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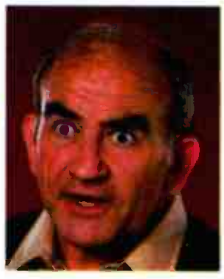

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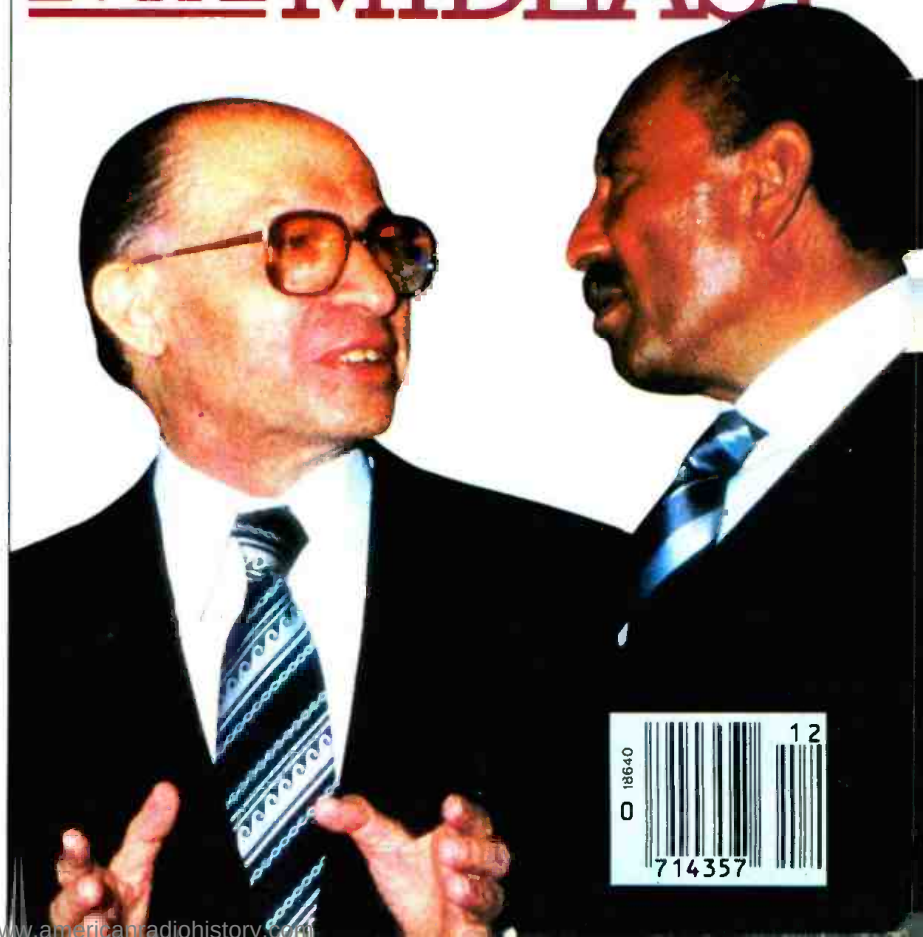

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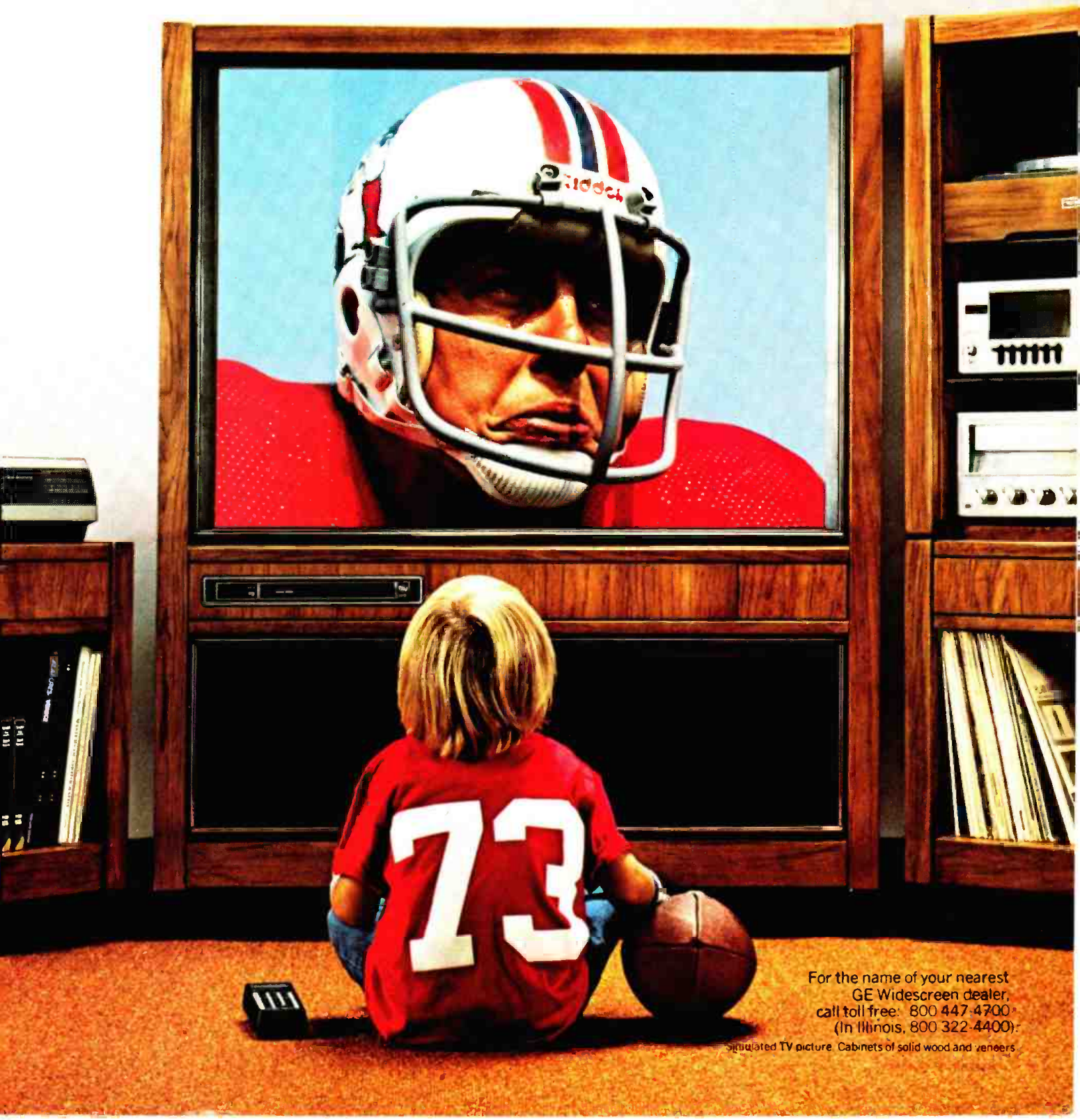

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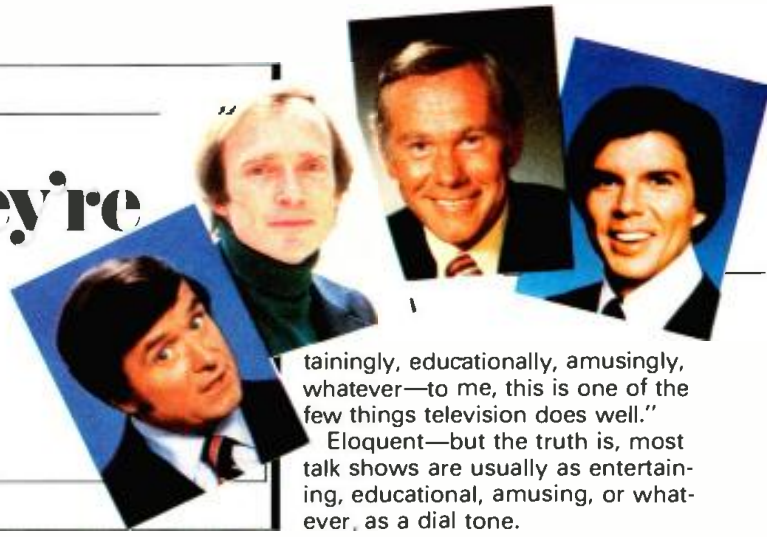
IMPRESSIONS

Talk Shows: They're as Stimulating as a Dial Tone



By CYRA McFADDEN

Talk shows always remind me of Sartre's play "No Exit," in which three people, trapped in a room for eternity, can't do anything but talk at each other. Now, in metropolitan areas with a wide variety of TV channels, a modified version of that existential hell is possible. Set your mind to it, and you can watch talk shows almost around the clock.

I know, because I tried it and fell short of a record for indiscriminate talk-show watching only because I conked out half an hour into the *Tomorrow* show—not soon enough. All the marathon took was adroit dial-switching, the willingness to watch reruns and a strong stomach. Commercials on daytime talk shows puff the merits of cakes made of synthetic whipped cream and instant pudding.

Yet another talk-show commercial suggests one "let a Bundt cake do the talking." Not bad advice if the only alternative is Mr. Blackwell—who turns up on such shows constantly, like a recurring nightmare—or Annette Funicello. Ms. Funicello was John Davidson's guest the day of my Sartrean experiment. After a little numbing chitchat, she dubbed him an "Honorary Mouseketeer." Davidson, who has a low thrill threshold, was ecstatic, although for some reason Ms. Funicello awarded him only the ears and not the tail.

The Mike Douglas Show wasn't much of an improvement. Like Davidson, and talk-show hosts in general, Douglas is a bland, perennially boyish performer.

I sat back and listened to the pitter-patter of little voices. "Exercise is the dullest form of . . . ." Douglas trailed off in mid-insight.

"Isn't it?" said guest Jayne Kennedy brightly.

Kennedy, a raving beauty, next complained that her chin is too long. Douglas: "You don't have a long chin." Kennedy: "Oh, yes, I do; I have a *very* long chin." And so it went, enlivened only by a remark destined for the Sexist Hall of Fame. Another guest was country-and-western singer Tom T. Hall, the host of his own new syndicated talk show. "How do you talk to a whole group of musicians?" he asked Douglas.

Douglas said it was best to find out who did the talking for the group and direct questions to that individual. "If there are girls in the group," he added helpfully, "you have to say 'spokesperson'."

On Phil Donahue's show, an unusually deferential Donahue played host to Isaac Stern. "Forgive me . . . if I may?" the violinist said firmly, when Donahue interrupted in mid-sentence. Then he went on talking about a life dedicated to music. "It's so right, so clean and all-encompassing," said Stern about Bach, and for a moment, the talk on a talk show was worth hearing.

Not for long. Johnny Carson that night, in rerun, opened with Johnny as "Floyd R. Turbo, American," a sketch that was unfit for human consumption. There were sexual allusions, toilet jokes and a line appearing in my notes that time has mercifully dimmed. I can't remember the context in which Carson/Turbo said, "This raises the question: kiss my test tubes."

In an interview some months ago, Dick Cavett, regarded as the best and the brightest of the talk-show hosts, defended the form. "To see an accomplished person on television, in a small picture where you feel intimate with them—talking well, entertainingly, educationally, amusingly, whatever—to me, this is one of the few things television does well."

Eloquent—but the truth is, most talk shows are usually as entertaining, educational, amusing, or whatever, as a dial tone.

A lonely—and ill-fated—exception was *The David Letterman Show*. Mixed up but entertaining, Letterman's morning hour was a hybrid: it parodied the talk-show genre, then turned around and conformed to its hoariest conventions. At his best doing comedy, Letterman even looked like a parody of a talk-show host. He'd overgrown "boyish," but somehow suggested the kind of boy who might decide to set fire to your cat.

He worried about social problems: "Where are the future bag ladies of America coming from?" He told authors straightforwardly he hadn't read their books. He joked about his show's lowly status on the talk-show ladder. "Guests on this show must have a blood type, an astrological sign and their own transportation."

Letterman also conducted regulation interviews; introduced his band, the "David Letterman Symphony Orchestra"; and narrated "Coffee Cup Theatre." A favorite of the studio audience, this was a sequence of film clips from old movies, chosen for their total meaninglessness.

Originally an hour and a half long, the *Monty Python* of talk shows was soon cut to an hour and, in the Bay Area, further amputated. The local NBC affiliate cut it to a half hour and replaced it with a game show.

It was a cliffhanger. Would David Letterman find his audience? Would he continue to provide useful household hints, such as "A sedated pet makes a good centerpiece"? Was John Davidson somehow responsible for booking Letterman's guests?

I kept my fingers crossed that Letterman would hang on, but crossed fingers were not enough. The show was canceled. A shame. Crazy and mixed up as his show was, it beat letting a Bundt cake do the talking.

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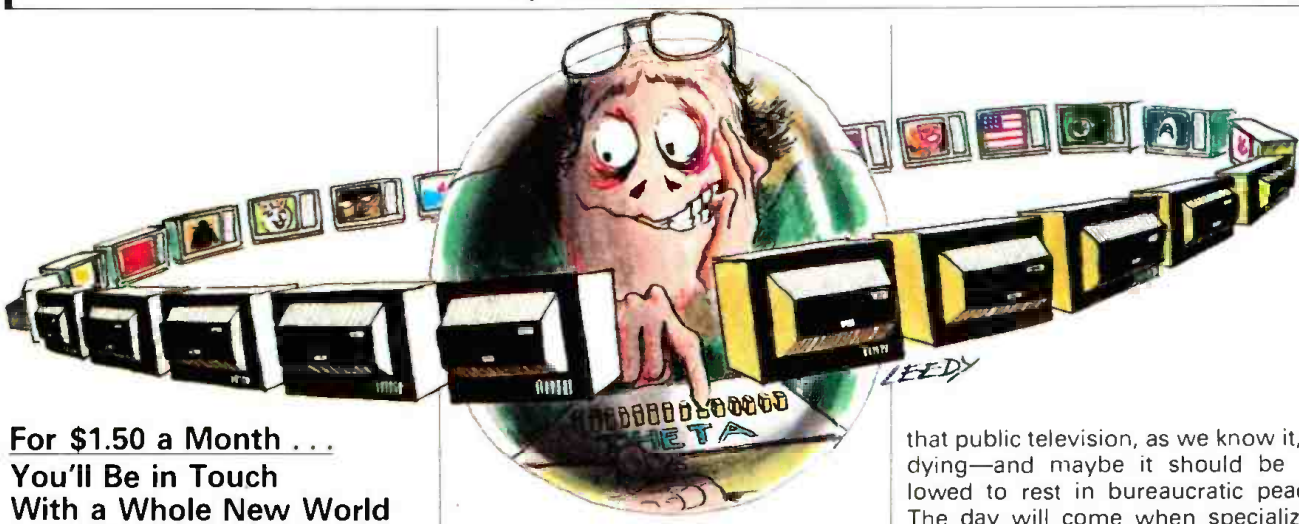
PERSPECTIVE

By RICHARD REEVES



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I have seen the future and it costs $1.50 a month. That's what it costs me to be hooked into the 29-channel Theta Cable system that serves 100,000 homes in the Los Angeles area. With Theta, you can sit at home at eleven o'clock on a Tuesday morning and watch: Phil Donahue or *Family Feud*; five movies in English or Spanish; the UPI news wire or the stock ticker from the New York Stock Exchange; live coverage of police demonstrating in Detroit; Montreal versus Toronto in the Canadian Football League; instructions on observing the Jewish High Holy Days or in American history from Santa Monica College; Jane Russell in an old appearance in New York or *Green Acres* and *Maverick* being shown in Atlanta; a shopper's guide showing that Del Monte peach halves are selling for 59 cents at Safeway but 49 cents at Gemco; a city council voting on local street repair; or Rep. James J. Florio of New Jersey advocating increased railroad aid on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Seeing Congressional debate each day on Channel H was the reason I decided to spring for the buck-fifty—that's in addition to the $8 a month you have to pay Theta to see any television where the Santa Monica mountains are inconsiderate enough to be between your house and VHF television transmitters. You can also pay another $10.95 a month for Theta's Z channel, which sometimes shows first-run movies. But who needs Z or Los Angeles's ON-TV channel—a pay-television channel that features even more new movies, plus sports? Your children can turn into zombies with just 29 channels.

Playing with the box, with buttons marked from 2 to 13 and A to Q, has done more to convince me of what's coming in television than all the Wall Street Journal reports about Time Inc., General Electric, American Express and Times Mirror investing hundreds of millions of dollars in cable's future.

What's coming, inevitably, if perhaps more slowly than some investors think, is a new kind of television—and a new kind of journalism and a new version of an old kind of American politics.

Television, obviously, is never going to be the same. The networks—CBS, NBC and ABC—I think will still dominate the American audience. They have the money, the experience and the talent to continue providing the most popular mass entertainment and, for the foreseeable future, they will continue to have the only technical capability to reach all of the Nation at the same time. But there will almost certainly be demographic markets served by more specialized channels. The medium will be the way magazines are today. In the simplest terms, Budweiser will be advertising on ABC, some California white wines will be advertising on an all-news channel, and exclusive wine shops will be pushing good Bordeaux on a channel that carries the Metropolitan Opera and the American Ballet Theater.

Speaking of culture, I have a feeling that public television, as we know it, is dying—and maybe it should be allowed to rest in bureaucratic peace. The day will come when specialized channels will be able to outbid public broadcasting for *Masterpiece Theatre*. Other outlets will be filled with controversial local political and governmental programming—more than the Public Broadcasting Service now provides. What will be left for public TV then except what sometimes seem to be its major functions—meetings, expensive lunches, hiring people who can't make it at the networks, paper work?

Newspapers are never going to be the same, either. In the past couple of weeks, in private conversation, the editor of one of the country's most prestigious papers was musing that he hoped to build a television studio adjacent to his large city room and the publisher of another huge journal was wondering whether his reporters were contractually bound to provide television journalism under his corporate umbrella. Both men just assumed that their papers would be principal sources of the information that will be needed to fill all those new channels—and they will be. No one is going to be able to construct huge new information-gathering organizations—and no one is going to have to with Time magazine, The New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and Chicago Tribune already out there.

Politics—and government, too, I think—will inevitably be localized by new television technology. In "Thetaland"—an advertising invention of the company—viewers in one city, Beverly Hills, can already watch city council meetings on Channel O. When people around the country begin to see local

government in action—or inaction—they are going to become more interested in the *local* issues and personalities presented in their living rooms.

The fact is that most Americans know more about the workings and personalities of the Federal government than they do about what is being done for them, and to them, right around the corner. One reason for that is that network news has focused attention on Washington for more than 20 years. So, the U.S. Senate is news, Scoop Jackson is news, but your mayor is not. The result shows in voter turnouts—in almost all parts of the United States, voting percentages are now much higher in Federal elections than in state and local contests.

