** The roles of public and commercial TV have come to seem to me as complex as the roles of gender. In commercial TV it seems to me one finds the singular brilliance of a competitive endeavor threatened with utter compromise by the exactions of merchandising. In public TV one finds an originality and an admirable seriousness threatened by the bureaucratic delays of most public organizations. They seem as inseparable as male and female and it is my considered opinion that, in this country today, they are quite successful at challenging and enriching one another as I think they were meant to do.

**Yehudi Menuhin, violinist:** To encourage a greater discernment in public taste; to satisfy the unending thirst for understanding the problems of our era, the problems—social, cultural, ecological—faced by all living species, including man; to further the service of man to man; to acquaint wider audiences with the greatest theater, opera, music and art of all civilizations; to teach the acquisition of skills; to encourage a positive approach to the future in terms of the responsibility we bear toward our children and the coming generations.

**Theodore H. White, author:** First, to report the activity of the United States Government and its agencies as fairly, fully and dramatically as possible. Second, to report and explain the impact of the Government on its citizens—particularly the activities, sweep and scope of the regulatory agencies, which I consider the hidden government. Third, to report and dramatize the history of the United States and its promises, with its roots, heroes, villains

and antecedents, in such a manner as to make American history exciting and give the viewers a thrill of pride in the American adventure. Fourth, insofar as funds permit, to explain, illuminate and dramatize the problems of local governments in each area of their responsibility. Fifth, and lastly, to give what help it can to the arts and what passes for culture, realizing that this zone is the danger zone, that public television must never become the arbiter of public taste, that all governments try to bribe or bend artists to their purpose, with either money or exposure.

**Henry Ford II, chairman of the board, Ford Motor Company:** Public television should be the consciousness—the looking glass—of the American people to an extent that commercial television is not and never can be. It should help us see ourselves better by reflecting all the rich diversity of our pluralistic society on both national and local levels. Liberated from the economic constraints that shape commercial television's mass-market programming, it should provide an exciting, creative alternative that ranges the entire spectrum of the American people's heterogeneous tastes and interests. It should be neither deliberately elitist nor blandly conventional, but free to explore original approaches to informing and entertaining widely varied audiences through as many outlets as they are willing to support. Finally, by budgeting generous amounts of air time to local and regional affairs, it should be an instrument for strengthening the sense of community so urgently needed in America today.

**Millicent Fenwick, U.S. representative from New Jersey:** In my view, public television provides an important alternative to commercial television. The programs are of higher quality, not only in terms of entertainment, but from an educational point of view—for example, the historical dramas. It also meets special needs—for example, one channel provides sign language for the deaf. Of course, the lack of commercial interruption is an additional pleasure. I hope it will continue to provide this kind of alternative to commercial TV.

**Joseph Wambaugh, author, former policeman and creator of the television series *Police Story*:** Keep televising the excellent series from Britain (*Duchess of Duke Street, Elizabeth R*, et al.), which commercial television generally hasn't the guts to present in prime time. *continued*

**William C. Westmoreland**, former chief of staff of the U.S. Army, now author, lecturer and business consultant: Public television should provide to the American people an opportunity to see and hear programs of an informative, educational and cultural character without the constant interruptive annoyance of silly and hard-sell commercials.

**Julia Child**, author and creator of public television's *The French Chef*: Commercial television has to appeal to a mass audience if it is to exist, but this necessity leaves a whole segment of our population culturally deprived for a large part of the time. I'm not particularly concerned with the well-educated and affluent, who can fend for themselves, but with those who live in isolated communities or environments and have few opportunities for self-education and limited access, if any, to cultural life. To fill this gap, public television should provide a continuous supply of the educational, inspirational, intellectual, experimental and even moral-uplift programming that commercial TV, by its very nature, is unable to offer.

**Gore Vidal**, author: A revival of live drama, written especially for television. A narrative history of the United States—*Roots* on a really grand scale—from the Revolution to, say, Kennedy. Free and ample time for *anyone* seeking office. This will be hard to supervise in a nation given to the honoring of those who advertise themselves, but the nuts can be neutralized and, meanwhile, other voices will be heard in the land. All politicians should be questioned in depth, something beyond the competence of our anchor-men but not too difficult a task for a knowledgeable historian or journalist or critic.

**Joyce Carol Oates**, novelist: Since commercial television, like most commercial ventures in the United States, is primarily concerned with entertaining the public on a fairly simple and unimaginative level, public television should have as its goals both *entertainment* and *education*. It should provide us with material that is "difficult"—so that we, as the audience, are constantly stretching the boundaries of what we already know. It should not only be fearless about presenting controversial programs, but actively seek them out. (I happen to think that public television has been doing a good-to-excellent job, in fact, along these lines.)

**Will Durant**, historian: To make education interesting, and to make entertainment intelligent.

**Norman Vincent Peale**, clergyman and author: Since the early days of my childhood in Ohio, I have always felt that the greatness of America is in its "grass roots." And public television is indeed close to the heartbeat of America. Public television since its inception has established the highest standards of programming in drama, music and public affairs. In expanding its mission in future years, I would like to hear more from the individual stations, each of which has opportunity for local drama, concerts, cultural events, as well as a "grass-roots" reaction to the great issues of our time in the form of local debates and forums.

**Annie Dillard**, author, columnist and visiting professor of English at Wesleyan University: Public television should continue to inform and perform. It should not engage in local controversy. It should examine in detail the issues and histories of all the materials in all the sciences. It should make available to every citizen the products of high culture in all the arts.

**Henry Steele Commager**, historian and professor of American history at Amherst College: It is arresting that while in the realm of education we support *public* education far more generously than private, when it comes to television we have (in contrast to almost every European nation) trusted the private sector to do the job. I think the role of public television should be pretty much what the role of private higher education is in our dual system. It should provide competition at the highest levels: it should do what commercial television either cannot or will not do. The model here is, to my mind, the BBC—the best television system in the world and one which has enjoyed immunity from political or other extraneous interference. It seems to me inevitable that sooner or later Congress will sponsor public television as intelligently as it has, in the past decade, sponsored the arts, science, and so forth, and that it will do this because the public interest is thereby best served.

**Sada Thompson**, star of the ABC series *Family*: It should reflect the best of American minds and imaginations—as well as

the lore of the world. It should be the yardstick by which commercial television can measure its contributions. As just another network it would be a sorry loss. It should continue to dare, to think and to grow.

**Michael DeBakey**, surgeon and chancellor of the Baylor College of Medicine: The mission of public television in the United States should be intellectual and cultural—to provide information and entertainment in the public interest. In addition to programs on historical as well as significant current events and on vital social, ethical, scientific and political issues, public television should provide entertainment in the form of programs of fine classical, semiclassical and modern music, dance, art and drama.

**Frank Borman**, president of Eastern Airlines and former astronaut: I have been impressed when public television provided live, extensive coverage of governmental activities, such as state-legislature debates on key issues. It may be argued that such programming does not compete well against commercially sponsored fare. But I feel it would draw larger audiences as time progressed, and would certainly pull viewers from among the influential segments of our society. In any respect, it should never be the objective of public television to "compete" with private outlets. Public television, in my opinion, should deal in good part with public matters.

**James Michener**, author: Public television should provide every major outlet area in the United States with an 0800-2400 program of diverse programs that might not find an outlet on commercial stations. This includes news, comment, sports, drama, music, special features and whatever the bright young women and men of our Nation can devise. Public television should be financed partly by public taxation, partly by a fee charged against every commercial network and individual station. Salaries should be kept low and every effort should be made to attract imaginative producers and directors and writers. A crucial feature should be that on four weeks' notice any commercial network would be able to take over any program developed by public television, providing it kept the major characteristics of that program intact, but not necessarily all of them. And this adoption or preemption should be available without fee being paid by the commercial net-



work to public television. In the same way, commercial networks should be able to hire on four weeks' notice any producer, director, writer or performing artist without paying any fee to public television, again providing that the contribution of the person should be reasonably protected and extended. Thus public television would become a constant source for the germination of new ideas, which, once they proved commercially viable, could be lifted entirely. I am convinced that there is enough young talent in this country to keep the pipelines filled with great ideas.

**Karen DeCrow, lawyer, author and former president of the National Organization for Women:** As an active feminist I look to public television for a function it has yet to fulfill—that of portraying both women and men as human beings, rather than as stereotypes. If we are to educate our sons and daughters as full persons, certainly the media are a more important (pervasive) teacher than all the schoolrooms in America.

**Arthur Miller, playwright:** The mission of public television ought to be to make the medium a free and liberal means of artistic expression by American writers, actors, dancers, musicians, etc., with as little interference as is possible. There is enormous talent in this country waiting to be sparked into life and the strictures of television at present kill most of it. Free up

the medium and it will be exciting and automatically educational.

**Dean Rusk, former Secretary of State and now professor of international law at the University of Georgia:** Public television can play a very important part in education, including "lifelong learning," and can let us see some of the vast context of normality from which we can derive some elements of the hope and confidence on which a democratic political system and a free-enterprise economic system crucially depend. It would be a great mistake, in my view, for public television to try to become competitive with the commercial networks and become infected with the standards which the commercial networks apparently use.

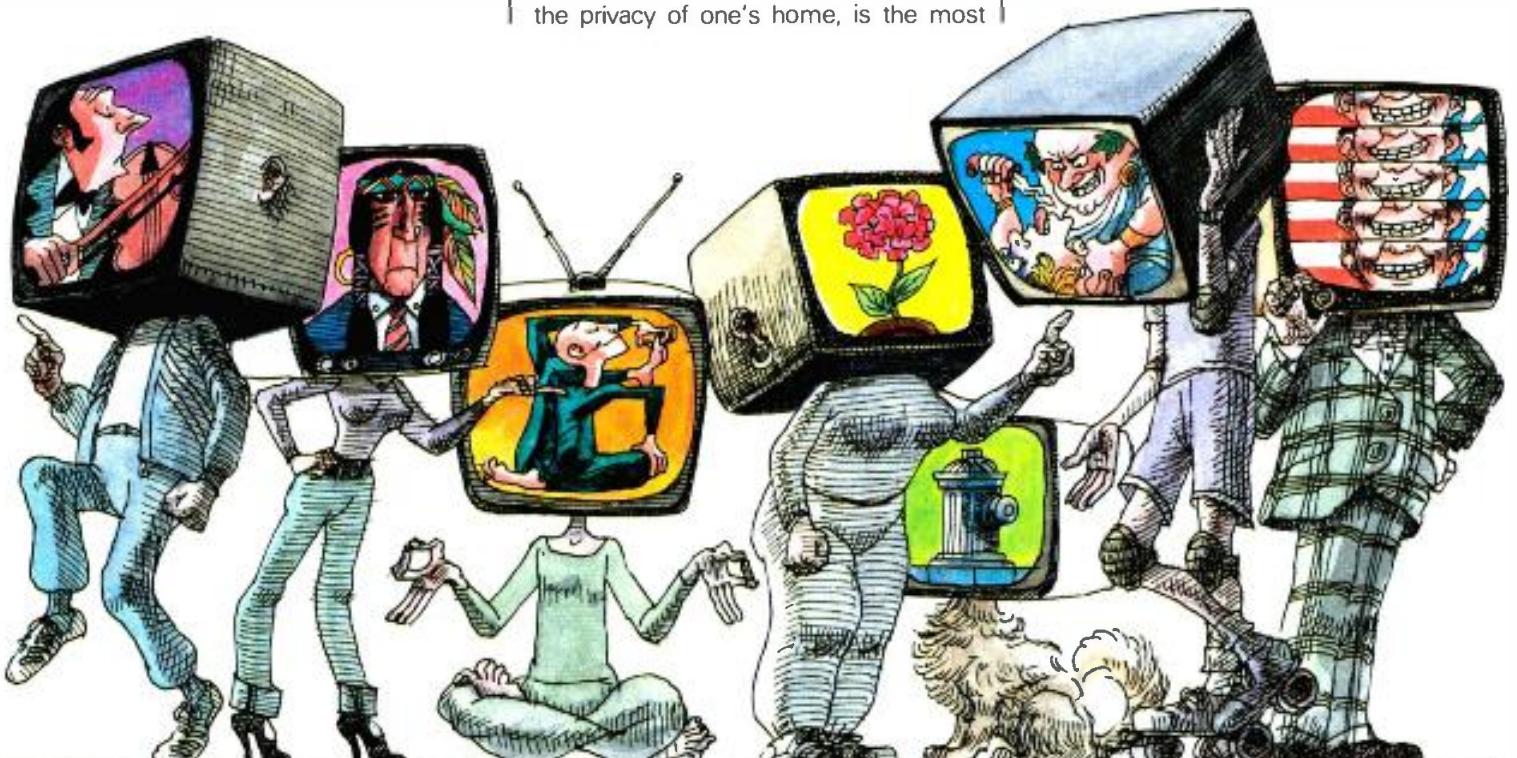
**Joseph Papp, theatrical producer:** To attract, entertain and educate a popular audience for quality programs indigenous to the United States. To cultivate and develop native cultural resources for television. To protect the right of free and independent views on major issues facing the Nation. To raise the level of TV technology.

**S. I. Hayakawa, educator, author, semanticist and U.S. senator from California:** Public television is a wonderful instrument of communication, perhaps more effective than any in the history of the world. All television is educational. Public-television programs tell us something about how the real world shapes our expectations and hopes. The message of public television, with words reinforced by music and pictures and action, received in the privacy of one's home, is the most

powerful and effective communication ever let loose on the world. Television affects millions of families day after day, night after night, every day of the year. Public television allows us access to documentaries and programs that are not available to us through other means and is appreciated by millions all over the country.