When Americans see local government and learn something about it, they may be interested to find out that it has very little real power any more. Federal aid and Federal regulations have gradually stripped power from state and city governments. Washington has the taxing power, so it distributes the money and, essentially, it decides how that money will be spent. In Manchester, N.H., this year, I mentioned to the mayor of that city that the timing of the traffic lights on Main Street was about the worst I had ever seen. He asked whether reporters would tell that to someone in Washington, so that the city might be eligible to apply for funds and assistance to change the system.

Well, television—new broadcast and cable channels—might be what changes the system. If the people of Manchester were plugged into their local government, they might begin to wonder why they don't have the power even to regulate their own lights on Main Street.

I'm obviously excited about my $1.50 box. With the Cable News Network or the House of Representatives droning on behind me, I get a sense of being in touch. It's not the same as being there, of course, but no one can ever be as many places as television cameras anyway. I was almost 3000 miles away when Sen. Edward Kennedy and Rep. John Anderson held a dramatic little meeting in Kennedy's office just before the Democratic National Convention. I saw them, live, coming out of the office and talking to other reporters—on Cable News. I felt like a network news president with my own private feed.

I don't want to sound like a convert or a salesman. The new technology has a long and expensive way to go. Fortunes will be made and lost. Most of what will be broadcast will be nonsense. Theta Cable lost more than $25 million over 13 years before turning its first profit—$709,000—last year. Much of that system has the capability of providing 42 channels, but there is not enough programming available to fill them. Even with "only" 29 channels, Theta is reduced to providing two channels of print weather forecasts and Los Angeles's UHF channel 30, which is owned by Faith Center, Inc., whose president, Pastor Gene Scott, sits in front of a camera, live and videotaped, day and night, attacking nonbelievers and his enemies, usually interchangeably and interchangeable.

Much of the Theta system is also capable of handling two-way television—with viewers responding to broadcast questions through push-button consoles. In Columbus, Ohio, of course, Warner Amex's Qube system is already providing two-way service in 30,000 homes. Qube does a lot of instant polling—sometimes while governmental bodies are meeting and debating some local question—and the possible effect of that on government and politics is mind-boggling. I fully expect to be sitting here some day watching Congress debate a bill in prime time and then, with millions of other citizens, punch in my opinion—or vote—and see it instantly recorded on a console in front of my congressman. Then, he or she will be "free" to vote.

The future is going to be something like that. One of the things that convinced me was that while it took my wife and me months to really figure out how the Theta box worked, the 11-year-old of the house, without benefit of schedules or instructions, knew in one day that something called *In Concert* was on Channel H each night at 8:30—The Who, Styx and such regularly beat out ABC, NBC and CBS at our place. It was worth $1.50 to get a peek, not of Styx, but of the future. ■

PANORAMA
Television today and tomorrow

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THIS MONTH

DECEMBER 1980

Struthers? In a New Sitcom? . . . TV Pirates Ronstadt . . . Examining the Stations' Ledgers . . . The Great "Faction" Debate

WHAT'S HAPPENING

HOLLYWOOD

Don Shirley reporting

Sic transit Gloria. How hot is CBS to return Sally Struthers to the fold? Hot enough to offer the former star of *All in the Family* a 13-week commitment to a new, half-hour comedy series. Such deals, of course, are not unusual. What *is* unusual is that the show—entitled *Me? On the Radio?*—bypassed the normal pilot route: the pact was signed before a single foot of film had been shot . . . which was about the last thing that went smoothly with the whole project.

Me? On the Radio? was supposed to feature Struthers as an aspiring radio singer in New York during the Forties. Her own company was producing the series at Warner Bros. A 1980 debut was confidently predicted. As 1980 ends, *Me? On the Radio?* isn't on the air—or even on the shelf. Warner Bros. and the Struthers team parted company after shooting only one episode. Both sides are mum on what went wrong. Warner Bros. TV programming president Alan Shayne says Struthers "behaved beautifully," but he wouldn't say the same for her husband William Rader, the "executive in charge of production." It would be "unpleasant" to comment on Rader, says Shayne. There were stories that Rader—whose primary TV experience is as the on-air psychiatrist for KABC-TV newscasts in Los Angeles—butted in too much. "He was totally naive as to what makes a show work," says an executive on the show's staff. "But he has a big ego, and what he thought was good—was good. His presence was a terribly inhibiting factor."

However, another account says Rader was only one of too many cooks on the show. "There were eight people who had been told they were the boss," says one of the eight. "None of us agreed on the premise for the show. It was like a Chinese fire drill."

Struthers and Rader tried to start over, using the facilities of CBS itself. But the second effort also failed, and the whole concept of *Me? On the Radio?* was scrapped. However, the 13-week commitment for a Struthers series on CBS still exists. Maybe 1981 will be her year.

Down under up here. *Number 96*, an NBC series planned for a midseason debut, will be the first American program based on an Australian series. And if it is anything like its model, it could wind up raising a lot of eyebrows.

Occasional nudity was a major drawing card when the original *96* was introduced to Australia in 1971. The show was "so successful that it devastated the entire marketplace," says an executive at a rival Australian company; in its early years *96* was credited with saving its network, Network 10, from collapse. When the series' ratings finally sagged, more and more flesh was displayed. But viewers apparently became bored with the skin show and *96* departed the airwaves in 1976.

Like the original, the American version will focus on the intertwining lives of the residents of a single apartment building. Among the 18 regular actors are Betsy Palmer and Randee Heller, who played Jodie's lesbian roommate on *Soap*. Heller will portray a woman in an open marriage on *96*.

Rest assured, the U.S. version will be far tamer. Nudity, for instance, is out. The show will be "more mature, less titillating, and there will be more comedy," claims one of the co-producers. "We don't want to do a show where you could say, 'It stinks, but at least you get to see someone's breasts.' The Australian show was like an afternoon soap opera with nudity." The American *96* also will run in hour-long episodes rather than the half-hours seen in Australia.

A representative of Network 10 defends the quality of the original *96:* "Ours was a very mature program. It had far more than nudity. It was a dramatic program, but also a comedy." Still, he is not complaining. He regards the sale

Sally Struthers: *Her radio develops static.*

***Meryl Streep**: A sensuous Alice wanders through Wonderland.*

***Johnny Carson**: Floyd R. Turbo sets the standard for editorial replies.*

WHAT'S HAPPENING *continued*

of the *96* concept to NBC as "a very substantial thing for Australia."

NEW YORK

Doug Hill reporting

Direct from Broadway. Rock singers Linda Ronstadt and Rex Smith and actress Meryl Streep are opening in a pair of intriguing stage productions here this month—productions that are also on their way to television.

Ronstadt and Smith are among the stars in a Broadway revival of Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance," which had a highly successful limited run in Central Park's Delacorte Theater last summer. A performance of the earlier production has been videotaped, and the plan is to add footage from the Broadway version—possibly including backstage scenes and interviews with the performers—for sale as a special to broadcast or cable TV once the musical closes. ("Pirates" would also be ideal for the stereo sound capabilities of videodiscs, a factor not ignored when a 24-track recording system was used for the original taping.)

Streep stars in a musical adaptation of Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland," which after a six-week run, is to be filmed for NBC's upcoming series of children's specials, *Project Peacock*. Though NBC has a family-oriented program in mind, indications are that Streep's interpretation will hint at some of the darker, more sensual undertones of the surrealist classic. The score is by multi-award-winner Elizabeth Swados.

Both projects are part of an effort by America's most prolific producer for the stage, Joseph Papp, to translate theater to the small screen without, as Papp puts it, "flattening out" the experience.

WASHINGTON

Steve Weinberg reporting

Punching up editorials. If you've been wondering why TV editorials tend to be so tame, then be advised that TV stations too are starting to question their innocuousness. In fact, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) is asking for repeal of the two FCC provisions that are responsible — they claim—for the toothless nature of most commentaries.

The provisions in question, both passed 13 years ago, are the so-called personal-attack rule and the political-editorializing rule. The first requires a TV station to offer response time to a person if an attack "is made upon his honesty, character, integrity, or like personal qualities," during "the presentation of views on a controversial issue of public importance." TV stations say the rule has been counterproductive in that it focuses attention on personal and moral questions rather than important issues. According to Steve Nevas, First Amendment counsel for the NAB, which represents 662 TV stations as well as the networks, "Response opportunities are most often used by those attacked to settle private disputes." (Hence Johnny Carson's Floyd R. Turbo stereotype for the editorial reply.)

Broadcasters also want the right to endorse political candidates—a right, they say, that has been effectively taken from them by the political-editorializing rule. While it does not forbid TV stations from broadcasting political endorsements, the rule does require that TV time be offered to opposing candidates. As the NAB's Nevas puts it: "If a broadcaster does editorialize in favor of or against a particular candidate, the rule requires broadcasters to supply *every* qualified candidate who was not favored in the editorial the right to reply." This means that not only must air time be made available to Republicans, Democrats and Independents, it must be given to the Antivivisectionist Party and the Temperance Party as well.

Because TV stations are unwilling to part with such potentially huge blocks of air time, says Nevas, "The rule has had a substantial chilling effect on broadcasters' fundamental First Amendment freedoms."

What broadcasters want, essentially, is the same latitude that newspapers already have. In fact, in their petition to the FCC, the broadcasters cite the 1974 landmark decision in which the Supreme Court ruled that The Miami Herald did not have to provide space to a political candidate who was the subject of a negative editorial. "The recognition," reads the NAB's petition, "in the Miami Herald case of the chilling effect of access obligations and the inhibition of freedom of the press caused by them must be carried over to the broadcast medium."

Who sees the profits? Everyone knows that TV stations make money. Just how much money is the question—and a continuing point of contention.

Still, we do know that in 1979 the average TV station—

continued on page 93

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.)

DRAMA AND MOVIES

Testament of Youth. This five-episode *Masterpiece Theatre*, which began last month, stars Cheryl Campbell in a dramatization of Vera Brittain's World War I memoir (see page 64). PBS.

The Shadow Box. Paul Newman directed this made-for-TV version of Michael Cristofer's Broadway play. Joanne Woodward, James Broderick, Valerie Harper and John Considine star. ABC.

The Muppet Movie. Kermit, Miss Piggy and an all-star celebrity cast cavort in this 1979 theatrical release. Showtime, Home Box Office, The Movie Channel, Home Theater Network (cable).

Big Blonde. Sally Kellerman plays the title role in a dramatization of the Dorothy Parker short story. PBS.

The Amityville Horror. A haunted house on Long Island is the setting for this 1979 box-office smash starring Margot Kidder and James Brolin. Home Box Office (cable).

A Christmas Without Snow. John Houseman and Michael Learned star in this TV-movie revolving around the lives of a choir giving a holiday rendition of Handel's "Messiah." CBS.

Fighting Back. The story of Rocky Bleier, who recovered from Vietnam wounds to become a mainstay of football's Pittsburgh Steelers. Robert (*Vega$*) Urich stars. ABC.

A Conflict of Interest. A presentation of the *Broadway on Showtime* series, this political drama stars Barnard ("Da") Hughes. Jose Ferrer directed. Showtime (cable).

La Cage aux Folles. Ugo Tognazzi stars in this 1978 farce from France. The Movie Channel (cable).

A Time for Miracles. The life of the American saint Mother Seton, played by Kate (*Mrs. Columbo*) Mulgrew. ABC.

Lost and Found. George Segal and Glenda Jackson are the on-again, off-again lovers in this 1979 romantic comedy. Home Box Office (cable).

MUSIC

A Christmas Special with Luciano Pavarotti. The tenor appears in a holiday performance taped at Montreal's Church of Notre Dame. PBS.

Shadows and Light. Joni Mitchell in concert at Santa Barbara, Cal., singing songs from her latest album, "Shadows and Light." Showtime (cable).

Standing Room Only. Paul Simon in concert at Philadelphia's Tower Theatre. Home Box Office (cable).

NEWS AND DOCUMENTARIES

Survival: Gentle Giants of the Pacific. A one-hour documentary on the humpback whale. Richard Widmark narrates. PBS.

ABC News Closeup. Two are scheduled this month: one on the troubles in the Caribbean, the other on the life of a big-city police officer. ABC.

NBC White Paper. "Gambling in America" is the subject. NBC.

Directed by John Ford. Orson Welles narrates a documentary on the late film director's career, with clips featuring John Wayne, Henry Fonda and James Stewart. PBS.

Jacques Cousteau: Voyage to the Edge of the World. On this trip, the famed undersea explorer travels to Antarctica. PBS.

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

The House at 12 Rose St. An NBC *Special Treat* about a black girl whose family moves into an all-white neighborhood. NBC.

The Little Match Girl. Puppets act out the Hans Christian Andersen tale. Calliope (cable).

How the Grinch Stole Christmas; Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer; A Charlie Brown Christmas. The 14th, 13th and 14th showings, respectively, of these holiday classics. CBS.

Jack Frost. An egotistical youngster tries to mend his ways in a live-action show featuring special effects and trained animals. Nickelodeon (cable).

Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas. Kermit the Frog is the host as the Muppets deck the halls with their yuletide folly. ABC.

Pinocchio's Christmas. An animated musical version based on the classic tale. ABC.

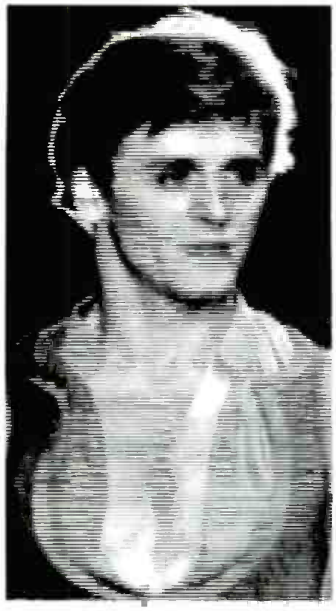
COMEDY

Victor Borge: Comedy in Music. A *Soundstage Special* taped at Chicago's Drury Lane Water Tower Theatre. The protean Danish entertainer is joined by opera singer Marilyn Melvey and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. PBS.

On Location: The Fifth Annual Young Comedians' Show. Carl Reiner hosts this special, which might introduce the next Robin Williams or Andy Kaufman (both alumni of past shows). Home Box Office (cable). ■

Cheryl Campbell: *Memories of World War I are made into this.*

Luciano Pavarotti: *Gift-wrapped voice box.*



Mikhail Baryshnikov: He gives his regards to Broadway.

BOOKS

A special Christmas listing of some of the recently published books dealing with television.

My Prime Time: Confessions of a TV Watcher, by Katie Kelly. (Seaview; $10.95)—The *Today* show's former TV critic presents some of her on-air reviews and views of video fare in general, including trashy sitcoms, so-called specials and superior programs that were killed in the ratings.

Cosmos, by Carl Sagan. (Random House; $19.95)—A lavishly illustrated companion volume to the scientist's PBS series of the same name, which explores the emergence of life, evolution, the mysteries of the atom and the possibilities of life in other galaxies.

I Didn't Do It Alone: The Autobiography of Art Linkletter, as told to George Bishop. (Caroline House; $10.95)—The life story of the popular radio and TV personality (*House Party, People Are Funny, Hollywood Talent Scouts*), whose broadcast career spans four decades.

Always on Sunday, by Peggy Whedon. (W.W. Norton; $12.95)—The producer of ABC's *Issues and Answers* gives her opinion of world leaders who have appeared on the show and shares some backstage reminiscences.

Baryshnikov on Broadway, by Martha Swope. (Harmony; $15.95 hard-cover, $8.95 paper)—A collection of photographs taken during the making of the Russian dancer's televised tribute to American musicals.

Growing Up on Television, by Kate Moody. (Times Books; $12.95)—A detailed report on the ill effects of TV on children, plus information on the controversies in children's programming and advice to parents.

How to Write for Television, by Michelle E. Coe. (Crown; $8.95 hard-cover, $5.95 paper)—A radio and TV writer tells how to write successfully for every aspect of this medium, including commercials, newscasts and serials.

In a Flea's Navel, by Don Freeman. (A.S. Barnes; $8.95)—A sequel to the TV columnist's previous book of commentary, "Eyes as Big as Cantaloupes."

Loving Lucy: An Illustrated Tribute to Lucille Ball, by Bart Andrews and Thomas J. Watson. (St. Martin's Press; $15.00)—A pictorial history of Lucy's 45-year career in show business.

Making It Perfectly Clear, by Herbert G. Klein. (Doubleday; $14.95)—Richard Nixon's chief press aide gives a personal account of the love-hate relationship between the former President and the media.

M*A*S*H: The Exclusive, Inside Story of TV's Most Popular Show, by David S. Reiss. (Bobbs-Merrill; $8.95)—An assortment of *M*A*S*H* memorabilia, including a history of the show, episode summaries, star biographies and fan mail.

Television's Transformation: The Next 25 Years, by Stuart M. DeLuca. (A.S. Barnes; $9.95)—An examination of the history, economics and technology of TV and radio, and a look into possible developments in the next 25 years.

TV Facts, by Cobbett Steinberg. (Facts on File; $17.95)—541 pages of TV history and trivia.

NEW IN PAPERBACK

Connections, by James Burke. (Little, Brown; $10.95)—A companion to the BBC/PBS television series that puts eight technological advances into historical perspective.

The Dallas Family Album. (Bantam; $6.95)—Photographs and biographies of the stars from the hit TV show.

The Ewings of Dallas, by Burt Hirschfeld. (Bantam; $2.75)—The first in a projected series of original novels based on, but not tied in with, the hit TV show.

The Newscasters, by Ron Powers. (Leisure; $2.50)—The well-known TV critic takes a look at the news business as show business.

Prisoner: Cell Block H, by Murray Sinclair. (Pinnacle; $2.25)—A novel about women in prison, based on the syndicated Australian TV series.

The Quotations of J.R. Ewing. (Bantam; $1.50)—Sayings from *Dallas*'s popular villain.

Star Trek Maps. (Bantam; $8.95)—Four "absolutely accurate" maps of the *Star Trek* universe and a navigational guide for charting original flights or following those of the starship Enterprise.

continued on page 95

"THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CAR OF THE LAST QUARTER CENTURY."

IMPROVED.

Don Sherman, in the July, 1980 issue of Car and Driver had this to say:

"I hereby nominate the Volkswagen Rabbit as the most significant car of the last quarter-century. It's the only automobile in the world that actually anticipated the energy cataclysm we've suffered through for the last six and a half years and conducted its affairs accordingly.

"We all love this car as family sedan, as diesel car, as sports coupe (Scirocco), and also as convertible while our own Yankee ingenuity has spawned the VW Pickup Truck. As if this weren't enough, Volkswagen engineers have testified that a Rabbit capable of 80 mpg is well within the realm of possibility. You'd be foolish to doubt their word."