**Cyra McFadden, author and television writer:** I suppose to do more of what it does best now—provide alternative programming for that share of the audience that finds little of interest in commercial television and objects to commercials. As a writer, I'd of course like to see public television do more original scripts and adapt more novels and short stories by talented people who'd love to work in the medium and reach a larger audience without having to write scripts for *Laverne & Shirley*. I'd also welcome more good public-television news. But if all this is too ambitious, how about a weekly rerun of "Casablanca"?

**Lawrence Grossman, president of the Public Broadcasting Service:** The mission of public television was expressed by Knowledge in a 15th-century morality play: "Everyman, I will go with thee and be thy guide, In thy most need to go by thy side." Public television educates, informs and entertains. Its goal is to pursue excellence, to serve as a model for all broadcasting and to bring to Everyman the very best that civilization has to offer. ■



# How To Watch a Two-Hour Movie in Eight Minutes

By DAVID LACHENBRUCH



In the beginning, the videocassette recorder, or VCR, was a godsend to the selective viewer. He or she could eliminate schedule conflicts and watch two top prime-time programs broadcast at the same hour during sweeps week merely by taping one of them for viewing later when nothing special was on. Or choose to watch yesterday's late-night movie tonight. Or today's talk show tomorrow.

But what about the nonselective viewer—the person who just wants to watch *everything*? Well, the VCR has come to his rescue, too. With a new generation of recorders, the indiscriminate now can watch three full days of programming—from *Sunrise Semester* to *Sermonette*—in a single evening of prime time. Yes, television's version of speed writing, a new gadget called "visual fast-forward," can cram 52.5 hours of programming into a single three-and-a-half-hour video orgy—although it may not necessarily improve comprehension. More to the point, this feature does have some perfectly sensible uses. It allows the viewer, selective or otherwise, to sprint through commercials (or any other recorded segments) with muted sound. And it enables him readily to locate a particular portion of a taped program that he wants to view again or show to someone else. These feats are not possible with older models.

The first competitive feature of VCRs was playing time, which escalated from one to six hours per cassette (a European recorder now boasts eight hours). Since there are very few six- or eight-hour shows on television, the VCR manufacturers soon started looking around for other ways to attract buyers—and came up with the *tricky VCR*. The first tentative step in this direction was taken by Japan Victor Corporation (JVC) almost two years ago, with a recorder that could play back cassettes in double time. After that, the race was on, and new-model VCRs now offer such features as triple-time playback, stop-motion and slow-motion, in addition to visible fast-forward and visible

reverse. (Most of these new features can be operated directly from your comfy viewing chair via remote control, so you don't have to waste valuable time jumping up to push the proper buttons.)

The visible fast-forward feature is what makes it possible to view a two-hour movie in eight minutes, or the Super Bowl in 12. First introduced by Sony under the name of "Betascan," it lets you view any tape 13 times faster than it was recorded (on machines costing \$1250, or \$1350 for a programmable recorder). Living night and day with Betascan, if you started from the day of your birth, you theoretically could squeeze 910 years of vicarious living into your three-score-and-ten.

But, naturally, that wasn't the end of it. Mitsubishi now gives you just a little more than Sony, letting you watch 1050 years' worth in the same theoretical 70-year life span, thanks to a recorder that plays at 15 times normal speed (priced at \$1350). Presumably, "Mitsubishiscan" didn't quite have the proper ring to it, so the manufacturer calls this feature Speed-Scan.

As we said, visible fast-forward *does* have an important use, which is rarely mentioned in the ads: it's the only precise way to skim through commercials in programs you've recorded off the air. Standard recorders always have had fast-forward and fast-rewind controls, but since they didn't show the picture while you were using them, trying to do away with a commercial on a tape was a matter of trial and error—mostly the latter. The normal procedure was to push the fast-forward button when the screen went to black for a commercial break—but you never knew how long to push. As a result, on your first try you didn't fast-forward long enough and the picture came on again right in the middle of a fascinating scenario about a headache remedy. So you pushed it again, but this time you overshot, past the ads and into the program ("But, Monsieur Poirot, how did you know that the chambermaid . . .?"). So you put it on rewind, and—*voilà!*—you're

back in headache country.

Using the visible fast-forward, you can zip through three minutes of commercials in less than 14 seconds (hardly as long as it takes to say "twiceasmuchofthe-principalingredientasbutterImperialwhen-yousayBudweiseryou'vesaidyou're-ingoodhandswithwashdayproduct"), but, of course, with no sound at all. As soon as you see the end of the last commercial flash by, you simply click the remote control and pick up the program again—at the right spot and the right speed.

Visible fast-forward and reverse have many additional uses. The escalation of recording time up to six hours per cassette does make video recording extremely economical, if you cram the six-hour cassette full of programs. Programmable VCRs—those that can be set in advance to record several programs—have an automatic indexing feature, which locates the start of each show recorded. But the nonprogrammable types don't have this, so visible fast-forward and reverse are particularly valuable for skimming through the tape in either direction to locate quickly and easily the start of any program, or any segment of a show.

An aside: this particular function makes it possible for the tricky VCRs to cater to strictly prurient interest by showing programs as the directors never intended them to be seen. One of the most popular prerecorded cassette movies is the original feature-film version of "M\*A\*S\*H," which included a split-second view of Hot Lips Houlihan in the altogether as the walls of her shower tent fell away—far too short a glimpse for any true aesthetic appreciation of the human form. Now, with stop-motion, that single frame of the movie can be held as long as desired (long enough to find out if Hot Lips really was naked in that scene—I won't spoil the suspense by telling you).

So now you, too, can conquer the time warp. In fact, if you have access to *three* VCRs (or two recorder-equipped friends willing to pool their tapes with yours), you can see all three networks' prime-time programming in less than an hour. If you have only one VCR, and no friends, you'll have to be content with a single network's programming for three nights to fill up that same hour, but that's a minor inconvenience if you want to play the new type of video one-upmanship. You've got a lot to live, baby, at 15 times real time. ■



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

continued from page 8

fenseless countries or the culture of the secret police." The head of the BBC's educational programs replied: "Had we been able to read the future, I doubt if we would have chosen this particular time to launch the series, but programs like this are not made overnight."

The Corporation had labored for three years on this project, with the cooperation of Soviet television, one of whose announcers, Tatyana Vedeneeva, presents the new series.

While the language course survived the onslaughts of its critics, another BBC miniseries—six travelogues that were shot in the USSR last year—was pulled out of the schedule. Explained one of the producers: "Our programs show the soft face of Russia. The world at the moment is confronted by the hard face. We think viewers will enjoy the programs more when the Afghan situation is not dominating people's thoughts."

*Sound of silence.* *Hollywood*, a 13-part documentary miniseries on Thames TV, is leading many viewers to revise their conceptions of the silent-movie era. If until now they have imagined a solitary piano player tinkling away in the darkness of those early theaters while the melodrama unfolded above him, they have been surprised to learn that Theda Bara and Lillian Gish were often accompanied by a 100-piece orchestra.

And *Hollywood* has also astonished them with its revelation of the quality of the movies themselves. Producers Kevin Brownlow and David Gill spent four years and \$2.25 million hunting down the finest prints and processing them on a special "telecine" machine that converts the usual staccato rhythm of the frames to an almost modern glissando. Says Brownlow: "For the first time in years, the films are being seen as the makers intended."

The miniseries, which has already been purchased by 40 U.S. stations (and 55 other

countries), is narrated by James Mason, and includes one of the last interviews ever given by John Wayne.

*Downstairs, upstairs.* Last year's 11-week strike of commercial-TV technicians, which blacked out all programming except the BBC's, has spawned an unexpected result: a baby boom. The British Medical Association says that the country's birthrate in 1980 will be 2.5 percent higher than in 1979, and partly attributes the increase to the absence of a major British diversion during those long autumn evenings. A BMA spokesman said matter-of-factly: "People went to bed early and made love." He omitted to explain why their thoughts didn't turn to the BBC.

*Video printout.* Britain is forging ahead with videotext, the technology that brings stock quotations and news summaries to the home screen at the touch of a button. Although the specially adapted TV sets are still selling slowly (around 100,000 anticipated by the end of the year), the BBC has recently announced that its Ceefax videotext system will soon offer a remarkable extra—a hard-copy printer that will transfer the electronically displayed information called up by subscribers to the permanence of print.

Are first editions of Ceefax weather reports, sports results and vegetable prices about to join the memorabilia of the Eighties?

## TOKYO

John Fujii reporting

*Over to Okinawa.* Far-flung areas of Japan that were formerly out of range of broadcast television signals have been enjoying excellent reception in the last three years, thanks to an experiment in satellite direct-to-home broadcasting. The Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) has demonstrated that a satellite can meet the needs of remote communities such as those of the islands in the Okinawa archipelago, at the south-

ernmost tip of the country.

But islanders may soon be plunged back into the primordial electronic darkness from which they so recently emerged. The establishment of a permanent satellite service would require massive funding from the Japanese government, and it is by no means certain that the money will be forthcoming. If the government does give the go-ahead, the half-million prospective viewers served by the satellite will have to dip into their pockets too: the cost of a receiving dish and an adapter for the TV set will be around 100,000 yen, or \$425.

*Quiz biz.* A writer in a Japanese magazine recently opined that TV quiz shows proliferate in periods of recession. If he is right, Japan must be receding fast. The six Tokyo television channels are currently offering 24 quiz programs—one channel

alone, Tokyo Broadcasting, has eleven.

The most popular of these shows, with a 37.4-percent rating, is *Quiz Derby*, in which competitors place bets on the likelihood of celebrity panelists correctly answering questions in various subject categories. The panel is mixed in its expertise—it might include a pop singer, an actor, an athlete and a university professor—so skillful betting calls for judgment as well as reckless optimism. But the rewards are paltry by the standards of, say, *\$100,000 Name That Tune*. Rarely does any competitor go home with more than \$200—and most have to content themselves with much smaller winnings.

Perhaps this explains the strange fascination of such shows when times are hard: it is comforting to know that others, too, are underpaid.

## VIDEOCASSETTES

## NEW RELEASES

## MOVIES

*Catch-22* (1970)—Caustic humor and an all-star cast stud director Mike Nichols' version of Joseph Heller's best-selling novel about a U.S. Air Force base in the Mediterranean during World War II. Alan Arkin, Martin Balsam, Richard Benjamin, Arthur Garfunkel, Bob Newhart, Anthony Perkins, Martin Sheen, Jon Voight, Orson Welles, Paula Prentiss, Buck Henry. (Paramount Pictures; \$59.95) (R)

*Hustle* (1976)—Burt Reynolds and Catherine Deneuve play uneasy lovers in this tale of urban crime and corruption surrounding the investigation of an apparent suicide. With Ben Johnson, Paul Winfield, Eileen Brennan, Eddie Albert and Ernest Borgnine. (Paramount Pictures; \$59.95) (R)

*Life of Brian* (1979)—The Monty Python group's irreverent comedy about a reluctant messiah whose impact was de-

cidely less than that of his contemporary, Jesus Christ. Graham Chapman, Terry Jones, Eric Idle, Terry Gilliam, Michael Palin, John Cleese. (WCI Home Video; \$55) (R)

*Lipstick* (1976)—Margaux Hemingway made her film debut in this story of a rape victim who turns to vigilante justice. With Chris Sarandon, Anne Bancroft and Mariel Hemingway. (Paramount Pictures; \$59.95) (R)



Barbra Streisand

*The Main Event* (1979)—Barbra Streisand's newest comedy

# THIS MONTH

about a feisty female executive who finds herself managing a reluctant boxer (Ryan O'Neal). (WCI Home Video; \$60) (PG)

**Murder by Decree (1979)**—Sherlock Holmes vs. Jack the Ripper, in a sometimes violent adventure story. Christopher Plummer, Donald Sutherland, Genevieve Bujold, John Gielgud, Susan Clark. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$54.95) (PG)

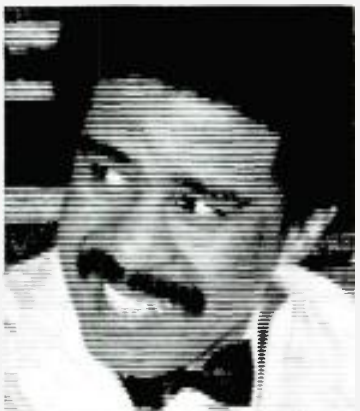
**The Omen (1976)**—Gregory Peck and Lee Remick are the unsuspecting parents of a satanic child in this chilling melodrama. With David Warner and Billie Whitelaw. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$54.95) (R)



Zero Mostel

**The Producers (1968)**—Director/writer Mel Brooks won an Oscar for this wild farce about a producer (Zero Mostel) and an accountant (Gene Wilder) who plot a sure Broadway flop to swindle the investors. With Dick Shawn, Christopher Hewitt and Renee Taylor. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$54.95)

**Silver Streak (1976)**—Gene Wilder and Jill Clayburgh find ro-



Richard Pryor

mance and adventure aboard a Los Angeles-to-Chicago luxury train in this slapstick suspense thriller. With Richard Pryor and Ned Beatty. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$54.95) (PG)

**A Star Is Born (1976)**—Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson star in an updated version of this familiar Hollywood story of ill-fated love. With Gary Busey. (WCI Home Video; \$65) (R)

**Sunburn (1979)**—An insurance investigator is thrust into the midst of international intrigue and high-class gang warfare in scenic Acapulco. Charles Grodin, Farrah Fawcett. (Paramount Pictures; \$59.95) (PG)



Bo Derek

**"10" (1979)**—Adult comedy about a middle-aged man (Dudley Moore) chasing the perfect woman, featuring the Eighties' first sex symbol, Bo Derek. (WCI Home Video; \$65) (R)

**The Warriors (1979)**—An attempt by a charismatic youth to unite all New York City gangs into one powerful army turns into a citywide rampage. Michael Beck, Thomas Waites, Dorsey Wright. (Paramount Pictures; \$59.95) (R)

*The following films, released by Allied Artists Video Corp. (at \$59.95 each), all star Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes and Nigel Bruce as the ever-faithful Dr. Watson.*

**The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (1939)**—The detective

uncovers plans for a large jewel theft. With Ida Lupino.