How do you improve the most significant car of the last quarter-century? Significantly. But not recklessly. Or mindlessly. The magic change for 1981 is improved passing power and improved economy at the same time. EPA estimated 28 mpg, 42 mpg highway estimate. (Use "estimated mpg" for comparison. Mpg varies with speed, trip length, weather. Actual highway mpg will probably be less.) The 1981 interiors are lavish. (If you woke up in a Rabbit, you'd never guess it was a Rabbit.) The headlights, taillights and grille of the 1981 version are sleeker and even more functional.

The thing to remember is that the improvements started with the Rabbit itself. We are proud and pleased to have been honored by Car and Driver, but not totally surprised. An awful lot of work went into it.

We will keep on working. And we hope to do as well in the next quarter-century.

THE 1981 RABBIT.

VOLKSWAGEN DOES IT AGAIN

HBO PEOPLE ARE GETTING CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND AND 20 OTHER BIG HITS FOR LESS THAN THE COST OF TAKING THEIR FAMILY TO A SINGLE MOVIE.

WHAT ARE YOU GETTING?

Every month HBO people can sit in the comfort of their own home and see blockbuster movies like Alien, The Rose, Meatballs, Starting Over and lots more, with no cuts and no commercials. And they can see dazzling entertainment specials and exclusive sports, too.

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CASSETTES IN REVIEW

Deck the Halls with Tape

By GENE SHALIT

What do you give to a friend who has everything?

1950: Penicillin.

1980: A videocassette, especially if there's a VHS to play it on.

The initial meaning of VHS is Video Home System, but at Christmas VHS becomes Valued Holiday Surprises, so stores and catalogues are crammed with cassettes. Diligent fellow that I am, I've been winding (and rewinding) my way through enough tape to make the head reel, because it's fun to sift for a gift.

When you shop, keep this in mind: the only sensible reason to buy a cassette is to watch it again and again. That's why my picks are based on a desire for multiple viewings.

All ready for Shalit's Selections? OK, turn on the set.

A Christmas Carol: *(1951) B&W; 86 minutes; Video Communications Inc.; $54.95.*

My favorite holiday story is "A Christmas Carol," written by Charles Dickens in 1843 and since then adapted for every known form of communication except Aztec smoke signals. There have been at least eight movie versions, including a disastrous 1970 musical whose songs were ho-humbug. But the single enduring version is the 1951 film starring Alastair Sim as Ebenezer Scrooge.

The story flows with happiness and remorse; it teaches a lesson; it is a gripping ghost story; it spreads before us a vivid picture of 19th-century London; and its central character is all that drama can offer: a figure who undergoes a monumental change and fills us with good feelings. The spell cast by the spirits of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet to Come make "A Christmas Carol" an incomparable Christmas . . . present.

How to Make Lasagna: *color; 30 minutes; Video Tape Network; $39.95.*

This cassette could be subtitled "One Lesson from Madam Lasagna." The Romagnolis, husband and wife, spend the entire half hour showing you how to make this I'll-start-my-diet-tomorrow Italian dish. It's a gift for the cooking zealot who longs to be rolling in dough and who feels that pasta is just what she kneads. What I learned principally from the Romagnolis is that you've got to keep talking the whole time, chattering half-baked nonsense while your arms ache from pounding the pasta. Still, there are folks who want to do it themselves, and if cookbook directions wrinkle your brow, this kind of watch-*me*-do-it instruction may help things pan out.

Will anyone want to watch this again and again? Not once the dish has been mastered. But I know women who have formed what they call "Cooking Cassette Circles": they trade cuisine cassettes and pass them around among themselves, exchanging those they've seen for new ideas. So if you know such a person and want to coddle her for Christmas, dish up the Romagnolis.

The Bugs Bunny/Road Runner Movie: *(1979) color; 90 minutes; WCI Home Video; $50.*

The happiest holiday cassette is "The Bugs Bunny/Road Runner Movie." This full-length movie features some of the best cartoons, strung together by Bugs Bunny stringing us along between episodes, introducing each in his inimitable carrot-chomping way.

The movie also features the character voices of Mel Blanc. Not only are his voices funny, but each is perfectly suited to the character's look. Mel is an *actor*, and he does it the hard way—with his voice. Bugs's sardonic "Eh, what's up, Doc?" became a national catch phrase. Blanc is also Elmer Fudd who hunts "wabbit twacks," only to find his gun "out of boo-wits." Blanc voices Wile E. Coyote, Daffy Duck, pl-pl-plus P-P-P-Porky Pig. Bugs's costar is Road Runner, who beep-beeps into view and whooshes out of sight.

By the way, young children think that these characters were dreamed up for them, when you and I know that Bugs and his pals were made for *us*. I won't tell if you won't.

Woodstock: *(1970) color; two parts, 90 minutes each; WCI Home Video; $50 apiece.*

Cassettes of music—rock concerts, symphonies, pop star performers—never lose their appeal. And if you combine music with an historical event, you get something special: you get "Woodstock." This 1970 pseudodocumentary devoted to the 1969 concert (called Woodstock because it took place in Bethel, N.Y.) is divided into two 90-minute cassettes. As a documentary, it hedges: many unpleasant occurrences are slipped over or ignored. The film begins with the construction of stage and fences on the vast farm that became a site for sore ears, and ends when the last of the hippies has hitched home. In between we see the gaiety, the love fest, the hunger, the quagmire rain, the merry mirth and myth of it all.

Among the performers are Arlo Guthrie; Joan Baez; Joe Cocker; Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (when they were still Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young); and Sha-Na-Na on "Woodstock," Part I . . . and Country Joe & the Fish; John Sebastian; Sly & the Family Stone; and Jimi Hendrix on "Woodstock," Part II.

With all of its flaws, these Woodstock cassettes are a vital memory. Reverberating in *my* memory is the sound of the girl sobbing to a policeman: "I lost my sister during Richie Havens." ■

Gene Shalit is a featured regular on NBC's Today *show.*

Color TV Model #4236 sold separately. Simulated TV Reception.

Model #5306

Available in most larger Sears retail stores.

Save $100* on Sears BetaVision VCR

Packed with features such as high-speed BetaScan, freeze frame, up to 5 hours on one cassette.

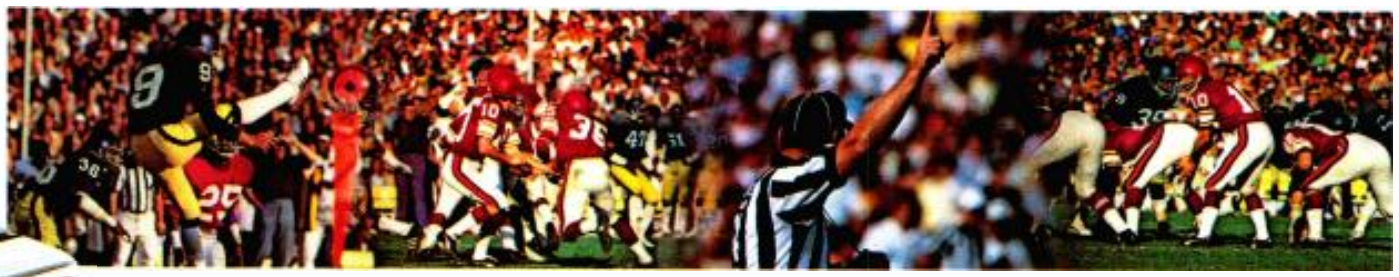
What do you do when ABC's Monday Night Football conflicts with *your* Monday night racquetball? You let Sears BetaVision II/III videocassette recorder "cover" the game in your absence.

Delayed Recording

You're due on the court at 8 p.m.—the kickoff time for that other game you don't want to miss. Before leaving the house, you simply pre-set the Beta-Vision's digital clock. Once for the starting time of the game, once again for the estimated finish (or you can simply let the cassette run out). The BetaVision memory locks in both times and automatically starts and shuts itself off as instructed.

Up to 5 Hours on One Cassette

And don't worry about a game going into overtime. When programmed for the long-playing mode, this BetaVision slows its speed to give you 50 percent more programming than on our standard mode. You get up to five full hours of playing time, depending on the length of the Sears BetaVision cassette you use.



BetaScan whizzes you forward or backwards at 15-times-normal speed. You cover 30 minutes of action in just 2 minutes. And the speeded-up picture is displayed while you scan, so you can easily locate the exact segment of the recording you want to replay.

Playing Lengths of Series BetaVision Videocassettes

Tape #	L-250	L-500	L-750	L-830
Standard Mode	60 min.	120 min.	180 min.	*
Long Playing Mode	90 min.	180 min.	270 min.	300 min.

**Not recommended for use on Standard Mode.*

High-Speed Scanner

Time to play the game back. BetaVision II/III has faithfully recorded everything, including the halftime show you may prefer to skip. Just hit the BetaScan button and it zips you through 15 minutes of halftime hoopla in just 60 seconds. That's 15-times-normal speed.

BetaVision II/III also lets you view as you scan. It keeps the speeded-up picture sharp enough for you to easily follow the action. You'll be able to see that key pass rush shaping up in time to revert to normal speed.

Freeze Frame/Edit by Remote Control

During playback, your plug-in remote control unit lets you stop the action, "freeze framing" anything from a golfer in midswing to a gymnast in midair. While recording, the same remote control unit stops the cassette, editing out unwanted material. Restart it, and recording resumes with no tell-tale "breaks" in the finished tape.

Regular $895. Now only $795. Nov. 28-Dec. 24, 1980

BetaVision II/III is on sale in most larger Sears retail stores for just $795—a full $100 below the regular price. Ask about Sears convenient credit plans. And remember, efficient Sears service is only a phone call away.

BetaVision is designed to expand opportunities for your personal in-home TV viewing and not for any usage which might violate copyright laws.

This advertised item is readily available for sale as advertised. Price and date may vary in Alaska and Hawaii.

**This is the minimum savings nationally. Regular prices vary in some markets.*

Sears Where America shops for Value.

CABLE AND PAY-TV

Culture Blitz

By STANLEY MARCUS

Back in August, the headline on this column trumpeted the news that "Culture Is Coming." We went on to boldly predict that the first wave of cultural programming to hit cable television would wash across the Canadian border from Toronto some time next spring.

But, like most soothsayers, we have been overtaken by events. While opera buffs and balletomanes have been looking expectantly in the direction of Canada, the opening chords of an all-music cable service have been sounded by four major U.S. cablecasters with programming they have jointly created under the umbrella title *Bravo*.

Bravo made its debut at the end of October as a two-nights-a-week offering on the new Rainbow Network (which is devoting its other five nights to R-rated movies). For a monthly fee of between $5 and $10, subscribers can tune in on Sunday and Monday evenings to symphony concerts, chamber music, ballet, opera, and related "magazine" items such as news updates on the arts, critical reviews of new records and interviews with performing artists. Four hours of programming are presented—and immediately repeated—each night. Therefore, viewers who miss the early shows can catch the same programming later in the evening.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the new service is that all programs are transmitted in full stereo; to receive the stereo signal, a cable is hooked up to the subscriber's FM receiver as well as to his TV set. This represents an advance over previous FM simulcasts, in that stereo broadcasting will be *constantly* available. (FM radio stations aren't always eager to preempt their regular programming for special simulcasts.)

An agreement with the American Federation of Musicians—in the past, notoriously cool to the overtures of cable programmers—has enabled *Bravo* to send its cameras and recording equipment to many important musical events, including the Aspen Music Festival, performances by the St. Louis and Milwaukee Symphonies, and recitals at New York's Carnegie Hall. Live video recordings such as these will form the backbone of *Bravo's* schedule. They will be supplemented by operatic and other productions brought in from Europe.

Bravo is adopting an avowedly missionary approach to its role as a purveyor of music. Though the service is primarily designed for the "educated arts consumer," a big effort is being made to win over a larger audience that lies "outside the ranks of the dedicated aficionados." Viewers who feel intimidated by the arcana of classical music will be gently coached in the rudiments of musical appreciation by means of breezy talks on such subjects as the structure of the symphony.

This month's prediction: Culture Has Come.

Class of '80

When PANORAMA, earlier this year, asked a cross section of cable-TV subscribers what kinds of programming they wanted to see in greater abundance, more people opted for education than for any other category. In fact, they outnumbered those who wanted more movies by 2 to 1.

The demand for education in the home may be running ahead of the supply right now—but not for much longer. Already the National University Consortium, based at the University of Maryland, is offering bachelor's-degree courses via public and cable TV in 11 states. And in October, the American Educational Television Network (AETN) unveiled an ambitious program of continuing-education courses on cable for a wide range of professional groups.

According to Bill Luxon, president of AETN, most continuing professional education today "is provided in the way it was provided 2000 years ago, in the sense that people are going to a place to hear someone talk, as they did in Athens." In many areas of the country, doctors, lawyers and other professionals are compelled to drive 100 miles or more to attend the lectures that keep them current in their fields. The advantage of having such lectures available via television should, Luxon hopes, be obvious.

AETN is working with the relevant professional associations, selecting the best of the live courses currently offered around the country and turning them into sophisticated studio-produced programs using graphics, film sequences and animation.

Among the 50 occupational groups that will be served when AETN is in full swing late next year will be government employees, doctors, dentists, nurses, engineers, real-estate licensees and computer programmers. Each disciplinary area gets three hours of satellite time per month. The cost to subscribers who wish to view the programs for credit—and who must register with AETN in advance—ranges from $19 to $34 per month.

Incidentally, AETN offers a course for firefighters as well. Will arsonists soon demand equal time?

THE FIRST HIGH GRADE VIDEOTAPE.

Video cassette recorders have changed a lot in the last few years. New features like six-hour recording, slow motion and freeze frame have added a great deal to home recording.

But there's one drawback. To utilize these new features, you must operate your cassette recorder at a slower speed. And this places increased pressure on the videotape, which can cause the magnetic oxide particles on the tape's surface to loosen and eventually fall off. Once this starts to happen, a loss of picture quality isn't far behind.

At Maxell, we've always been aware that a video cassette recorder can only be as good as the tape that goes in it. So while all the video cassette recorder manufacturers were busy improving their recorders, we were busy improving our videotape.

The result is Maxell Epitaxial HG, the first high grade VHS videocassette. In technical terms, there are several significant differences between our high grade and regular videotape.

For one thing, our oxide particles are smaller and more densely packed on the tape surface. Which is why we have a better frequency response and signal-to-noise ratio, especially at the slower recording speeds.

And, because of our unique binding process and calendering system, the oxide particles on Maxell HG stay put. This drastically reduces friction and video recorder head wear. So not only will you get better picture quality, but you'll be able to enjoy it a lot longer.

All in all, no other home videotape can deliver better color resolution, sharper images or cleaner sound than Maxell HG.

So if you own a VHS recorder, please remember one thing. If you want high grade picture quality, you need a high grade tape.

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IT'S WORTH IT.

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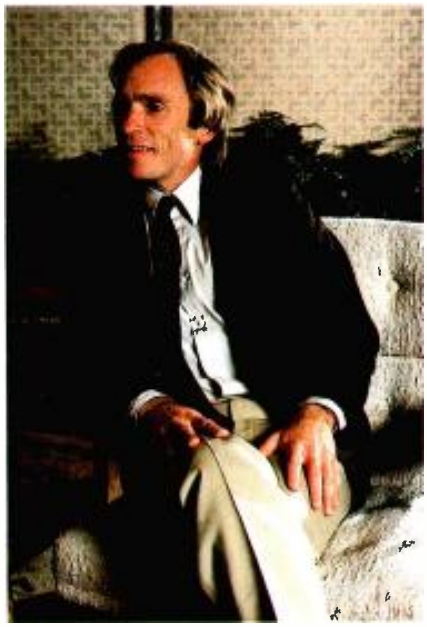
Q&A

DICK CAVETT Interviewed by Kathleen Fury



"I Have Known Guests to Come On Stoned, Drunk, All Kinds of Ways"

The talk-show host says it's the unexpected and difficult moments that he finds most stimulating

In his 13-year career as a TV talk-show host, Dick Cavett has been accused of cuteness, tastelessness, evasiveness. His fans, equally fervent, point out that he has raised the level of television talk immeasurably. Who else, they ask, has the range to converse intelligently with guests as diverse as Richard Burton, Sugar Ray Leonard, G. Gordon Liddy and Katharine Hepburn?

After graduation from Yale in 1958, the Nebraska-bred Cavett came to New York and worked as an actor and as a writer for various comedians, including Jack Paar, Groucho Marx and Johnny Carson. In 1964 he began developing his own stand-up comedy routine, and appeared in nightclubs and on TV. Four years later, ABC hired Cavett as host of a morning talk show; eventually this turned into his own evening show on ABC. When ABC dropped him, Fred Silverman (then at CBS) hired Cavett for a talk-variety showcase that fizzled out when Silverman left shortly thereafter for ABC. Cavett then went on NBC, where he was co-host of "The Big Party," a fiasco that was to begin NBC's *Big Event* season. Then, in 1977, *The Dick Cavett Show* began on PBS, where it remains today.

In addition to network and public television, Cavett has worked for pay television as the host of the documentary series *Time Was*, which was on Home Box Office this year. He has won two Emmy awards for his ABC talk shows.

The set of the current *Dick Cavett Show* is decorated with hose-'em-down plastic ferns; yet here in the last three years he has talked with many of the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers. And here, too, without the pressure of pleasing nervous network executives, his style has mellowed. He seems more relaxed, less likely to interrupt a guest with a story about himself, less quick to deflect a serious moment with a joke.

This interview, conducted for PANORAMA by free-lance writer Kathleen Fury, took place in the Green Room, where his guests wait to go on-stage at his New York City studio. Cavett had just finished taping two shows and had changed into off-camera dress: white running pants, white windbreaker, white cap. and running shoes. He looked more like a golf caddy in a 1930s movie than a talk-show host nearing middle age (he turned 44 this November). As they talked, he helped himself to what was left—tuna fish sandwiches, fruit bowl, crackers—of the food that had been set out for the day's guests.

PANORAMA: *To open the fourth season of* The Dick Cavett Show *this year, PBS televised your four-part interview with Richard Burton. Did you know in advance that you'd get so much time—a full two hours—with him?*

CAVETT: No, neither of us did. I think he felt he was going to be here for an hour or so, and that we would edit things out. That's what happened to him on the *Today* show, which he wasn't too happy about. Maybe when he realized that we don't do that, he was encouraged to stay. I also contrived to end one show in the middle of a story, so he would have to come back. I kept keeping him as long as I could.

PANORAMA: *By the way, there's beer in that refrigerator if you want one.*

CAVETT: No, thanks. Wrong time of day for that. Huh! If this were England, you'd have a choice of about 20 alcoholic beverages to drink in the Green Room. That accounts for a lot of the strange things that take place on British shows. It seems to be almost their rule to get the guests smashed before they go on—or let them get themselves smashed.

PANORAMA: *Do you ever get the feeling that a guest of yours has taken something to calm down or get up?*

CAVETT: Sometimes I'm clearly aware that they have. Or in here, a guest who's waiting to go on may have anything from a bottle with him to an urgent request to order some wine. Or take a pill, I suppose. There may be lots of Valiums that I don't see.