**Dressed to Kill (1946)**—In Basil Rathbone's last Holmes vehicle, he tries to recover engraving plates stolen from the Bank of England.



Basil Rathbone

**The Hound of the Baskervilles (1939)**—When an heir (Richard Greene) is marked for death, Holmes is called in to solve the mystery. With John Carradine.

**The House of Fear (1945)**—Holmes investigates the activities of a murder club.

**The Pearl of Death (1944)**—Holmes disguises himself as a clergyman to protect a valuable gem.

**Pursuit to Algiers (1945)**—When the king of a European country is murdered, Holmes undertakes to see the heir to the throne home safely.

**The Scarlet Claw (1944)**—In Canada, Holmes investigates a murder supposedly committed by a marsh monster.

**The Secret Weapon (1942)**—Holmes tries to protect the inventor of a secret bomb from enemy agents.

**Sherlock Holmes Faces Death (1943)**—Holmes is called in when several unusual murders take place on an estate.

**Sherlock Holmes in Washington (1943)**—A matchbook cover concealing a microfilmed document passes in and out of enemy agents' hands.

**The Spider Woman (1944)**—

Holmes suspects that a murder ring, led by a woman, is at work when a wave of suicides hits London.

**Terror by Night (1946)**—The story of jewel snatchers out to nab a fabulous diamond.

**The Voice of Terror (1942)**—A mysterious Nazi radio broadcast terrorizes the English populace with threats of destruction.

**The Woman in Green (1945)**—The master sleuth on the trail of a maniacal killer of young girls.

Some movie descriptions courtesy of TV Guide magazine. Ratings (G, PG, R and X) are those assigned by the Motion Picture Association of America for theatrical showings.

## SPECIALS

**All-Star Tour of Japan**—Film of last year's major-league baseball all-star team competing in Japan. (VidAmerica; prices to be announced)

**The Best Defense**—A one-hour sailing documentary about the 1977 America's Cup, won by the yacht captained by Ted Turner. (Sports World Cinema; \$62)

**Cockaboo**—Four prize-winning children's shorts. (VidAmerica; prices to be announced)

**Comedy Tonight**—An hour-long compilation of routines performed by members of the Chicago Hysterical Society. (Video Tape Network; \$49.95)

**The Funnier Side of Eastern Canada** with Steve Martin—Produced in 1974, before Steve Martin became a household word, this program features the comic and his bag of gags in an offbeat travelogue of Eastern Canada. (Video Tape Network; \$54.95)

**Kiel Olympiad**—Highlights of sailing competition at the 1972



Olympic Games. (Sports World Cinema; \$62)

Kingston Olympiad—Film of the international sailing races at the 1976 Olympic Games. (Sports World Cinema; \$62)

The Kinks—One of rock and roll's most durable groups, recorded live in Providence, R.I., last fall. (Time Life Video Club; \$34.95)

Money Madness—Profile of rock star Eddie Money, filmed in and out of concert. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$44.95)

Reckon with the Wind and Kialoa to Jamaica—Two 30-minute programs (on one cassette) that feature sailing races in

Miami and Maui. (Sports World Cinema; \$62)

Rich Little and the Great Pretenders—The king of impressionists presents a group of young aspirants to his crown; originally shot on location in Las Vegas and presented as an HBO special last summer. (Time Life Video Club; \$29.95)

Scruggs—A tribute to the banjo virtuoso, featuring Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Earl Scruggs himself. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$44.95)

Video Fashion Quarterly—Charter issue of the fashion magazine on videotape, illustrating styles of the Eighties. (Time Life Video Club; \$29.95)

BOOKS

A listing of some of the recently published books dealing with television

Donahue, by Phil Donahue and Company. (Simon and Schuster; \$11.95)—Donahue's autobiography deals with both his personal and his professional life.

The First Freedom: The Tumultuous History of Free Speech in America, by Nat Hentoff. (Delacorte; \$9.95)—An examination of the evolution of the First Amendment as it applies to the media and other forms of expression.

Gadney's Guide to 1800 Inter-

national Contests, Festivals & Grants, by Alan Gadney. (Festival Publications; \$15.95 soft-bound, \$21.95 hardbound)—A new reference directory for people in film, video, audio, photography, broadcasting, poetry, playwriting, publishing, advertising and journalism.

The Networks: How They Stole the Show, by A. Frank Reel. (Charles Scribner's Sons; \$8.95)—The former president of the Metromedia station group blames television's ills on the

BESTSELLERS

This list of the Top 20 prerecorded videocassettes is based on sales figures from a survey of retail outlets around the country.

1. Saturday Night Fever (1977)—John Travolta stars as a hip-wiggling dancing champ in a Brooklyn disco. (Paramount Pictures; \$59.95)

2. The Godfather (1972)—Francis Ford Coppola's gangster epic about the rise and near-fall of the Corleones. (Paramount Pictures; \$79.95)



"Superman" Christopher Reeve

3. Superman (1978)—A super-budget film starring the special effects. (WCI Home Video; \$65)

4. The Godfather, Part II (1974)—More tales of the Corleone family. (Paramount Pictures; \$79.95)

5. M\*A\*S\*H (1970)—Robert Altman's antiwar farce that was turned into a TV series. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$54.95)

6. Debbie Does Dallas (1978)—Rated X. (VCX; \$99.50)

7. Enter the Dragon (1973)—Bruce Lee's last film. (WCI Home Video; \$50)

8. The Towering Inferno (1974)—Flames engulf the world's tallest building. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$74.95)

9. Deep Throat (1972)—Rated X. (Arrow Film & Video; \$99.50)

10. Patton (1970)—George C. Scott's Oscar-winning performance as Gen. George Patton. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$74.95)

11. The Sound of Music (1965)—Julie Andrews in one of the most popular musicals of all time. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$74.95)

12. Sex World (1978)—Rated X. (TVX; \$79)

13. The Mr. Bill Show (1978)—Selected segments from the popular Saturday Night Live feature. (Video Tape Network; \$39.95)

14. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969)—Newman-Redford Western about two bank robbers on the run. (Magnetic Video Corp.; \$54.95)

15. Flesh Gordon (1974)—Rated X. (Media Home Entertainment; \$54.95)

16. Blazing Saddles (1974)—Mel Brooks' parody of Hollywood Westerns. (WCI Home Video; \$55)

17. Murder on the Orient Express (1974)—Agatha Christie's classic thriller, with an all-star cast. (Paramount Pictures; \$79.95)

18. Looking for Mr. Goodbar (1977)—Diane Keaton as a woman caught in New York's singles-bar subculture. (Paramount Pictures; \$79.95)

19. Chinatown (1974)—Murder, corruption and Jack Nicholson in 1930s Los Angeles. (Paramount Pictures; \$79.95)

20. The Exorcist (1973)—From the best-selling novel about a child possessed by demons. (WCI Home Video; \$60)

Retail outlets participating in our survey include:

A V Enterprises, Los Angeles; Associated Video, Houston; Audio Center, Honolulu; Beta Home Entertainment Club, Las Vegas; Brenda's Movie House, Philadelphia; Columbia Video Systems, Highland Park, Ill.; Concord Video Center, Stamford, Conn.; Conlon Service, Litchfield, Ill.; Cyclops Video, Sherman Oaks, Cal.; Discotronics, Inc., Cranbury, N.J.; Enchantment Video, Albuquerque, N.M.; Future World Video, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Godwin Radio, Inc./Godwin Video Centers, Birmingham, Ala.; Home Entertainment Emporium, Manhattan Beach, Cal.; Lantzen Beach Magnavox Home Entertainment Center, Portland, Ore.; Kaleidoscope Video Shops, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Media Associates, Mountain View, Cal.; Media Concepts, Inc., St. Petersburg, Fla.; Barney Miller's Inc., Lexington, Ky.; Modern Communications, St. Louis; Newbury TV & Appliances, New

Bedford, Mass.; Northern Lights Video, Pacific Grove, Cal.; Precision TV and Video, Bellwood, Ill.; Record Rendezvous, Cleveland; Recycle Light and Sound, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Red Fox, Elizabethville, Pa.; Select Film Library, New York; Self's Electronic Entertainment Center, Clovis, N.M.; The Sheik Video Corp., Metairie, La.; Stansbury Stereo, Baltimore; Televideo Systems, Richmond, Va.; Thomas Film Video, Royal Oak, Mich.; Valas TV, Denver; Video Audio Electronics, Williamsport, Pa.; Video Cassette, Phoenix, Ariz.; Video Cassettes, Etc., Lubbock, Texas; The Video Connection, Toledo, Ohio; Video Corp. of America, Edison, N.J.; Video Dimensions, New York; Video Industries of America, Council Bluffs, Iowa; Video Library, Bala Cynwyd, Pa.; Video Library, Torrance, Cal.; Video Mart, San Bernardino, Cal.; Video Services, Towson, Md.; Videospace, Bellevue, Wash.; Video Specialties, Houston; The Video Store, Gretna, La.; Video 2000, San Diego; Wizard of Vid, Beverly Hills.

"monopolistic" practices of the three networks.

**Show People**, by Kenneth Tynan. (Simon and Schuster; \$11.95) — The British drama critic profiles Johnny Carson, Mel Brooks, Ralph Richardson, Tom Stoppard and silent-film star Louise Brooks.

**Thirty Seconds**, by Michael J. Arlen. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux; \$8.95) — The New Yorker's TV critic details the making of the 30-second commercial.

### New in Paperback

**The Complete Encyclopedia of Television Programs 1947-79**, by Vincent Terrace. (A. S. Barnes; \$10.95) — Descriptions, casts and credits of all TV series.

**The Golden Turkey Awards: Nominees and Winners—The Worst Achievements in Hollywood History**, by Harry and Michael Medved. (Perigee/Putnam; \$6.95) — The authors pick the all-time losers.

**TV Guide: The First 25 Years**, edited by Jay S. Harris. (New American Library; \$8.95) — A cross section of articles from the television magazine, plus photos and covers highlighting the past 25 years.

## PASSAGES



### MARRIED

Actor **Steve McQueen** ("Bullitt," "Papillon" and the TV series

*Wanted—Dead or Alive*) and model Barbara Minty.

### SIGNED

Sportscaster **Merle Harmon**, to a multiyear contract with NBC Sports; Harmon will handle the play-by-play for NFL football, in addition to announcing NBC's college basketball Big 10 games and regional telecasts of the network's *Major League Baseball Game of the Week*.

**Mike Douglas**, by Syndicast Services, Inc., of New York, which will distribute Douglas's new talk show as of July 1, the date John Davidson takes over Douglas's slot on his former show.



CBS News correspondent **Dan Rather**, to succeed Walter Cronkite as anchorman and managing editor of the *CBS Evening News*. Rather will take over when Cronkite voluntarily leaves the post early in 1981.

### APPOINTED

**Cy Leslie**, founder of Pickwick International (the world's largest record rack-jobber), as president of the newly created Video Enterprises Division of CBS, which will manufacture and market video software for both tape and disc formats.

**Jim Heyworth**, to the position of president and chief operating officer of Home Box Office, succeeding N. J. Nicholas Jr., who continues as chairman and chief executive officer.

### ASSIGNED

**Art Kent**, NBC News' bureau

chief in Pittsburgh, as a correspondent in the Tel Aviv bureau of NBC News, covering the Middle East.

**Peter Kent**, former correspondent for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, as a correspondent for NBC News, based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

### HONORED

**Alan Alda** and **Meryl Streep**, with *Pudding Pops*, as the Hasty Pudding Club's 1980 Man and Woman of the Year, at Harvard University.



NBC sportscaster **Dick Enberg**, as the National Sportscaster of the Year for 1979, by the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association, which had previously honored Enberg as California's Sportscaster of the Year four times.

**James D. Parker**, staff consultant, telecommunications, engineering and development, CBS, with the 1980 Engineering Achievement Award, from the National Association of Broadcasters. Parker retires this month after 43 years with the network.

### ENSHRINED

In the Smithsonian Institution, the Fonz's original black leather jacket, worn by Henry Winkler in the series *Happy Days*. The relic takes its place of honor in the Museum of History and Technology alongside Archie and Edith Bunker's living-room chairs

(plus table, ashtray and empty beer can) and the furniture from the Kennedy/Nixon and Ford/Carter debates.

### DIED

*Love of Life*, television's second oldest serial (*Search for Tomorrow* began three weeks earlier), at the advanced age of 28, of a ratings collapse attributed to a new 4 P.M. time slot, on CBS. Among the survivors: former cast members Warren Beatty, Marsha Mason, Anne Jackson and Peter Falk.



**Jimmy Durante**, 86, one of America's best-loved comedians on stage, screen and television (*Texaco Star Theatre*, *The Jimmy Durante Show*, *Jimmy Durante Presents The Lennon Sisters Hour*).