PANORAMA: *Can you see the effects when you're interviewing them?*

CAVETT: Sometimes. Over the years, I certainly have known guests to come on stoned, drunk, all kinds of ways. There are people who are more interesting if they've had a little to drink.

Some who aren't. I don't think I would be. Well, maybe a *little.*

PANORAMA: *What about marijuana?*

CAVETT: Marijuana only makes you more interesting to yourself, I think. But certainly I've had guests who I know are into it a lot.

PANORAMA: *Cocaine?*

CAVETT: I've never seen anybody snort backstage. Well, I have, but not on my show.

PANORAMA: *Do you see your guests before you go on-stage?*

CAVETT: Usually to say hello. I've never known what to do, really, about that. Sometimes, it's calming to them to see me before, and others don't want to. Paar never used to. Oh, on rare occasions, with Noel Coward or somebody like that, of course he'd go in and say hello and talk a bit.But he always said, "Surprise me." That was his order. Don't tell me the story, because I can't laugh twice. There's something to that.

But in a lot of cases here, there are people who haven't been on television that much, if at all, or that rare instance when they don't know me or are from another country or something, and need some kind of reassurance for some reason. But I don't sit and chat for an hour before the show.

PANORAMA: *You have said, talking about your former boss Jack Paar, that no matter who his guest was, in a two-shot your eyes were on Jack. What do you think is the case with your show?*

CAVETT: Nobody's had that quality to the extent that Paar did. With almost anybody else, people will say they watched to see who's on—never realizing that that's a vague insult to the host. I have friends who'll say, "I never can find out in the listings who you've got on, so I don't know whether I want to watch or not."

PANORAMA: *Don't you ever feel that the less conspicuous you are, the better it's going?*

CAVETT: I suppose so. Even though I'm the constant element in the show, it shouldn't look like that too much.

PANORAMA: *On the Burton shows, your presence was certainly understated. Mostly you just let him talk.*

CAVETT: Yes, and at times like that you are aware that you've done your work beforehand, by either how you've met the guest or reassured him or whatever. There are times when you don't get enough credit, I think, for a show in which somebody "just talks," because they didn't choose to do that on another show, or wouldn't have felt so comfortable somewhere else. In some way you should get credit for creating that atmosphere for them. They'll often say afterward, "This is the easiest show I ever did"; or "I never would have been able to do this elsewhere." Or the wife or husband will say, "I never saw him or her like that."

> ●●Apparently Burton's wife sat bolt upright when I brought up Elizabeth Taylor and drinking.●●

In fact, Burton is an example. His wife seemed very pleased and, in some ways, relieved afterward. Apparently she sat bolt upright a couple of times when I brought up Elizabeth Taylor and drinking. Sometimes an idiot critic—underline "idiot," because not all critics are—will utterly miss one's contribution to the show, and say, "Cavett idiotically said this or that at a certain point," when, in fact, I know that was the very thing that made the guest do what they did, or say what they said, or continue when they might have wanted to leave.

How many idiot critics are there?

PANORAMA: *I was going to ask you that.*

CAVETT: I haven't suffered that much. It never bothers me any more. Sometimes I marvel that it doesn't get to me at all, except when they utterly miss the *point* of something. It seems to me exasperating.

PANORAMA: *Apparently John J. O'Connor, the television critic for The New York Times, got to you. You wrote to The Times twice to complain about his columns on you.*

CAVETT: Yeah. Everybody advised me not to at the time, but it was what I felt like doing. But it's probably a mistake to write to critics, or write about them.

PANORAMA: *Do you hold grudges?*

CAVETT: I don't think so, no. I ran into O'Connor at a party once, and it was sort of startling, because I guess I'd had another visual image of him. I must have pictured a Scrooge-like figure of another age and physical description. And he was quite pleasant.

PANORAMA: *In 1974 you said: Johnny Carson "must be bored with the sameness of it all, and I think it would be good for him to do something else before he convinces himself he can't." Are you ever bored with being the host of a talk show?*

CAVETT: At times, but I've found that those are just spells you go through, because it's intrinsically interesting. It's got to get interesting again, just because the people are constantly changing. Some event or incident or

something in the news or the arts will just grab you again. But if you go through a stretch of two or three or five mediocre shows, you can start to think, "God, next to roofing this must be the dullest job in the world."

PANORAMA: *You've said you thought Carson should do something else "before he convinces himself he can't." Is there any similar danger for you?*

CAVETT: There might be. If in fact what I ought to do is get out and do other things, then it's true that the longer I do this the more reluctant I am to throw caution to the winds and spend a year just acting or indulging myself in some way, or writing a script.

PANORAMA: *Is that what you'd do?*

CAVETT: I don't feel a great urge to do those things, but I thoroughly would enjoy it if somebody came along with a sort of romantic comedy or something in film. I'd love to do it. I love doing plays, as I do from time to time in Williamstown [Mass.], and one I did on Broadway. I've never ever enjoyed anything more than that. It's not that I enjoyed it more than the best talk shows I've done, but it was in that league of just being totally satisfying, making me feel that I should pay *them* to do this.

PANORAMA: *You have also talked about the common fear among artists that if they understood their neuroses, their talent would disappear.*

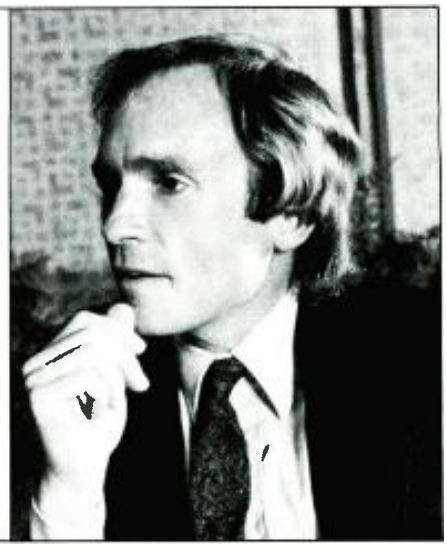
CAVETT: Oh, that comes up all the time in the arts; people cite examples of actors they know who no longer feel the urge. It's come up on the show so many times, people wondering if the impulses that go into art are frittered away with self-analysis or professional analysis. Woody [Allen] would seem to disprove that theory, because he's certainly been in analysis a long time, and it doesn't seem to have limited his work.

PANORAMA: *Have you been in any kind of therapy?*

CAVETT: Yeah, in fact I am now. I finally decided I didn't want to be the only one who wasn't doing it.

PANORAMA: *What kind is it?*

> "I do miss having more people on that I hate. There aren't that many hateful people around right now."



CAVETT: I think it's called psychotherapy. But I find it quite enjoyable, and I know that's not the right attitude toward it; it's also difficult. But I think it's a good idea, if you're happy in your choice of therapist. I know people who've suffered by it or claim they've been ruined by it, who have gotten hold of quacks or have used up all the contemporary self-help fads.

PANORAMA: *Is your therapist a man or a woman?*

CAVETT: A male person. It always surprised me when I heard that somebody I knew was going to a female psychiatrist, analyst or psychologist, because I had the amateur's idea that you have to start by confessing all of your most lurid sexual adventures. How could you talk to a blue-haired lady about what you did in the garage at age 9—or even worse, at age 39? And with that, he placed his pickle on the table and reached for his banana. It's really too bad this isn't on television. Do you mind if I have this now? Will that be too symbolic in any way? I just have been craving a banana all day.

PANORAMA: *Go right ahead. I suppose, actually, some men would find it easier to talk to a woman. Your mother died when you were 10, and then you had a stepmother. Whom did you confide in?*

CAVETT: I wasn't much of a confider. I don't remember ever really sitting down and saying, "I have this problem," nor ever really feeling I *had* any particular problem.

PANORAMA: *What have you learned from therapy?*

CAVETT: I don't know yet. I really don't. Probably a number of things, but I don't know that I could articulate any of it. Maybe I'm too new to it; I've only just begun.

PANORAMA: *Are you happier with the results of your interviews with people you adore or with people you hate?*

CAVETT: I can enjoy both. I do miss having more people on that I hate. There aren't that many hateful people around right now. There seems to be a shortage. I'd hate to think it's that I've become more tolerant. Maybe I should speak to the staff: "Book more hate!" You know, we live in so much blander times, it seems, than we did in the Sixties. There don't seem to be as many rogues on the scene. Or perhaps they're better disguised now.

PANORAMA: *How did you feel about your interview of G. Gordon Liddy?*

CAVETT: I probably would have been different with Liddy if I'd seen the shows as they were on the air—that is, if I hadn't taped them straight through. If I'd had time to go home and look at one and think, "Maybe I'm being too nice to him." But I didn't realize how much so until I *saw* it. The part about killing John Dean and all that. . . . If I'd had time to consider that, I probably would have been harder on him, or at

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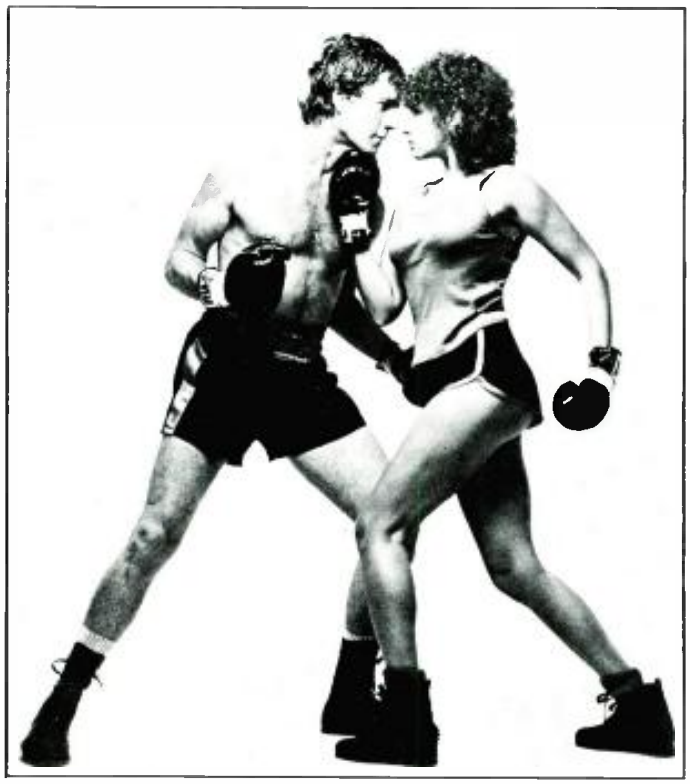

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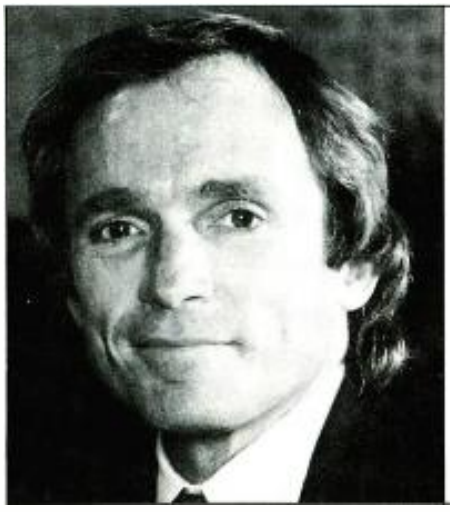
least registered more than just disbelief. Or simply have said, in conclusion: "I think you're a case of pathologically arrested development, and dangerous. And it makes me uneasy to find you so, in some ways, charming and intelligent and *free*." As in, out of prison.

PANORAMA: *How are the guests for your show selected?*

CAVETT: Booking meetings; everybody pitches ideas. Largely, the staff and the producer do the booking with my approval, if it's a question mark, of somebody who's, for example, been on too recently, or hasn't been on at all. Then they'll say, "How do you feel about So-and-So; do you want them?" You book from all sources, from the Celebrity Bulletin that tells who's in New York, to what's being published, danced, acted, written. There's no case of the network—of PBS or anybody—ever saying: "Have So-and-So."



"Sinatra called back and said, 'Talk shows are a confessional, and I don't need that'."

PANORAMA: *Whom would you most like to get now?*

CAVETT: That I can't get, you mean? Ummm. I'd love to talk to Cary Grant and Sinatra. Mike Nichols. I can't seem to convince [Robert] Redford to do it. Actually, there aren't that many left now. It seems like I got almost everybody they said, "You'll never get."

PANORAMA: *Why are these people hard to get?*

CAVETT: In each case it's different, apparently. Sinatra called back once and startled me out of my sleep at 3 A.M. I had spent part of a weekend at the Bennett Cerfs' as a house guest, and he was also there. I realized how pleasant and amusing and interesting he could be, and I'd love to be able to do him. But he called back and said, "Talk shows are a confessional, and I don't need that." It may have been momentary, I don't know.

PANORAMA: *And Cary Grant?*

CAVETT: Just won't do it.

PANORAMA: *What about Redford? He's done so much publicity for print media in connection with "Ordinary People." Does that bother you, since he's a friend of yours?*

CAVETT: No. He's always done that. Well, not always, but he's done it in the past. He feels that's a lot different than coming on television, being interviewed that way. Gee, I hope he isn't hoping that I'll ask him again!

PANORAMA: *Do your guests ever say, "I'll come on, but I won't talk about such-and-such"?*

CAVETT: Yeah, and at that point you decide whether you still want them or not. If it's vital, if it's the one thing you're going to look foolish not having talked about, there's no point in having them on and you tell them so. And then, occasionally, they'll turn around and say, "Oh, all right then, I will." As if they were just testing.

PANORAMA: *Did Katharine Hepburn lay down any ground rules about what could be discussed?*

CAVETT: No. She had approval of the final product; she wanted that, but then she didn't exercise it, in the sense that she didn't go over the thing word for word.

PANORAMA: *Do you let everyone have final approval?*

CAVETT: No, no. I was happy to make that concession to her, though, hoping that she wouldn't take a dislike to it when she saw it, whatever "it" turned out to be.

PANORAMA: *You've done network, public and now pay television. Do you see these as three different audiences?*

CAVETT: I think I tend to more than I should, because the evidence is that the people I run into on the street who watch the show don't seem to be that different from the same ones who say, "I saw you on Johnny Carson last week." I don't think of the PBS audience as something terribly elite. A recent guest, John Leonard, once said that in writing for The New York Times he can assume that he can refer to Mallarmé and not have to add, "the famous French poet." On PBS, you don't have to say, "Baudelaire, author of. . . ." You can assume they know. Maybe I make that mistake a little too often, assuming people know things they don't. I think you could say "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and assume people know what you meant, but if you start referring to, oh, "Enemies of Promise," you can't assume they know Cyril Connolly wrote it.

PANORAMA: *Do you ever have guests who make you uncomfortable?*

CAVETT: Yes. If a guest is uncomfortable himself, I tend to cover for that in a way that's uncomfortable but looks like they're interesting me more than they are, or that they aren't as much trouble as I see them to be. Or if they are really overplaying what's appropriate for the screen and the medium.

PANORAMA: *When you walk out there, are you ever nervous?*

CAVETT: Very seldom any more. I'd be nervous if I think I've prepared wrong,

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or realized at the last minute that there's something else I should have done. But the things that are supposed to make you nervous—if a guest is drunk or fractious or whatever—only stimulate me. I like the unexpected. I know that when I go on a show as a guest, I'm better when I haven't prepared anything. And part of that comes from just the plain adrenaline you get from not having prepared. It's the delicious, dangerous sense of walking out without any idea what the next 20 or 30 minutes are going to be.

PANORAMA: *Do you enjoy being in the other chair?*

CAVETT: Very much. I love to go on Carson or Griffin or Douglas or any of those shows. But it's not always enjoyable to be interviewed. When I was on the book tour, I really got to dread being asked the next "Why did you decide to name your book 'Cavett'?" Or, "How did you get your start in show business?" (Loud snoring sound.)

PANORAMA: *Do you ever feel yourself nodding off during the show?*

CAVETT: Yes. There's nothing worse than that feeling. Whenever I get it, I pay extra attention, because of what might happen. You just force yourself to become interested; you put the spurs into your own sides. It's happened to me many times, that feeling that "My God, I don't know what they're saying. The mouth is moving and they're looking at me." And somehow I'll tune in and pick up on it, but realize that I have taken that opportunity to nap. And amazingly, when I'll watch the show later, I'll realize that the person talking—that is, me—seemed to have been listening. But I know I wasn't.

PANORAMA: *If you could choose five of your interviews to preserve in a time capsule, which ones would you pick?*

CAVETT: That's hard, because I once looked through a list of tapes to save, when ABC was either going to erase them all or let me buy some of them. And I was amazed how many of them I wanted.

I did save several hundred of the shows, though I remember thinking I'd probably want only 50.

Anyway, to get back to the question, I don't know what the five would be. It would have to include Hepburn, but then would that mean sacrificing some of the Groucho shows? And what about Olivier, and the Lunts, and Brando and Astaire and Coward? Five would be real hard.

PANORAMA: *There were published rumors some months ago that you were hospitalized.*

CAVETT: Me?

PANORAMA: *Yes. The implication was that you had some sort of breakdown.*

CAVETT: Oh, well, there were all kinds of rumors. I read that I was in Bellevue at one point, and somewhere else that I had pellagra or something else, some out-of-the-way odd wasting disease.

PANORAMA: *What really happened?*

CAVETT: Apparently what I had was either exhaustion or depression or both, stemming from a flu episode, I guess. It felt like mononucleosis. I thought I was getting that again. I had that just as I was being drafted, fresh out of college.

PANORAMA: *When was this hospitalization?*

CAVETT: May, I guess. End of last year. I never can remember when anything is. And so I took off about four weeks, I think it was, and checked myself into Columbia Presbyterian and slept and read and then came out.

PANORAMA: *There was a rumor that you checked yourself in under your wife's name.*

CAVETT: I heard that one, too. It's not true. If I'd done that, I really *should* have been at Bellevue.

PANORAMA: *Your marriage to actress Carrie Nye is a source of considerable curiosity, and it seems to me that you contribute to a certain air of mystery by not talking about it.*

CAVETT: I think it amuses me.

PANORAMA: *Why?*

CAVETT: Just to see the various things that people write and the number of times I've been imminently divorced on Page Six [gossip column in the New York Post]. Then there are other things that have appeared there or elsewhere—parties I've been to that I wasn't at, and people I've endorsed that I haven't.

PANORAMA: *Are you saying that you don't talk much about your marriage because it amuses you to provoke gossip?*

CAVETT: Maybe that is what I'm saying. Yes. I think it does amuse me to do that, or to say contradictory things about it. It's a dumb little game, but it's fun.

PANORAMA: *Is it a good marriage?*

CAVETT: Seems to be.

PANORAMA: *Glad to hear it. And are you happy?*

CAVETT: Deliriously. ■

"I read that I was in Bellevue at one point, and somewhere else that I had pellagra or some out-of-the-way odd wasting disease."

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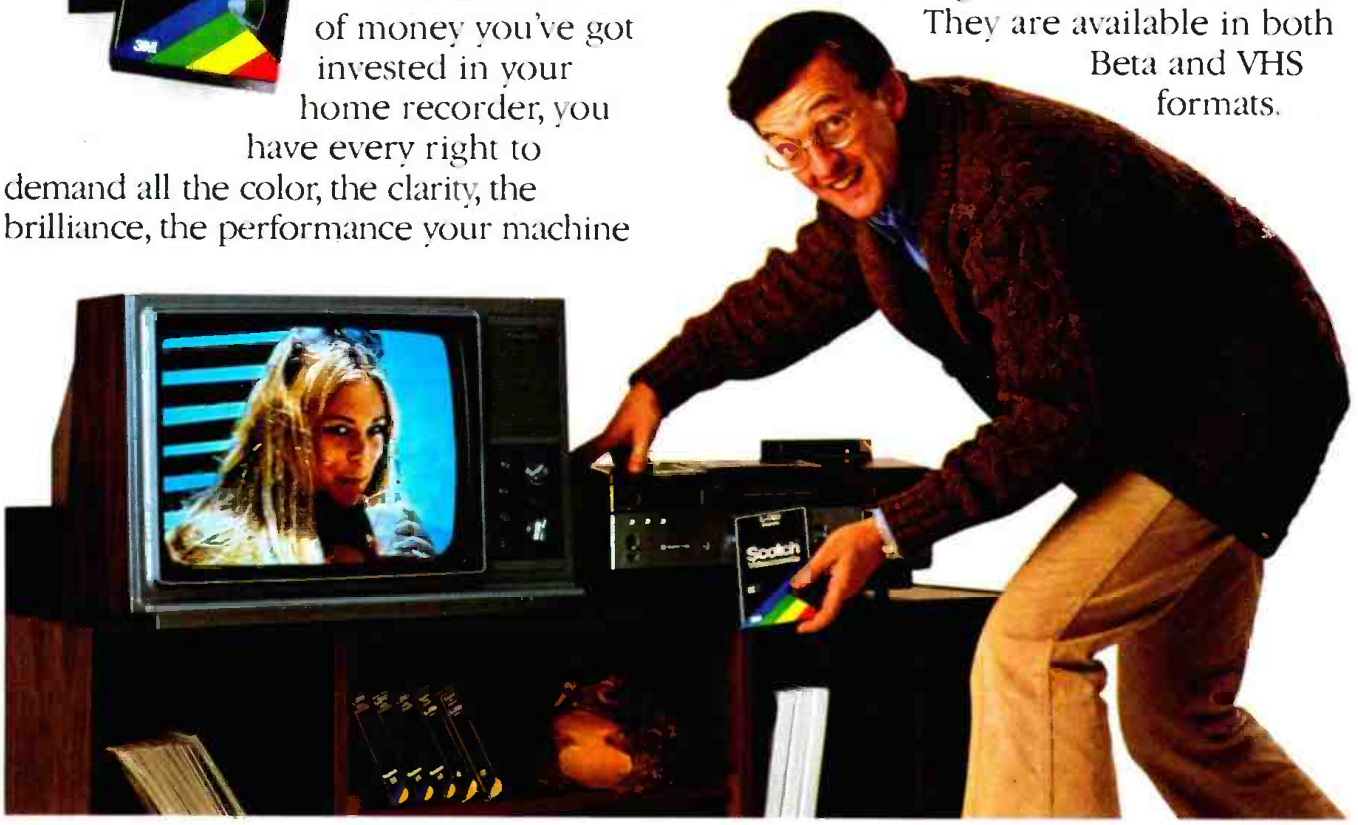

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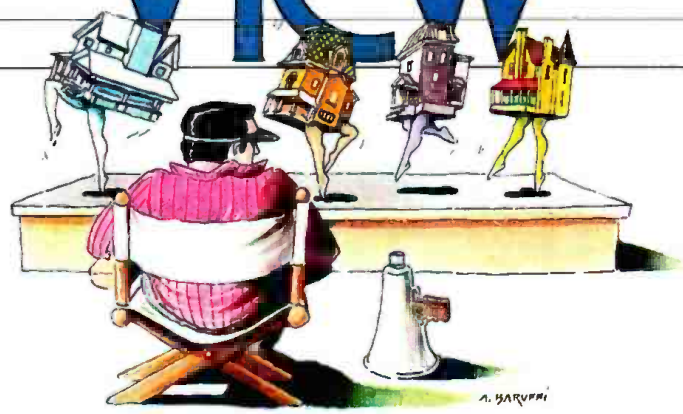


QUARTERS FOR DOLLARS

The *Kojak* people were getting anxious. The storyline called for a sprawling English-style estate in an exclusive New York suburb. They needed a set and they needed it fast. And what's more, they needed it not in Woodstock, or the Hamptons; they needed this Eastern-style mansion right in their own back yard, in Hollywood.

No big deal. Locations Unlimited, one of a handful of firms involved in a largely unnoticed but lucrative business in Hollywood, filled the bill in a hurry. Fact is, they had received the same request before—for *The Mod Squad, Columbo* and for hundreds of commercials. The Hancock Park home of the late realtor Fritz Burns would get the nod. Locations Unlimited had once again come to the rescue.

There are also odd requests. (This *is* Hollywood, after all). "For a pilot called 'Three Eyes' for Warner Brothers TV," remembers Beverly Metzler, president of Location Enterprises, "we had to find a home where we could drive a car directly into a swimming pool from the street. We finally found a willing homeowner in Encino. Surprisingly, it wasn't difficult. We just called everybody that had driveways that led right into swimming pools and asked them if they would do it. Sure enough, one agreed."

There is no one type of homeowner who agrees to such seemingly hair-raising requests; donors run the gamut from old-line Californians to the nouveau riche. And do not exclude the well-known. Locations Unlimited president Marillyn Breslin remembers the time she coaxed Walter O'Malley, the late Dodgers owner, into letting his Hancock Park home be used as a *Kojak* location. All went well until one day when O'Malley overheard the director telling a worker that he thought the driveway "needed to be widened."

"I was able to calm the situation," Breslin remembers, "though it could have been a disaster."

Ever since inflation made it cheaper for Hollywood to film their projects right in their own back yard, producers have turned to the photo-filled catalogues offered by location services for help.

Sometimes a home becomes a permanent location—the old Dick Powell mansion in Mandeville Canyon, for example, became "home" for the Harts in *Hart to Hart.* And then there are the times when real life seems far stranger than fiction, as was the case with the unlikely match of the nunnery used as Charlie's home in *Charlie's Angels.*

"*Charlie's Angels* said they had to have the most fantastic house in the world," remembers Locations' Breslin. "I finally coaxed the nuns into permitting the convent to be used for filming, with the proviso that the fee be donated to their hospital."

The three or four major firms in the field tend to have their own specialties and *modus operandi.* Metzler keeps loose-leaf notebooks cataloguing more than 600 homes; after 16 years in the business, she has built that inventory through advertising and word-of-mouth. The Location Enterprise firm's annual gross this year was just under $200,000. Out of that, Metzler's firm gets to keep substantially less than half, because well over half her fee—which generally ranges from $500 to $2500 a day—goes to the homeowner.

Why would a homeowner want his abode to make it to the small screen?

"Many of the owners donate their place to friends involved in the project," says Breslin. "It's also a status symbol."

"If a home is used regularly, a homeowner could make a couple of thousand dollars a year," says Metzler, "but nobody's in it for the money. These people have too much money to be in it for the profit. They do it for charity, or for friendship, or something other than monetary reward."

—Stella Zadeh

"It's too easy to flail at television executives.... I think we have to understand that they're trapped in the system. They are not dumb people, they are not people who don't know, they are not people who are necessarily making decisions their gut tells them they should be making. They are people who are trapped in the system, and the system is: 'I want four shows in the top ten next week. I don't want to lose Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday nights.' When the only motivation is that, there is no room for innovation."

—Norman Lear, TV producer, interviewed for the NBC program "TV Guide – The First 25 Years"

AD INFINITUM

To TV lovers, the promise held out by cable television is of an almost limitless bounty of programs available on dozens of different channels. But beware, ye faithful viewers: advertising executives and public-relations experts have their own fond visions of cable's video plenty—visions in which their genius will no longer be fettered by the constraints of the 30-second commercial. The advertising form of the future has already been invented, in fact, and it's called the "info-mercial."

As the name implies, the info-mercial combines commercial messages with information. It does so in a style that may or may not make direct reference to a specific brand name, and in a length limited only by the viewer's attention span. In the forefront of info-mercializing is Qube, Warner Amex's interactive cable system in Columbus, Ohio. A Columbus appliance store sponsored a discussion of microwave ovens, for example, and subscribers who punched the right button on their Qube keypads afterward were sent a free microwave cookbook.

A company delivering more traditional corporate documentaries by a nontraditional route is the Modern Satellite Network in New York City. Modern distributes, at no charge, 35 hours of what it calls "sponsored films" each week to approximately 370 cable systems around the country via satellite. Among its customers is the R.T. French Co., which offers *What's Cooking*, a monthly series filled with helpful culinary tips, including use of the company's own condiments.

An obvious danger posed by the info-mercial is that it blurs lines between selling and informing that might be better left unblurred. A Warner spokesman described Qube's microwave-oven lecture as "having an educational orientation that microwave cooking is not dangerous," for example. Larry Wangberg, vice president and general manager of Qube, says, "I don't think that's a concern. This is an excellent service to subscribers—it helps them make better consumer decisions." Tom Pry, former manager of operations and affiliate relations for Modern, agrees. "I wouldn't call it a sneaky sort of thing," he said, "because every one of these films is identified with the company that makes it. It's the old line—consider the source."

—Doug Hill

THEY STOOP TO CONQUER

The preteen market for "status jeans" is anything but kid stuff. The blue-jeans Children's Crusade accounts for about 20 percent of sales for companies like Jordache and Sergio Valente, and the total market is worth tens of millions of dollars. So, the big boys of high fashion are playing hardball with TV commercial blitzkreigs, hoping to make designer jeans *de rigueur* for the milk-and-cookies set.

That's because some companies use the same hard sell that typifies adult jeans ads. For example, Jordache boys and girls dance, sing and flirt to the company's adult theme song ("You've got the look I want to know better"), only to be brought to order by a teacher poured into a skin-tight pair of adult Jordache jeans. Bon Jour kids receive three wishes from a benevolent jinni: two complete Bon Jour wardrobes, naturally, and a minibike to ride off on.

The most provocative ad in recent memory is a spot for Goldiggers jeans, set in that unique Madison Avenue creation, the preteen disco. An aggressive young wolflet coolly cruises a sweet young thing with a degree of cynical aplomb that few adults could muster. "What kind of girl do you think I am?" his reluctant quarry protests. "A gold digger," he smirks, sweeping her away on his tandem bike. "Good clean fun," says Goldigger spokeswoman Sharon Haspel. "Child pornography," sniffs a competitor. The spot sold a lot of jeans, but caused a storm of controversy in the process, and has been replaced by a tamer ad showing children roller-skating and playing Frisbee in New York's Central Park. "People don't like to face the fact that kids are growing up very quickly now," sighs Haspel philosophically.

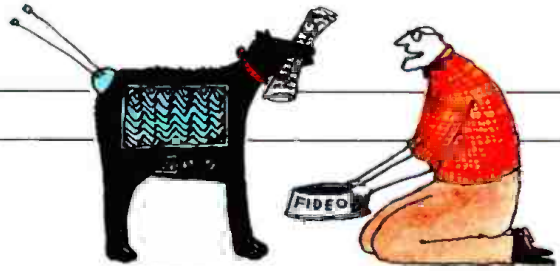
Some manufacturers are more discreet. "We don't make disc jockeys out of 2- and 3-year-olds," states Eli Kaplan, the somewhat unlikely creator of Sergio Valente jeans. "As far as we're concerned, it's a moral decision. Children should be treated as children." Sergio Valente ads show kids playing follow-the-leader and roller-skating in a park, albeit to the sexy sound track used in the adult ads.

Why does the fashion industry insist on portraying children as swinging singles? "These commercials are aimed at parents," says Margaret Hunnewell, a filmmaker and fashion analyst. "Some parents want their kids to be Brooke Shields—little stars." Indeed, the teen-aged Shields caused a sensation in a show-stopping series of Calvin Klein ads that had nothing to do with childhood and everything to do with sensual salesmanship.

Soft sell or hard, though, many people don't think kids belong in designer clothes. "I hate designer *anything* for children," says a mother of three. "Why should everybody look like everybody else? And these clothes, they cost a fortune."

The end, alas, is not in sight. Calvin Klein's latest venture stretches the boundaries of designer name-dropping to a new limit—he's marketing designer denim diaper covers, presumably for the baby destined to have everything.

—Michael Bulger



WHATEVER YOU SAY, DEAR

If you've paid extra for the convenience of changing channels from your easy chair, don't junk your remote-control unit—yet. But get ready for progress. In the next few years, you may be able to give orders to your television set without even lifting a finger.

Just as those science-fiction books and movies predicted, television sets soon may be operated by verbal command. Two manufacturers, Panasonic and Toshiba, already have prototypes; and if marketing tests show that consumer demand (at an acceptable price) exists, the push-button age could give way to the era of voice control.

Developed with computer technology, both systems have microprocessors that can be programmed to recognize a particular voice and respond to certain command words. Toshiba's model comes with a microphone that directs the voice to the set so viewers won't have to shout across a room. Panasonic's version also has a mike, but engineers there say it's optional and that the naked voice alone is enough unless a house is exceptionally noisy.

In either case, voice commands can turn the set on and off, select channels and adjust volume. Since it doesn't matter which words are used as long as the TV understands them, the possibilities are limitless. There can, of course, be the simple "on" and "off" commands. Other viewers might try "get started" and "enough already." If the phone rings while the TV is on, "shut up" could turn the volume off. And much to Madison Avenue's future chagrin, the same abrupt order could be given to Mr. Whipple, Frank Perdue, Aunt Bluebell and others of their ilk. In the privacy of the home, there's no telling how brazen command words might become.

What listens also is likely to talk back. Both Toshiba and Panasonic are working on "voice synthesis" (speech creation) as well as "voice recognition," and Toshiba's prototype combines the two technologies. If you mumble or give a command that the set doesn't understand, it asks you to "repeat." Otherwise, it gives an "OK" and follows orders. The Panasonic set uses an indicator light to tell viewers if a command has been accepted.

Voice synthesis research and development are also being explored by other companies. Texas Instruments, for one, already is marketing a talking home computer and vocal Speak & Spell and Language Tutor learning aids.

Many believe that consumer interest can be created first for machines that talk and then for those that listen. So before you start thinking up command words for your TV, you should be prepared for some new voices in the home. Last month Panasonic began selling a talking clock radio that announces the time and says "good morning" and "good night." Later in the winter another Panasonic product will appear on store shelves: a talking microwave oven. —*Frank Jacobs*

THE BRIDE CUTS THE CAKE, TAKE THREE

Remember when your parents embarrassed you by making you play the piano—or even worse, sing—in front of guests? Well, if yours is like many American families who are getting hooked on the VCR craze, those days are over. Now, there's a cheaper and easier way to mortify your *own* kids—all thanks to the home-video boom.

Now all you need do is pop a videocassette of their latest ballet recital into your VCR and—*voilà*!—your pride and joy will be up there on the screen (the TV screen , that is) without all the hassle of setting up the home-movie projector. And best of all, if you've paid to have the videotape professionally made, all of your kids' flubs will have been left on the cutting-room floor.

All this thanks to Video Village, Inc., a four-person operation out of Fort Lee, N.J., that specializes in commissioned video recordings of weddings, bar mitzvahs, christenings and other special events. "It's a live keepsake," explains Ron Impalli, who started the business a year and a half ago when he realized the home-video industry was going through the roof. Since then, Impalli and his three partners have recorded about 30 events, including piano recitals, local theater productions, anniversary bashes and a judge's enrobing ceremony.

For about $400 (the price varies, depending on total shooting time and the number of cameras used), the folks at Video Village will record your wedding—ceremony, reception, the works. Besides capturing the traditional dances and bouquet-throwing, the camera will get shots of guests at each table mugging and offering toasts to the bride and groom. But if you're worried that the camera will also record the bride's mascara running and the best man passing out in his baked Alaska, fear not.

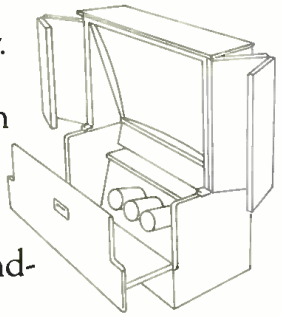
Before delivery, each and every tape is carefully edited for "taste," and any embarrassing moments are snipped out. (On one tape of a formal garden wedding, Impalli and crew tactfully excised the part where the bride tripped on her train and nearly fell into a nearby pond.) Finally, music (of your choice) is dubbed in, and titles and graphics are added to create a polished film of about one to one-and-a-half hours.

Although video recordings are still a luxury item reserved for those who are pulling out all the stops for their wedding or bar mitzvah, Video Village has also recorded events for people who have not even gotten around to buying their own VCR. "I did a christening the other day for a woman who doesn't have one [a VCR] yet, but knows she'll be getting one in the future," Impalli says. "In a few years, VCRs will be just like stereos—everyone will have them."

When asked if he's had any weird requests for his services, Impalli chuckles. "Yeah—but I don't think I can tell you about them over the phone. All I can say is, people are strange." —*Alison Nelson*

Tomorrow is available for immediate delivery.

While you've been waiting patiently for the ultimate developments in projection tv and video recording, Mitsubishi has been quietly perfecting them.
Well, maybe not so quietly.



Because, even before our new VS-510 projection tv and HS-300U videocassette recorder became available, videophiles all over the country were standing in line.

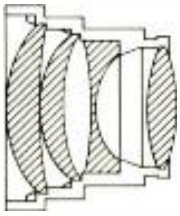
For the first 4-foot diagonal-measure picture that's bright, sharp, movie-like. In a woodgrain cabinet now available with optional bi-fold doors to cover the screen so it looks like furniture, not like the Incredible Hulk.

And for the only 2-or-6 hour VHS recorder with a full, 15-function wireless remote control. That lets you record, playback, pause, slo-mo, freeze-frame, fast-forward, search, you-name-it, from clear across the room.

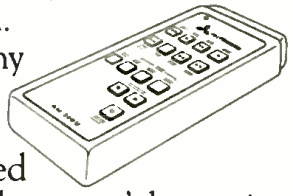
Now, however, both these products are in full-scale production. So you can probably see them at your nearest Mitsubishi dealership. (For the location, call (800) 447-4700* toll-free.) And when you see them in action, you're going to wonder.