**Arnold Rosen**, 58, Emmy-winning TV comedy writer and producer of *The Carol Burnett Show*, who also won three Emmys for best comedy writing on *The Phil Silvers Show*.

**Jack Bailey**, 72, former host of *Truth or Consequences* and *Queen for a Day*.

Screenwriter **James Poe**, 58, past president of the Writers Guild, Screen Branch, and winner of an Oscar for "Around the World in 80 Days" (which he coauthored), as well as Oscar nominations for "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," "They Shoot Horses, Don't They?" and "Lilies of the Field." Poe's television credits include "The Gathering," "Enola Gay" (to be seen next season) and scripts for *Playhouse 90*.

Prominent TV actor **David Janssen**, 49, best-known for his four-year search for the mysterious "one-armed man" on *The Fugitive*. Janssen also starred in three other series, including *Harry O*, and numerous TV and theatrical films ("The Shoes of the Fisherman," TV's "A Sensitive, Passionate Man").





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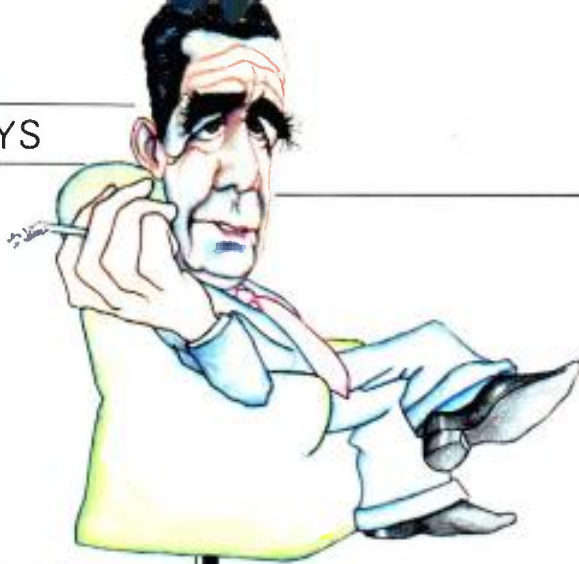
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tomorrow  
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## YESTERDAYS



Edward R. Murrow

### 25 Years Ago: April 1955

Jimmy Carter is on television. He's the lightweight champion of the world, facing Orlando Zulueta on the Wednesday-night fights.... On *Person to Person*, Edward R. Murrow visits Marlon Brando, who shows viewers his seashell collection.... An A-bomb test is televised live from Yucca Flat, Nev.... "Davy Crockett, Indian Fighter" is rerun on *Disneyland*.... April is loaded with live adaptations of stage classics—Kaufman and Ferber's "Stage Door" (adapted by Gore Vidal), Robert E. Sherwood's "Reunion in Vienna" (starring Greer Garson), Jerome Kern's "Roberta" (with Gordon MacRae) and Franz Lehár's "The Merry Widow"—as well as original dramas by Calder Willingham, Sumner Locke Elliott, Rod Serling and Horton Foote.... *Omnibus* stages a 90-minute version of the "Iliad."... The star of a live *Appointment with Adventure* episode is Paul Newman.... Another little-known actor, James Arness, is signed to do a new Western series that will be called *Gun-smoke*.... Ralph Edwards is rehired for five more years of *This Is Your Life*.... The Syracuse Nats (with Dolph Schayes) and the Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons (with

George Yardley) battle for the NBA championship.... Dagmar (portrayed by future feminist Robin Morgan) graduates from grammar school on *Mama*.... The *Today* show is on location in Detroit, where Dave Garroway tours a Packard-Studebaker plant and reports on a new electronic concept known as automation.

### 10 Years Ago: April 1970

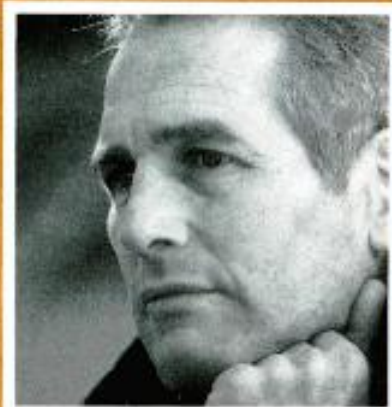
On April 17, viewers watch anxiously as the crippled Apollo 13 is brought safely back to Earth after its unsuccessful lunar-landing mission.... "Pollution," "environment" and "ecology" become common nouns this month as newscasts and documentaries report on Earth Day, April 22.... The Academy Awards are telecast, and John Wayne wins his first (and only) Oscar for "True Grit."... Weekly variety shows are in their network-TV heyday. Everybody's got one: Dean Martin, Carol Burnett, Andy Williams, Jim Nabors, Lawrence Welk, Tim Conway, Glen Campbell, Johnny Cash, Tom Jones and Engelbert Humperdinck. And then there are *Laugh-In*, *Hee Haw*, *The Kraft Music Hall* and a series improbably titled *Jimmy Durante Presents the Lennon Sisters*

*Hour*.... Raquel Welch does a special, with John Wayne and Bob Hope as guests.... Motorola and CBS unveil a color EVR (Electronic Video Recording) "tele-player" that can feed a 25-minute color film into your home TV set, for \$795.

### 5 Years Ago: April 1975

The rerun season is upon us. The wedding episode is repeated on *Rhoda*, as is Walter's heart attack on *Maude*, and a *M\*A\*S\*H* show set entirely in the operating room (with the laugh track eliminated).... On *The Waltons*, Jim-Bob's guinea pig dies.... Baretta, McCloud, Harry O, Hawaii Five-O and Petrocelli are all battling "the syndicate." Kojak nails a cop killer, Mannix a contract killer, Cannon a vice ring and S.W.A.T. a Middle Eastern terrorist. A pilot movie for yet another prospective crime series, *Starsky & Hutch*, is telecast.... NBC does a documentary on handgun control, and other network-news specials deal with Indochina, the IRS, lawyers, IQ tests and "Rabin and Sadat—Peace or War?"... An episode of a six-part miniseries, *Carl Sandburg's Lincoln* (starring Hal Holbrook), is shown, and a three-parter, *QB VII*, is rerun.... A docudrama, "I Will Fight No More Forever," tells the story of Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Indians.... Jimmy Connors beats John Newcombe in a \$250,000 tennis match that later will get CBS into hot water with the FCC for misrepresenting it as a "winner-take-all" contest.... As the networks begin revealing their new-series plans for next fall, one intriguing prospect is a live weekly ABC variety hour starring Howard Cosell. ■

## COMING UP IN PANORAMA



Isaac Asimov Writes About J.R.R. Tolkien

Should You Buy a Video Camera?

*Beulah Land*: The Making of a Miniseries in Mississippi

Behind the Scenes with Paul Newman As He Directs a TV Drama

One Vote Against New TV Technology, by John Leonard

How Bizarre Can Game Shows Get?