"How does Mitsubishi do it, when nobody else in the world can?"

In the VS-510, we do it with optical-quality glass lenses and mirrors instead of the usual plastic. With seven stages of video amplification instead of the usual three. With superior electronic engineering for superior video and audio fidelity, for convenient operation.



In the HS-300U videocassette recorder, we do it with microprocessor circuitry and 5 direct-drive motors, instead of the usual 500 to 700 additional moving parts. With Varactor-type touch controls instead of the usual, wear-prone mechanical ones. With an infra-red remote control unit that instantly and quietly activates every one of those controls. With a programming capability that lets you pre-select as many as 42 different programs in a 7-day period.



So there's no longer any possible reason for you to hold back.

Not for more-advanced products, simply because there won't be any in the near future.

Not for lower prices, because there won't be any of those in the near future, either.

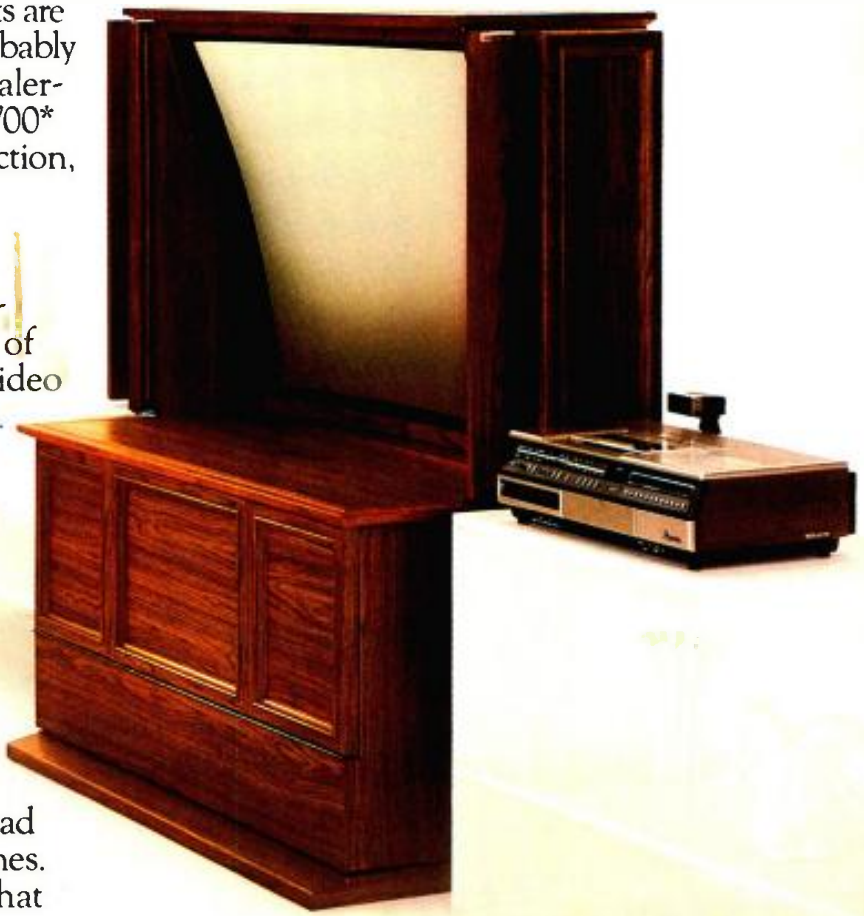
Which means there's no time like the present. To see the VS-510 and HS-300U at your Mitsubishi dealer's. Or check out his exceptional line of Mitsubishi television sets: from 13" to 25" diagonal measure, color or monochromatic.

And get everything your heart desires.

Light years before your head thought it would be here.

MGA/MITSUBISHI

*Mitsubishi Electric Sales America, Inc., 3010 E. Victoria Street, Compton, California 90221. *In Illinois, call (800) 322-4400.*



PANORAMIC VIEW

LOVE LETTERS ON THE SCREEN

As a kid, you probably remember hearing rumors about moving sidewalks and cars that would fly you to school. You may also remember hearing about how computers were going to take over the world. The schoolyard prophets would wax poetic about how "someday soon" we were going to have a computer for a teacher and a computer for a doctor and, someday, maybe even computers for parents. But the rumor that circulated most, back then, was the one about computers replacing mailmen. We may have all worried about computers taking away our fathers' jobs, but the children of mailmen worried just that much more.

Now those rumors have surfaced again. This time, though, rumor central is not the schoolyard, and though mailmen haven't yet been classified as an endangered species, predictions call for a lot fewer hand-delivered letters and a lot more mail read on monitors.

The first front is being fought in the corporate world as small TV monitors, keyboards and printers begin to infiltrate headquarters and divisions interconnected by large-scale computers. Corporate conversion is expected to flourish in the Eighties, with mass distribution of electronic mail to the home probably still a decade off.

But it's coming.

McLean, Va.-based Source Telecomputing Corp. claims 7,000 *personal* users are able to exchange electronic mail messages through in-home terminals linked to a master computer. CompuServe of Columbus, Ohio, another leader, tallies some 4500 personal subscribers using its system.

Sending an electronic letter may, of course, be somewhat more complicated than putting a stamp on an envelope, but it doesn't take a computer genius. All that's needed in the home is a regular telephone and a keyboard monitor setup.

If John Doe in New York, for example, wants to send a letter to Jane Doe in Los Angeles, he calls up a master computer and then attaches the phone to his own personal computer. After punching in the right codes, he types up the letter on his TV monitor. The master computer then signals Jane Doe that a message is waiting, and when she's ready to read it, a few codes on her side bring it up on her TV monitor. And if she has a more sophisticated personal computer, she can also have the letter printed on paper.

Right now, the number of people with personal computers in the home presents no immediate threat to the livelihood of the American mailman. But by 1990, according to Martin Ernst, vice president, management sciences, for the Arthur D. Little, Inc., consulting firm, which has researched the field, 10 to 12 percent of U.S. homes will have computer terminals adaptable to electronic mail—enough of a base to start the business booming.

Clearly a staunch believer in the survival of hand delivery, the U.S. Postal Service has no plans for handling electronic transmissions on a personal domestic basis. They are, however, entering the electronic field in various ways, including a service called E-COM, which begins next month. E-COM will allow businesses to transmit computer-originated messages to 25 postal centers, where they can be delivered by the Post Office or picked up by the receiver.

Even the most pessimistic prognosticators, however, see a future for mailmen, although their numbers may be smaller and home delivery—every day—may become a thing of the past. Questions arise concerning who, if not the faithful mailman, would routinely handle packages, or letters from those without terminals. Will facsimile printers cheap enough for the home be sophisticated enough to copy adequately the Playboy centerfold and other special items carried in the mail pouch? And, asks a Postal Service spokesman, "Would you want to send your girlfriend a letter or birthday card via computer?"

Unhappily for some, the impersonal computerized touch could play a part in getting some personal messages across. If tearing open a handwritten and hand-delivered "Dear John" letter once seemed hard enough, imagine coming home and reading it on your TV monitor. —*F. J.*

EST INVADES TV SPACE

Due to the actors' strike—and the subsequent boycott by TV's biggest stars—we figured this year's Emmy Awards would have to win the prize for marathon programming with highest tedium content. Well, we may have figured wrong.

Werner Erhard, guru and founder of the controversial self-help philosophy est, was the host of a nine-hour, pretaped extravaganza this past July that was distributed over Satellite Program Network on more than 400 cable systems.

Clearly, Erhard is not in the telethon business in the same way as, say, Jerry Lewis. For one thing, Erhard's marathon had its own headline: "A World That Works for Everyone." And, for another, no one was asking for contributions—at least not directly. Instead, the entire *est*fest was billed as a "consciousness-raising" promotion rather than a "fund-raising" event. "It had a public service sort of message," contends Debra Feinstein, est's manager of media relations. "It kind of addressed the issue of whether *you* really matter."

Oh, and one other thing, *est*fest didn't offer very much talent—unless you consider Werner Erhard talking about the "principles of life" as very much.

"It was," admits Feinstein, "basically a 'talking head' [the "head" being Erhard's, of course] show with lots of medium and close shots. It wasn't," she adds laconically, "like a real visual thing. Sometimes Werner shouts and waves his arms to make a point, but that's about it."

Was the event, which cost est $50,000 to produce and distribute, worth it?

"Definitely," is Feinstein's instant response. "We're always thinking, 'Gee, we've got a real valuable message, but not everybody's got $350 to get it.' [The initial cost of est training is $350.] The Satellite Network allowed us to hook up with these people.

"Most of our letters," adds Feinstein, "and most of our requests for more information came from small towns and rural areas. They definitely weren't from the 'hip' parts of the country."

Clearly, when it comes to the future of est, cable systems and satellite transmission, this is one organization that is both bullish and mysteriously obscure. "We're looking into a lot of things," says Ms. Feinstein. "We think there's a relationship there for us." —*Jack Friedman*

YOUR REMOTE CONTROL HOME IS HERE!

Instantly

or automatically

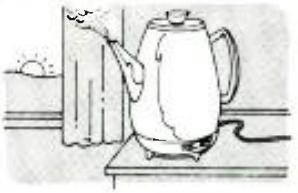
Save time! Save energy! BSR System X-10™ turns lights and appliances on and off, even dims lights, yet needs no special wiring!

- Turn off bedroom TV without getting out of bed.

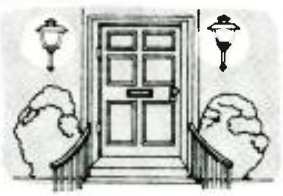
- System X-10™ dims any light—makes it a comforting night-light and saves energy.

- Preset window air conditioner to automatically cool your house before you get home! Don't waste energy!

- Preset your coffee maker the night before—have a hot cup waiting when you wake up!



- Preset outside lights to automatically turn on at dusk. Never come home to a dark house!



- Turn on living room floor lamp from upstairs—don't come down in the dark!

The BSR System X-10™ Controller™ gives you instant control of lights and appliances anywhere in the house, just by pressing the appropriate button. ***The BSR System X-10 Timer™*** lets you preset lights and appliances to turn on and off whenever you wish, wherever you are—home or away!

The BSR System X-10 installs in minutes! Plug lights and appliances into System X-10 modules, then plug in the modules, Controller and Timer. After that—System X-10 is yours to command! NOTE: A System X-10 wall switch installs just like any regular wall switch!

BSR

System X-10™

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TAKE IT HOME TONIGHT-UNDER $100!*

*Mfr's. suggested retail price for Starter Kit: Controller Command Console, 2 lamp modules, 1 appliance module

Available at major department and electronics specialty stores.

Experience the freedom of total control.

The new Sony Betamax SL-5800 frees you from the restraints of time, memory and circumstance. And makes you master of them all.

Mastering time, memory and circumstance.

The Betamax gives you the power to alter the fabric of time itself. You can record one channel while watching another. You can program it to record a variety of shows on four different channels, for up to fourteen days in advance. And with our optional BetaStack tape changer you can even record up to twenty solid hours of consecutive programming. If having all this programming in the palm of your hand seems a bit overwhelming, we've got some more good news for you.

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The Sony Betamax SL-5800 has a remarkable feature called BetaScan that allows you to find any single image from amongst the thousands of images on a tape many hours long. BetaScan lets you go fast forward or reverse without interrupting the image on the screen. A Variable BetaScan feature lets you adjust the speed at which you can view the tape from five times up to twenty times normal speed. A Variable slow motion feature allows you to go from Freeze Frame up to one-third normal speed. And our Freeze Frame is really frozen. It's clear and still and optically true, without noise lines or distortion.

Mastering space.

This Betamax also has a Time Commander Remote Control feature that lets you utilize Variable BetaScan, Variable Slo-motion, Frame-by-Frame Advance and Freeze Framing, without moving from the comfort of your bed or easy chair.

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The elegant, sophisticated technology of the Betamax SL-5800 gives you a new kind of freedom. It lets you record whether you're home or away. It gives you access to a vast variety of programming that you can buy or rent. And a Sony Portable Videotape Camera enables you to actually make your own programs, and play them back instantly. The Sony Betamax SL-5800 lets you shape and mold television to conform to your desires, to satisfy your own particular needs and interests. It allows you to make the final decision about what you'll watch and the way you'll watch it. It presents you with an almost infinite possibility of choices. And that's what freedom is all about.

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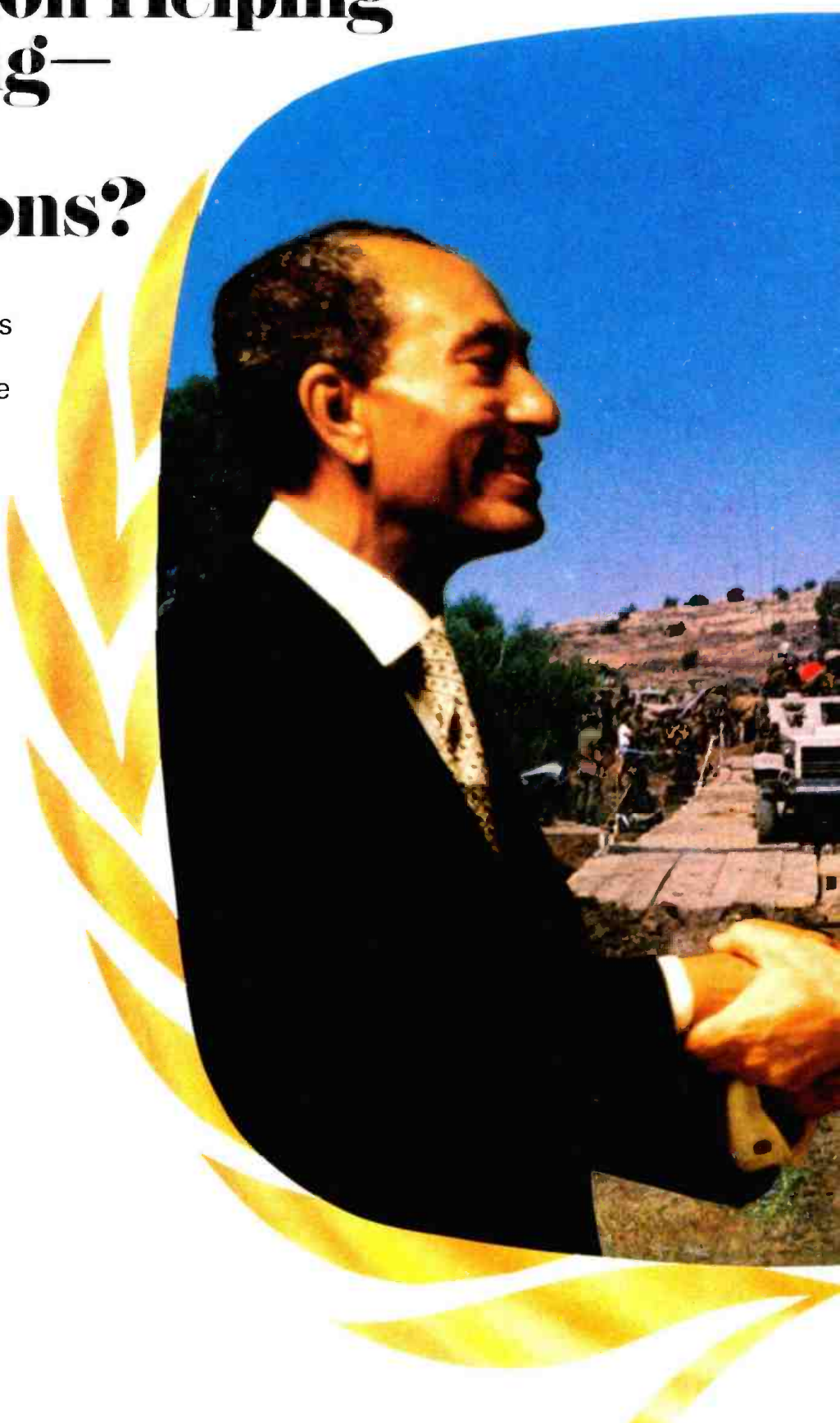
Models shown Betamax SL-5800, KV-1945R

Has TV Tilted Against Israel? Is Television Helping—Or Hurting—Peace Negotiations?



Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin answers these and other key questions in this exclusive PANORAMA interview

By JANE FRIEDMAN

On Nov. 14, 1977, Walter Cronkite seemed miraculously to achieve what 30 years of armed conflict, heated rhetoric and UN debate hadn't: a genuine peace initiative in the Middle East. Who can forget Cronkite simultaneously interviewing Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and extracting the news that, yes, if Mr. Sadat were invited to Jerusalem, he would indeed come. Days later, there was Sadat's moving airport arrival and his groundbreaking speech before the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset. The fruits of this so-called television diplomacy were harvested 16 months later when Begin, Sadat and President Jimmy Carter signed the Camp David accords, the first peace treaty between Israel and a modern Arab state, at the White House.

Today, more than three years since Sadat's historic Jerusalem visit, events in the Middle East are still ominous. And television is ever-present, reporting—and possibly influencing—wars, skirmishes, and diplomatic failures and successes. How do those in the eye of the Mideast storm view television coverage and its effects? Do they think the medium is fair to all sides? Is it overly intrusive? And how do they occasionally use it to further their own ends?

***Jane Friedman** is a free-lance writer living in Israel who writes mostly for The New York Times.*

To discuss the overall role of television in the Middle East, PANORAMA recently visited one of the protagonists in the drama of three years ago, Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Characteristically, he had some surprising and blunt comments about TV's part in the creation of the Camp David accords and how the medium is reflecting events in the Middle East today.

First, Mr. Begin doesn't quite agree that Walter Cronkite was the catalyst of Mr. Sadat's Jerusalem visit. "There is a famous story that Mr. Cronkite played a special role in bringing about the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem and my first meeting with him in our capital city," says Prime Minister Begin. "Though I suppose I can say that it is a [good] story, nobody really can claim that because of that double interview Sadat came to Jerusalem. The story about the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem started early, and this is how it goes.

"President Sadat made a speech to his Parliament and *inter alia* he said one sentence to which I paid special attention. He said, 'I am ready to go to the end of the world and even to Jerusalem and speak in the Knesset to save the life of even one of my sons.' Sadat calls the soldiers of Egypt his sons and he of course was referring here to the Egyptian soldiers.

"Then he said that he has two conditions for peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel. One, that Israel should withdraw to its borders of the fourth of June, 1967, the pre-Six-Day-War lines. Second, there should be a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district.

"I Even Quoted the Koran"

"I had an opportunity to reply to him because the following day I made a direct appeal to the Egyptian people that had been planned several weeks earlier. I made my speech in English; all the media were here. My appeal was to start peace negotiations. I even quoted the Koran, in which there is a verse that this land—*Eretz Israel*—belongs to the Jewish people. And then I gave the following reply to President Sadat. In my reply I said that President Sadat, if he decides to come to Jerusa-

lem, will be a welcomed guest and will be received respectfully and cordially. He should know that his two conditions are completely unacceptable to Israel. But of course this is a free country and if he speaks from the rostrum of the Knesset he will be entitled to say anything he wishes.

"Then the ball started to roll. I got an indirect reply from Mr. Sadat through the American Ambassador to Egypt, Mr. [Hermann] Eilts. In that reply to my reply, President Sadat said he is willing to come and he will speak from the Knesset rostrum, but he asks for a formal written invitation. [Then came Cronkite's historic interview, during which Prime Minister Begin told President Sadat he *would* issue such an invitation.—Ed.] So I immediately sat down and wrote a letter of invitation. The question was the date, because I was scheduled to go to London for an official visit. I explained to President Sadat that we would have to agree to a date or, for the sake of peace, I will postpone my visit to England.

Media's "Serious Role"

"But the second part of the letter became unnecessary because in 24 hours I got a reply again through the good offices of the two American ambassadors [Eilts and Samuel Lewis, Ambassador to Israel] that President Sadat accepted my invitation. To my astonishment, he suggested that he come on Saturday night, and that was only a few days away.

"Of course, I accepted gladly. I suppose that he wanted to come as soon as possible in order to avoid pressure from the Arab states, pressure that started but evaporated very soon because the visit became a fact.

"I only made a condition that he come on an hour after *Shabbat*. He understood very well because he himself is a religious man. The visit came out in the most excellent way. There was not even one fault.

"So again about the role of the media—I must say that the fact is that Mr. Cronkite brought Sadat and me together for the first time. It was an almost simultaneous interview. He spoke to me in Tel Aviv. He spoke to Sadat in Cairo. It came out in the U.S. simultaneously, so he of course played a role.

"However, I cannot say that this event created the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem."

Prime Minister Begin lauds the television coverage of Sadat's visit, saying, "The media played a very serious role in giving publicity to the visit. First of all, Mrs. Barbara Walters had a common interview with President Sadat and myself. She used her influence with me to bring about that common interview. I like her very much and she knows it.

"And it was a very successful interview, although we had already spoken about Jerusalem and our points of view were different. I, for instance, asked why Jerusalem should be divided. Cairo is one city; Washington is one city; London is one city; and Jerusalem should be one city, the capital of Israel.

"Sadat had a different outlook, as you know. But the whole talk was very friendly, very friendly. *Inter alia*, Barbara Walters also asked President Sadat when I was going to Cairo to speak to the Egyptian Parliament. He answered that the Prime Minister has a right to speak to the Egyptian Parliament. However, for the time being he can't invite me to Cairo. He apologized to me. He said, 'I can't give you the reasons.' I never heard the reasons from him until recently, when he told Mr. [Yitzhak] Rabin [the former Israeli Prime Minister] that if I had appeared before the Parliament and I had expressed my opinion on Jerusalem—as he was sure I would—the reaction would be negative.

> "Mrs. Barbara Walters used her influence with me to bring about her common interview with President Sadat and myself. I like her very much and she knows it."

"After Barbara Walters came, of course, CBS and NBC. The second was Walter Cronkite. Mr. [John] Chancellor was the last one. All the three interviews were quite good, all in a friendly tone.

"Of course millions of people watched. By the by, I would like to stress that the media played a very great role as far as the Knesset sessions are concerned. The estimate I heard was that throughout the world 250 million people watched and listened to the speeches made by President Sadat and myself and by the leader of the opposition, Mr. [Shimon] Peres. So, of course, it was reaching almost every home in the United States and many homes throughout the world.

"In the United States, there was an unprecedented event" when President Sadat arrived in Israel, recalls Prime Minister Begin. "They interrupted on television a baseball contest. [Actually, it was the Ohio State-Michigan football game.—Ed.] Because, they said, a great event is going on in the Middle East; history is being written there. I wouldn't use those exaggerations. But so they said, and therefore they interrupted the match and told the American people to watch and listen."

Might the peace process have begun *without* television's presence? "That," says Prime Minister Begin, "is difficult to say. I can only say that during the visit of President Sadat, and immediately before the visit, the attitude of the media was very positive. They were very helpful. But I suppose if it had happened in the 19th century, there wouldn't have been any media and the visit still would have taken place.

"Later it came out that President Sadat previously had visited Bucharest. I had visited the capital of Romania earlier and I had long talks with President [Nicolae] Ceauşescu. And then President Sadat went to see President Ceauşescu. After that he took off for Tehran.

"When he was in Bucharest, he asked President Ceauşescu two questions: You met Mr. Begin. I would like to know, does he want peace and is he a strong man? And President Ceauşescu answered positively to both questions. Then, as I heard from our ambassador, President Ceauşescu volunteered another statement to President Sadat: the Prime Minister of Israel is capable of explaining things, but he is capable also of listening, which is true. So President Sadat took off for Tehran and, according to him, on the plane he said to himself, 'I think now it's time to go to Jerusalem.'

"Media Change Their Minds"

"So the idea of the visit to Jerusalem came to his head on the plane between Bucharest and Tehran as a result of his talks with President Ceauşescu. Therefore, I always say President Ceauşescu contributed to that meeting and praise him for it."

Since the peace treaty was signed, the media have reflected a continuing

acrimony between Israel and the Arab states. Does Prime Minister Begin think he and his role have been portrayed fairly and consistently? "The media, like the man running behind them, change their minds," he says. "From time to time they are sympathetic and positive and helpful. There are times they become negative. Before I became Prime Minister and immediately after the elections, the media and the press made some negative comments. But that was their opinion and I don't have any recriminations. That was their right.

"Then there was a time of great romance between the media and myself. When I came to sign the peace treaty, Vice President Mondale said, 'We greet you as a hero of peace.' The media broadcast it throughout America. But there was another period when some of the media said that I became an obstacle to peace. I always say that between the hero of peace and obstacle to peace there's some difference. But I accept both with one exception—that the word 'hero' is unacceptable to me. I'm a very simple man. I'm no hero. And I'm no hero of peace. I want peace, that's true. I think I also contributed something to the peace process in the Middle East, but that's all.

"Reporters Were Furious"

"As far as an obstacle to peace, I think that's a complete distortion of reality. I work for peace. I hate war. I want you to sign an agreement, you should carry it out. But I don't have any recriminations. The media and the press in the United States are completely free."

Prime Minister Begin also claims to be satisfied with the way he is portrayed relative to President Sadat. "I am glad he has got success," says Mr. Begin. "He is my friend. I appeared with him in common interviews. I never heard mine was faulty and his was good or vice versa. Everybody praised the interviews of both of us. He is my friend. Let him have success with any media.

"Sometimes," Prime Minister Begin adds, "the media make predictions which don't always come true. For instance, there was a meeting between an Israeli delegation and an American one [during President Carter's March 1979 trip to Israel]. All the three networks in the U.S. were given information by a State Department official, whose name I don't want to mention. [U.S. sources say it was Carter's press secretary, Jody Powell.—Ed.] It was to the effect that the visit failed. They all, especially Mr. Cronkite, sent it over to the U.S. It was broadcast all over America. The following day it became clear the visit ended in success. All of the reporters were furious. They told me they were misled."

Prime Minister Begin thinks governmental officials, reflecting what possibly is a tougher American line toward Israel, can tilt TV coverage of the Middle East against his country. "The media are free but, of course, from time to time there is information given by certain officials," he says. "The same practice occurs in Britain. The Foreign Office has influence with the press. There is an almost daily contact with the press by the Foreign Office and sometimes any government is interested in a certain line."

Even so, Mr. Begin is happy with the reporting on U.S. Envoy Sol Linowitz's visit to the Middle East last September. "He performed a very successful mission," Mr. Begin says. "We agreed and President Sadat accepted our agreement reached in Jerusalem. The media reported properly, faithfully about the event."

> "Sometimes, the media make predictions which don't always come true."

Prime Minister Begin claims to have generally good feelings toward American TV correspondents and anchormen, despite their occasionally harsh coverage of him and his policies. "I don't have any recriminations," he says. "Sometimes there was even criticism of myself and even some name-calling. I don't pay attention to it.

"But I want to tell you an episode. I had an interview on ABC during my visit to the United States in March 1979. I was invited by ABC to appear on *Issues and Answers*. They wanted Barbara Walters to interview me, but she was in Europe or Morocco. So a gentleman, Mr. Reynolds [Frank Reynolds, Washington anchorman on *World News Tonight*], interviewed me. He asked questions. Some of them were harsh. Usually they were to the point. Some of them were pertinent. None of them were impertinent. But in the last few minutes of the interview, he put to me the following question: 'Mr. Prime Minister, would you explain to me what you are doing here?' I said, 'Well, I am answering your questions.' 'Yes,' he said, 'but you make the impression that you speak to the people above the head of the Government of the United States.' I said, 'Mr. Reynolds, that is the most curious question I have heard in my life. Your office bombarded my office with cables inviting me to participate in *Issues and Answers*. I accepted your invitation. You asked me questions. I gave you answers. Now you ask me why I'm here.' So he was rather confused, I must say. But he overcame his confusion.

"He wanted to make the point that I came to *Issues and Answers* to attack the Government of the United States. Well, I told him that was not my intention. It depends on the questions and I have to give appropriate answers to them. However, the United States is a free country and Israel is a free country. I told him that if [former] Secretary [of State Cyrus] Vance comes to Israel and wants to be interviewed on our television, he will be perfectly free to give whatever answers and whatever criticism he may have against the policies of the government of Israel. . . . So is America a free country? If you ask me a question concerning the policy of the Government of the United States and I have to say the proposals made lately are unacceptable, I will say so."

Keeping the Lines Open

Actually, Mr. Begin sometimes gets his hardest knocks from the rough-and-tumble Israeli press. "Somebody asked me, 'How does the Hebrew press treat you?' I said, naturally—'atrociously'," he jokes. But Mr. Begin insists he enjoys the give-and-take. "There is a kind of uplifting of the spirit after an interview," he says. "There is a great concentration of all your senses. Therefore, it is a real intellectual effort. There is some exhilaration afterward, especially when people tell you complimentary things. Sometimes they are silent. Usually this is not a good sign. Usually they are silent because they would like to say something which they prefer not to say."

The Prime Minister realizes how important it is for his country's image that he keep his lines to the press open.

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"Hello There! I'm Your New Microcomputer! Won't We Be Having Fun!"

With a home computer promising blackjack, Frost poems and math answers, the writer couldn't lose—or could he?

By RALPH SCHOENSTEIN

"The TRS-80 Model I fills the bill as an all-purpose personal computer. Thousands have found the TRS-80 ideal for finances, education, accounting, engineering—even games at home."
—Radio Shack's 1981 catalogue, p. 169

On the day that I went to Radio Shack to buy a TRS-80 home computer, I thought I was buying a kind of videotape machine that could store my *Captain Kangaroos*. This was the depth of my electronic comprehension as I paid $500 for an uncertain plunge into the world of tomorrow. As I took the TRS-80 home to a wife and three daughters, whose lives it had been designed to change, I was still wondering what the hell it did. I knew only that the basic use of computers in America was to dun people for bill payments they had already made.

Radio Shack, however, was saying that the basic use encompassed "a stunning range of applications. TRS-80 Model I is the most popular computer in the world. You can put it to work immediately because it's so easy to use. Level I's manual makes learning to program fast, simple and fun."

Level I—or 4K Level I, as it is officially known—is the plane on which the TRS-80 operates. The computer itself consists of a typewriter keyboard for doing your own programming, a video monitor that looks like a small television set and a cassette player for preprogrammed tapes: a flying saucer game, a blackjack game, an IQ builder, an algebra teacher and a payroll control (the prices range from $4.95 to $199.95). These cassette programs are called software, but none were as soft as my brain in coping with this new technology: it took me an afternoon to set up the computer (it should have been 10 minutes' work, but my technological expertise begins and ends with the erector set). The instructional manual spoke to me as if I were a slightly backward 6-year-old, saying things like, "Hello there! I am your new microcomputer! Won't we be having fun!" When even a manual speaks patronizingly to me, I begin to wonder if man should not have stopped at the abacus.

The first thing that the manual tries to teach you is how to program the computer with a series of instructions written in a language known as BASIC; but I quickly learned that for me, the language of BASIC will always be "Goddamn it, soldier, that's no excuse!" "Write NEW. . . . Now press ENTER . . . . Write RUN after the computer says READY. . . . You must see the prompt mark on the bottom line. . . . Line numbers are accepted up to 32,767 . . . . REM statements have no effect on programming. . . . You can call for a LIST any time the prompt mark appears on the screen . . . . Nothing is saved unless it is the 'object' of a print statement. . . . If the computer says 'WHAT?' or 'HOW?', then you have simply made some error in . . . ."

WHAT? and HOW? were flashing like traffic lights now; for as I tried to formulate the easiest programs, I was doing little things that moved the computer to keep questioning *me*.

Luckily, however, my 19-year-old daughter Jane was entertaining a young man named Sam, who worked with computers in the MX missile program, and he showed me what the TRS-80 could do.

"You shouldn't get flustered, Ralph," he said. "A program is just a

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Public Television in Crisis:

This Could Be the Countdown to Extinction

Challenged by reduced funding and increased competition, PTV is fighting for survival with some radical marketing ploys

By DOUG HILL

"Everything's coming unstuck. All bets are off."—John J. Iselin, president of New York public-TV station WNET, on the future of public television

I. THE CRISIS

David M. Davis is sitting in his office at WNET in New York, trying to figure out a way to keep public television alive. A lot of people are working on that problem these days, but Davis is in the forefront. He represents not only WNET, but also KCET in Los Angeles and WGBH-TV in Boston. Collectively those three produce the bulk of PBS's most expensive and popular programs, among them Cosmos, Masterpiece Theatre, The MacNeil/Lehrer Report, Live from Lincoln Center *and* Great Performances.

Davis is no stranger to the public-television wars. He worked as station manager of WGBH for 11 years, and at the Ford Foundation when Ford was almost single-handedly underwriting noncommercial broadcasting in this country; he's seen PTV climb from a handful of ragtag, unconnected educational stations to a national network linked by one of the most sophisticated satellite systems in the world. But to hear Davis tell it now, it's almost as if he's back at the beginning.

He spent much of his summer and fall scouting out the pay-cable business, finding how his stations might start selling some of their more glamorous programs to companies like Home Box Office or Showtime, or how they might start a pay-cable network of their own. Without schemes like these, many of those programs might not get made any more: it's that simple. The fact that nobody has done it before doesn't make Davis's job any easier. Neither does the expectation that some people, some very powerful people, may try to prevent him from doing it. Neither do the doubts that his efforts could end up hastening *public television's demise, or the fears that maybe he'll end up selling its soul along with its programs. All Davis really knows, or believes, is that he has no choice.*

"Yes, there are dangers, and yes, it will be controversial," he says, staring down at his hands. "I've wrestled with my own conscience at length on this. I'm convinced we can do it. The alternative is to curl up and die."

Die? Now wait a minute. OK, we've heard all the sob stories from these public-television types. They're always crying about money—they get on the air and beg for weeks at a time, for God's sake. But what's all this about dying?

There's a clear and present danger that public television might not survive the decade, in the opinion of many in the PTV community today. They see two demons bearing down on them, two threats that together form a perfect paradox: scarcity and abundance.

The scarcity is, of course, one of money, but it's *not* the same old story. Witness a few quick examples:

- WGBH in Boston laid off 75 people this summer, including a third of its nightly news staff and half its studio personnel. "We're now beginning to cut back services," says Henry Becton, the station's vice president and general manager.
- KQED in San Francisco let 35 employees go last August and has stopped developing national programming.
- West Virginia's Educational Broadcasting Authority is facing cutbacks in its state funding that, if approved, would all but put an end to the 800 hours of local programming the authority produces each year, and to the jobs of its entire local production staff.

What's happening is pretty straightforward. For the first time in its history, public broadcasting's income last year failed to keep pace with the national rate of inflation. That statistic gets quite a bit gloomier when you consider that inflation was "only" 11.5 percent nationally, but in TV production, it was hitting close to *30 percent.*

But that's not the worst of it. While it's true that public TV *has* been chronically underfinanced, the fact remains that its subsidies from state and Federal governments, PTV's largest sources of revenue, have actually risen substantially every year since 1973. That joy ride is almost certainly over. This is an era when the public purse strings face tightening, not loosening, and the word has gone out from legislators in Washington and in dozens of state capitals around the country that "status quo" appropriations are the best public broadcasters can hope for. Rest assured passionate lobbying will be under way to change that view in the coming months, but even PTV's staunchest advocates admit the tide is against them.

Thus is left an even better opening for the second threat, the one from cable TV, pay-TV, videocassettes and videodiscs. Public television's raison d'être has always been to supply the more specialized alternatives to the mass audience programming of ABC, CBS and NBC. But isn't specialization what the video revolution is all about?

continued

As cable and the other new technologies blossom through the 1980s, aren't more and more legislators, producers, underwriters and viewers alike going to start wondering if they really *need* public TV any more? Indeed, not a few already are. Sen. Harrison H. Schmitt asked his audience at one PTV convention, "If commercial entrepreneurs are meeting specialized needs, why should Congress continue to fund public broadcasting?"

A dissipation of support within the ranks is also under way, as more and more of public TV's brightest stars, tired of the politics and the poverty, are departing for greener pastures. Robert Geller is a case in point. Recognized in the television industry for his talents as a producer, he was the guiding force behind PTV's *The American Short Story*, which The New York Times and many other papers called potentially "the most distinguished drama series ever made for television." Therefore, Geller went to the Public Broadcasting Service's annual program fair in San Francisco last February believing renewal of the program for another season was virtually assured. But although the stations spent a record $30 million for programs, $7 million more than the previous year, that still didn't keep up with the escalation of production costs, and a lot of series didn't survive. *The American Short Story* was one of them. "There are times I wish I'd been more astute about the internal politics," Geller says now. "I assumed people would have seen the shows. We didn't come in playing hardball; we didn't do politicking after hours; we didn't know what the voting power of the various stations was; we had no 'Bernice Bobs Her Hair' dolls; we didn't have Dick Cavett hosting a lunch. I noticed during our presentations that no one was meeting my eyes. It was a disaster for me." Geller, now developing projects for the commercial networks and cable, no longer produces for public television.

No wonder there's a grim joke making the rounds at PBS about "the eroding mission of public television." As PBS's vice president for programming, Ron Devillier, put it last fall (not long before *he* left to form his own production and consulting firm), "We're right on the fulcrum point. Either we go over the edge and crash, or we carve out a permanent niche in the television spectrum."