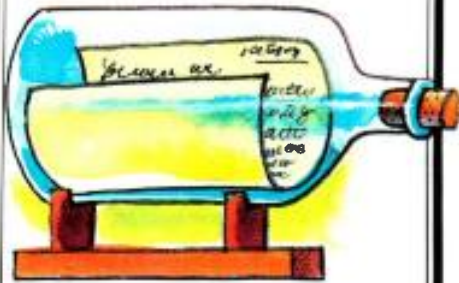
Television's Impact on Family Life, by Dr. Dorothy Singer

Satellites: How They Are Changing Our Viewing Habits

Red Smith Talks About the Politicizing of the Olympics



LETTERS



PANORAMA welcomes comments—pro or con—about topics covered in our magazine and about television in general. Readers are invited to address their letters to: Letters Department, PANORAMA, Box 950, Wayne, Pa. 19087.

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### Andy Machak tells Bill Cosby: "A CPR-trained guard brought me back from the dead."

**Andy Machak:**  
"Luckily, a guy with Red Cross CPR training works where I do. A security guard Don Guarino. He saved my life, no foolin'!"

I'd checked tin-plating lines a hundred times before, but that day was different. A boom came around from behind and pinned me to a T-bar... lifted me right off my feet."



**Bill Cosby:**  
"That's a big ouch."  
**Andy Machak:**  
"Last thing I remember was trying to find a kill switch..."

Three days later—in the hospital—Don told me it took six guys to get me down; somebody said *no pulse or breathing*, and Don remembers saying, "I gotta try anyway!"

**Bill Cosby:**  
"Sounds like you had them worried!"

**Andy Machak:**  
"Well, I was clinically dead. Can't

believe it myself, Bill. But thanks to Don's CPR training, I'm alive... thanks to Red Cross, I'm alive."

**Bill Cosby:**  
"CPR training can make the difference between life and death. Take it from Andy Machak. Help keep Red Cross ready."



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# REAR VIEW

By HARRY STEIN

Once a Nerd ...



Throughout my entire public-school career, there was one kid in every class whose family did not have a television set. "OK, boys and girls," Mrs. McGill would announce, "special homework this weekend. I want you to watch *Mr. Wizard*." And that one hand would shoot up. "What if we don't have a TV?"

There was, of course, a terrible poignancy to this. Life without television? Not even knowing what Rod Serling looked like? Never hearing the words "indescribably delicious"? One might as well have simply overdosed on Mallomars and kissed the world goodbye.

But at the age of 10, I didn't know from poignancy and I didn't care—for the fact is, most of the kids I knew who didn't have television were nerds. Other kids might have been dopes or crybabies—but at least you could settle down with them over a glass of milk for a lively discussion of *Highway Patrol*. The other kids, the ones without TV, were hopeless.

Their nerdiness was, above all, a matter of arrogance. These kids would actually profess *pride* that they spent no time before what they would unfailingly refer to as "the idiot box." They would assert they were more mature than the rest of us, and brighter. By the age of 11, they would let it be known that during the hours we had sat staring, they had polished off the complete works of Dickens.

Of course, the kids were not entirely to blame, being by definition the offspring of older nerds, the kind of people who read magazines like *Commentary*.

The principal nerd of my youth was a girl named Amy Morantz. In our 12th year, Amy Morantz actually had the audacity to attack *Leave It to Beaver*. "How dumb can you get?" she asked a group of us one afternoon at the playground. "I saw a little bit

of that program at Janie Cayle's house. It's sooo irrelevant."

We looked at each other in confusion. "Irrelevant," said Amy condescendingly, "means stupid."

"Stupid!" Allen Turner was incensed. "Beaver Cleaver is stupid? Ward Cleaver is stupid?" He began edging toward her, fists clenched. "*Miss Landers* is stupid?"

Three of us reluctantly held him back, while Amy skipped haughtily away.

For years I thought back on Amy Morantz with the special loathing one reserves for the truly smug. Then, just recently, at a large dinner party, I looked down the table and, to my astonishment, there she was.

She caught my eye and smiled. "Harry! My God, how long has it been?"

I smiled back. "Do I know you?"

"Naturally you do. I'm Amy Morantz."

I slapped my forehead. "Of course. What'd you think of the latest issue of *Commentary*?"

"Oh, I no longer read that. It's become quite irrelevant. I much prefer *The New York Review of Books*. It's more incisive."

Sure enough, for the next hour it was like back in fourth grade, with Amy dominating the talk around the table with an ease that was positively revolting. She shepherded the conversation from the stock market to the Supreme Court and then over to England for some observations on Galsworthy.

It was at this juncture that the person beside me, a fellow who had been sitting in a silence nearly as glum as my own, abruptly perked up. "Wait a minute, isn't that the guy who did *The Forsyte Saga*?"

Amy regarded him as though he were an insect. "Galsworthy? Naturally he did."

"I loved that! I saw every episode."

"Me too," cut in someone else.

"So did I," said a third.

And suddenly the table was alive with chatter—about the relationship between Soames and Annette, and between Jo and Irene, and whether or not, in sum, *The Forsyte Saga* was better than *Upstairs, Downstairs*.

"For my money," said the woman across from me, opening her mouth for the first time, "*Rich Man, Poor Man* was better than any of that PBS stuff."

"That's Irwin Shaw, isn't it?" injected Amy hopefully.

"Nah," snapped the guy beside me, "It was Nick Nolte." He paused and studied the woman across the table. "Are you talking about Part 1 or Part 2?"

"Part 1. Part 2 was junk. I was crazy about Ed Asner as the boys' father at the very beginning."

"Uh-uh," spoke up our hostess. "For me it's impossible to see Ed Asner as anyone but Mary Richards' boss."

"Well, for me," responded someone else, "Mary Tyler Moore will never be anyone but Laura Petrie. Call me conservative, but that's how I feel."

Several voices rose in accord and others in rebuttal.

I glanced over at Amy. "Hey," I said, "I have an idea. Why don't we go around the table and everyone name his favorite show from that era?"

And so around the table we went. The original *Disneyland* was mentioned and *Playhouse 90*, and *Love That Bob*. And then it was Amy Morantz's turn.

"Well, Amy..."

"I'm thinking, if you don't mind." She cleared her throat. "Actually, I very much liked that program with that Beaver boy."

"Leave It to Beaver?"

"Who was your favorite character, Amy?" I asked.

She blanched. "My favorite character?"

"Yeah. Was it June Cleaver, or Miss Landers, or Lumpy Rutherford's father, or who?"

"Oh, without a doubt it was Miss Landers."

"Miss Landers?" The woman across the table looked at her in astonishment. "How about the Beaver?"

The fellow beside me cut in indignantly. "How about Eddie Haskell?"

But he didn't wait for an answer. "Miss Landers!" he said with undisguised scorn. "That is the stupidest thing I ever heard in my life!"



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