II. THE PLAN

"Vibrant, auburn-haired Sheila Lummis looks every bit the successful businesswoman she is today." Sheila Lummis is the director of corporate relations for WNET in New York and the super-saleswoman of public television; the description is from a recent book in which she serves as a role model for women reentering the work force. In her first year at WNET, Lummis brought the station a record $4.5 million worth of underwriting and program promotion, selling The MacNeil/Lehrer Report *to American Telephone and Telegraph,* Dick Cavett *to The Chubb Corporation and* Bill Moyers' Journal *to Weyerhaeuser Company. What's her secret? "You have to talk about what's in it for them," Lummis says, "not just what a marvelous program it is."*

That's how Lummis sold Richard Draper, a corporate division manager at AT&T, for example. Lummis supplied him with research showing that ML's *audience is "up-scale" and involved. And she convinced him that AT&T could associate itself with "excellence" (the headline word in AT&T's ads). "We get on-air identification twice a program," Draper explains, "so that's 1000 credits a year. That's not a bad advertising buy."*

> Public TV, says a former PBS official, is "right on the fulcrum point. Either it goes over the edge and crashes, or it carves out a permanent niche in the television spectrum."

The tighter its financial squeeze gets, the more public television sees the profit-and-loss world of Sheila Lummis as its best, and maybe only, hope for the future. For as Ron Devillier's comment about the "fulcrum point" suggests, there may be a brighter resolution to the PTV paradox: that those same challenges of scarcity and abundance might provide both the impetus and the means by which the institution could emerge in 1990 as a far more vital and independent part of the TV spectrum than it is today. But for that to happen, dozens of PTV leaders believe they must move, and move fast, out of the cloistered halls of charity and into The Marketplace. "It is our conviction that public television must enter a new phase of development," PBS president Lawrence Grossman told the organization's annual meeting last summer, "a new approach that combines our traditional philanthropic public services with enterprising new marketing initiatives. We must mine new sources of income. We must earn our way."

Public TV's willingness to meet The Marketplace on its own professional terms, as Lummis does, has been growing steadily in the past few years, especially at PBS and at its 10 largest stations (which capture 97 percent of the national underwriting dollars). PTV's business suit has come out of the closet, and the new fashion is catching on with a vengeance. "Public television has been loath to call a spade a spade," says Lummis. "If you're selling, you're selling. That attitude is definitely changing, and as Government sources dry up, it will be changing even more."

The Marketplace also encourages the production of more *popular* programs by PTV, programs that will attract more subscribers—who in turn will attract more corporate underwriters, and vice versa. "There was a time when it was very embarrassing to publicly discuss the desire to have larger audiences," says one PBS executive. "I don't know exactly when that changed, but it has. We've been sitting in a little red schoolhouse somewhere, but now we've joined the broadcasting community. It sounds scary, but—hell, yes—we want audiences. Public television wants the biggest audiences it can get."

This is not to say that all public broadcasters share that philosophy—quite the contrary, as we shall see—or that public television has necessarily turned its back on those minority audiences it's supposed to be serving. The theoretical principle underlying all of PTV's new profit-making endeavors is that dollars gained will be used to produce other not-so-profitable projects. But it's fair to say that the prevailing atmosphere is one of "first things first"—and what comes first is survival.

To that end, public television spent the past year getting itself "positioned for the future," a process that in many respects epitomized what WNET's Iselin meant when he said "everything's coming unstuck." Some of the more significant pieces:

- KCET and WGBH reorganized internally, spinning off separate divisions for national and local programming and for marketing in order to "leverage" sales to a host of markets—PTV's traditional funders, *commercial* TV, cable and pay-TV, foreign broadcasters,

cassette and disc distributors and publishing.

● WNET has taken the repositioning process a crucial step further by setting up a separate, profit-making *company*, called NET Enterprises, to produce for commercial TV, among other ventures. One of its first projects: a talk show with Las Vegas columnist Dick Maurice.

● PBS also split itself internally this year, creating three separate program services: one for "high visibility" prime-time programs; one for educational programs; and one for special interest, minority and independently produced programs. Their first-year administrative budgets show where the immediate priorities lie: $800,000 for the prime-time service, $320,000 for the educational service and $224,000 for the special-interest service. "You can do all the nifty public-affairs programming you want, but that won't bring in the revenues," says M. Peter Downey, senior vice president of PBS's program support group. "The opinion of all the policy-makers is that pragmatic realities have to be faced."

● Local PTV stations set up their own organization in Washington, The National Association of Public Television Stations. It exists to lobby for larger Federal appropriations and to make sure the lion's share of those appropriations goes directly to the stations for local programming and *not* to national PTV organizations for national programming. In a discussion with several congressmen, one station manager pointed to the cable plans of CBS and others and asked, "How much national opera, dance, music and public affairs can viewers utilize between eight and ten o'clock? If public broadcasting is to survive the decade of the '80s, it must redirect its efforts to the support of localism."

● More than 235 of PTV's 286 stations joined a new organization called the Interregional Program Service. IPS's most important role is to act as public TV's equivalent to the commercial syndication market: a bargain-basement program bazaar where stations can buy programs—almost all of them from commercial and foreign producers—cheaply and quickly. To stations, IPS is an expedient alternative to the labyrinthine democracy of PBS, where program purchases are subject to an approval system that would frighten Kafka (not to mention Robert Geller), and where Government grants are tied to what IPS's Bob Davidson calls "a great social goal." Concedes Davidson about IPS, "I'd love to say our role in life is to produce the best possible programs, but I don't think that's true." Programs acquired by stations through IPS so far include *The Paper Chase; Superstar Profile; Fawlty Towers; Agronsky & Co.; All Creatures Great and Small;* a package of movie musicals from 20th Century-Fox; *Go Tell It; Ben Hooks Reports; Masters of Modern Sculpture;* and *Moments of Championship Skating.*

KCET's *Cosmos*, appropriately enough, is a good example of how the public-TV series of the future may be "leveraged" into being. By putting together a complicated combination of foundation and Government grants, corporate underwriting, foreign broadcast sales, videotape sales to schools and royalties from the tie-in book by Carl Sagan, KCET will eventually realize at least $1 million in profit from the $8 million production. And that's not including membership pledges the series will attract. In mid-production, the station went after sales to ABC-TV and to pay-cable, both of which might have played the series *before* PBS did. But because of its deals with the original partners, neither sale came through. "In the future we are trying to reserve our position in that regard," says KCET's Bill Lamb, who handled the negotiations.

> "You can do all the nifty public-affairs programming you want," declares a PBS vice president, "but that won't bring in the revenues."

In the end, it may be the new television technologies—abundance itself—that hold the greatest promise as new sources of PTV revenue. It turns out that PTV's elaborate satellite system for delivering programs to stations has some very handy commercial applications. For example, some stations are sharing their satellite earth terminals with Western Union, an arrangement that will bring in fees of $5 million by 1985. Others are using the bird to set up teleconferences for cash-paying clients. Perhaps the most ironic "fit" of all began this fall when an advertising firm started sending its *commercials* to 95 noncommercial stations, which videotape them for delivery across town to their commercial station rivals!

PTV stations are sitting on a videotape gold mine of old documentaries, instruction courses, concerts, specials and series. Legal rights to distribute those programs on videocassette and videodisc have to be secured, but WGBH in Boston, for one, plans to begin reediting its library for the home video market late this year. PBS hopes to start its own videocassette club, in part because its research found that five percent of public-station members own videocassette recorders—two-and-a-half times the penetration in the population as a whole. "The videocassette consumer is up-scale, with selective viewing habits—in short, precisely the kind of people who contribute to public television," says PBS's director of development, Eric Sass. "We should capitalize on those facts."

But it is pay-TV that is seen by many public broadcasters as the ultimately attractive new technology, for the simple reason that pay-TV could get public TV off the dole for good. "We lust after cable, because they have the answer," said Ron Devillier before he left PBS. "You *can't* see it if you don't pay. With us [now], it's the honor system, and that means a tough sale." It's no accident that PBS's three new program services are each tailor-made to fill a special cable channel. San Francisco's KQED plans to take a hybrid approach by leasing a little-used second station it owns to a subscription-TV company. Entertainment programs would be broadcast "scrambled" at night to STV subscribers whose sets are equipped with the decoding boxes to unscramble them; KQED would use the revenues to broadcast unscrambled educational and public-service programs during the day. Another station plans to scramble part of its program schedule and offer the decoder box as a "premium" to viewers who become full-time station members. "Maybe the best way to go," mused one marketing manager, "is to scramble the whole system."

The question arises as to just how prophetic those words will be.

III. THE DANGER

In New York's cultural mecca, Lincoln Center, one evening last March, pairs of black-tied and evening-gowned patrons of the arts are streaming into the Metropolitan Opera House on their way to a "Gala of Stars" concert sponsored by WNET. Inside they will see what is billed as "a stunning classical music celebration," featuring

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The Whitewashing of "Palmerstown, U.S.A."

A writer who grew up in the South measures the show against his boyhood recollections and asks, "How can you have a morally complicated TV series?"

By ROY BLOUNT JR.

At the hub of the show's racial interaction are the Hall and Freeman families (above). At left, a town parade from the first episode.

Although I was a Southern white boy throughout my childhood, I did not grow up romping and fishing with a Southern black boy in primal small-town innocence the way little black Booker T. and little white David do in the TV series *Palmerstown, U.S.A.* Many Northern people don't believe me when I tell them this, but it is true. I get some looks that seem to say, "In that case, why did you bother to be a Southern white boy at all?"

Well, I guess I wish I *had*, like Booker T. and David, capered interracially amidst color-obsessed elders in such a way as to prove that folks are naturally loving until they are about 12, when society makes them prejudiced.

Except that I'm not sure I would have liked my black playmate, or myself, if we had been as extremely presentable as the boys in *Palmerstown*—which was created and developed by Alex Haley and Norman Lear (who may have been nicer small boys than I was) and will begin its second run on CBS this season.

Booker T. and David mug a lot—they assume the kind of unthreateningly mischievous expressions that parents may *wish* kids would assume. Their hair stays extremely neat, and when they are covered with mud it seems to be by Elizabeth Arden. The boys are Tom and Huck, only a whole lot nicer, but odious social values are looming around them (the time is 1935) and every now and then a bunch of rednecks drive up in a truck .... Decency inevitably wins out, and in the end Booker T. and David are nudging each other and flashing hamburger-commercial grins.

When these boys get into fights or call each other "nigger" and "white trash," it is because of racial tensions among the grown-ups, and it is with none of the quivering fury that I remember from fallings-out with boys of my own color.

We didn't have any black kids in my grammar school, but there was a boy there whom we *treated* like an "uppity nigger." His name was Jerry. He wasn't a sissy, but he was oddly mature. He had grown-up manners and wore suit pants instead of Levi's, so we hated him.

I didn't really *hate* him, but all the rough boys did, and I liked the idea of being passably rough. And to tell the truth, I was not so intrinsically rough that I could afford to separate myself from the unquestionably rough boys on this issue. I was suspect because I had a terrible urge—I knew it was wrong, but I had trouble suppressing it—to volunteer answers to questions in class. So I acted as if I hated Jerry, and I enjoyed it.

Jerry sat right behind me. I told peo-

***Roy Blount Jr.** is a former Georgian whose latest book, "Crackers," was recently published by Alfred A. Knopf.*

If it weren't for the troubles stirred up by the adults of Palmerstown, Booker T. (played by Jermain H. Johnson, above left) and David (Brian G. Wilson) could spend their childhood frolicking in the countryside. With their fathers: W.D. Hall (Beeson Carroll, far right) is the town's grocer and Luther Freeman (Bill Duke) is the blacksmith.

ple he was always bumping my back and making dumb noises. So a bunch of boys decided the right thing to do was to take Jerry out into the woods so I could fight him. This sounded OK to me, as I felt Jerry was the one boy in my grade—except for some little squeaky ones who weren't worth fighting and knew it—whom I was clearly rougher than.

But when I came up to Jerry, who was looking apprehensive but dignified surrounded by rough boys in the woods, his face brightened, in a mature way, and he said, "Hello, Roy, how are you?" and I was the one who was supposed to beat him up!

"Roy's going to beat you up," said Conrad with relish. Conrad was rougher and bigger than the rest of us.

"Roy and I don't have any argument," said Jerry reasonably. All the rough boys looked at Jerry almost with delight. That was *exactly* the way you weren't supposed to talk in my school.

I don't know that I had a moral awakening, but I did feel silly, so I just sort of grumbled roughly and left.

Conrad, especially, was disappointed. Later that day, Conrad pushed me

into some bushes, and every time I tried to get out he pushed me back. I pretended it was one of those rough games we boys played. Actually Conrad became much nicer *after* he was 12, because most of us got to be bigger than he was.

When I was a kid, in other words, we acted not the way Booker T. and David do, but the way the *adults* in *Palmerstown* do. Only worse.

The premise of *Palmerstown* is not without historical merit. When kids of different social levels—in any part of the country—get together, they establish levels of their own. And in the face of vicious, corrupting, quasi-gracious, exiguously codified de jure segregation, small-town Southern black and white kids did socialize with one another far more freely than their elders, or than blacks and whites of any age in Southern or Northern cities. To a great extent these playmates were integrated, until white boy became white young man and black boy his inferior.

As Booker T.'s father, Luther, tells his wife, Bessie, in a *Palmerstown* episode from last season: "In a few years, they pass each other on the street and that boy gonna expect Booker T. to call him Mr. David. He be like any other white man; he expect Booker T. to tip his hat and let him pass."

"Them years come, Luther," counters Bessie. "We can't stop 'em and they brings with them whatever they wants to."

Praise the Lord, the years have come more progressively since 1935—or rather since the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I know two white brothers from a small town near Memphis. The older brother, now 39, did not become "Mr. Jace" to all the blacks in town until he came home from his first year at Ole Miss. The younger brother, now 26, never did become "Mr. Fred." Jace's childhood black playmate moved to Detroit before Jace reached "Mr." age, and eventually hit the wire services by stealing, in a colorful way, Leonard Bernstein's car. By the time Fred had made his way through a checkered undergraduate career, *his* former black playmate had become a Memphis physician.

In *Palmerstown* David's father, W.D., owns a grocery store, which makes him a leading citizen. He sometimes sounds, unnervingly, like Henry Fonda, and he even looks slightly like Henry Fonda, only heavier and dumber. He has an obscure, rather piggish sense of amusement—enjoys putting his wife in her place with smug little jokes—but is basically a decent sort. His wife, Coralee, is pretty and sweet, and a *thoroughly* decent sort.

The best characters are Booker T.'s family. Luther owns a blacksmith shop, therefore is—well, if there were such a thing as a black citizen in Palmerstown, he would be a leading one. He looks like Godfrey Cambridge superimposed on John Amos, very solid but also humorous. Bessie is even better: good-looking but not Diahann Carroll pretty, stone-practical but sexy-moving, makes a little independent money midwifing. The best child actor on the show is Booker T.'s older sister, Diana, played by the wonderfully named Star-Shemah Bobatoon. It goes without saying that everybody in this family has a lot of decency. Who's to begrudge?

Certain broad-based, but always peripheral, indecent elements in Palmerstown, is who. The rednecks (rough boys) and old fogys are always putting pressure on W.D. to take no inkling of lip from Luther, who is determined to stand up for himself.

Luther in fact comports himself the way that kid Jerry did, more or less. And W.D. generally winds up acting about the same way I acted that day in the woods. Only everybody in Palmerstown seems to be able to get out of the woods in a more heartwarming and less shamefaced way than I did. Even though there exists the real possibility not that Luther is going to be beat up, but that he is going to be *lynched.*

Luther and W.D. are both upstanding. And W.D. never *means* to stand in Luther's way. And Bessie is not only Coralee's salvation (she pulls her through a difficult childbirth), but also her buddy. I'm afraid the buddy part is too great a tribute to the taste of sweet Southern white ladies in 1935.

The rights, wrongs and balances of power should be more complicated than they are in *Palmerstown, U.S.A.* But how can you have a morally complicated TV series? Luther may not know his place, but TV drama does. Its function is not to show us how things were or are, but to give us a cliché that we and the advertising industry can live with. The history of race relations in this country is too rich and strange a brew of resentment, symbiosis, dread, painful grit and fierce comedy for prime-time commercial TV.

What if W.D. *liked* putting down blacks the way he likes putting down his wife? What if he had a real flair for it (and if certain viewers were almost tempted to agree with him?) but also an intimation that the flair was evil? And what if Luther had a real hatred, heroically but shamingly suppressed, for people who have a flair for squelching his gumption? Then we'd have a series that would make us wonder at the end of each installment, "How in the world are these people going to live until this time next week?"

To me—maybe because I wish I had known black people better when I was growing up—the strong suit of *Palmerstown* is Booker T.'s home life. Luther arrives from work to hear Diana exclaiming, *"Daddy, do I have horse teeth?"* while Booker T. chortles and makes, I must say, some excellent horse noises. Luther brings Bessie a memorable gift: "Oh Mama!" cries Diana, radiant. "Daddy got you some Jergens lotion!"

Whenever the white folks fade into the background, *Palmerstown* becomes a sort of *Waltons* with real sweat, worry, anger and soul. The episode "The Old Sister," last season, in which Beah Richards played Luther's mama and Diana got a crush on Luther's ne'er-do-well brother down from Chicago, was touching, gravely funny and jumping with church music. In one scene his mama acknowledges to Luther that his brother, who has always been her pet, is "a runnin'-away kinda man. He ain' no big bizness man .... Maybe he *needed* me to make a fuss over him. *You* didn't, son, did you?" It seems to me that anyone

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Ford Granada 1981. Built for a changing world. Designed with a commitment to quality.

In a world calling for change, no American-built sedan has changed more for 1981 than the new Ford Granada. Count the ways:

New size.

In 1981, Granada is smaller bumper to bumper, but more spacious passenger to passenger. In a world calling for efficient design this

is the smallest Granada ever, but the roomiest!

New mileage.

Granada's standard 1981 engine is an efficient 4-cylinder design. Granada's overall design and the use of high-strength steel allow a reduction in weight. A new aerodynamic configuration reduces drag. Result: the very highest mileage in Granada's history. That's an increase of more than 21% over last year.

23 EPA EST MPG **34** EPA EST HWY

For comparison. Your mileage may differ depending on speed, distance and weather. Actual highway mileage and California ratings lower.

New steering.

This year, for the first time, you get rack-and-pinion steering in Granada. Resulting in quicker response when you turn the wheel.

New suspension.

Granada's new suspension is a combination of thoroughly tested MacPherson struts and radial arms; a design calculated for a comfortable ride. Between the steering and suspension, we think you'll find Granada a pleasure to drive.

Commitment to quality.

Granada is built with Ford's attention to detail. There are dozens of hand operations. For example, every door is hung and adjusted by hand. The upholstery of every seat is fitted by hand. Every car is examined by at least 38 separate quality-control inspectors. Every Granada door is double weather stripped. That's attention to detail you can see, feel and hear.

Ford Inspector

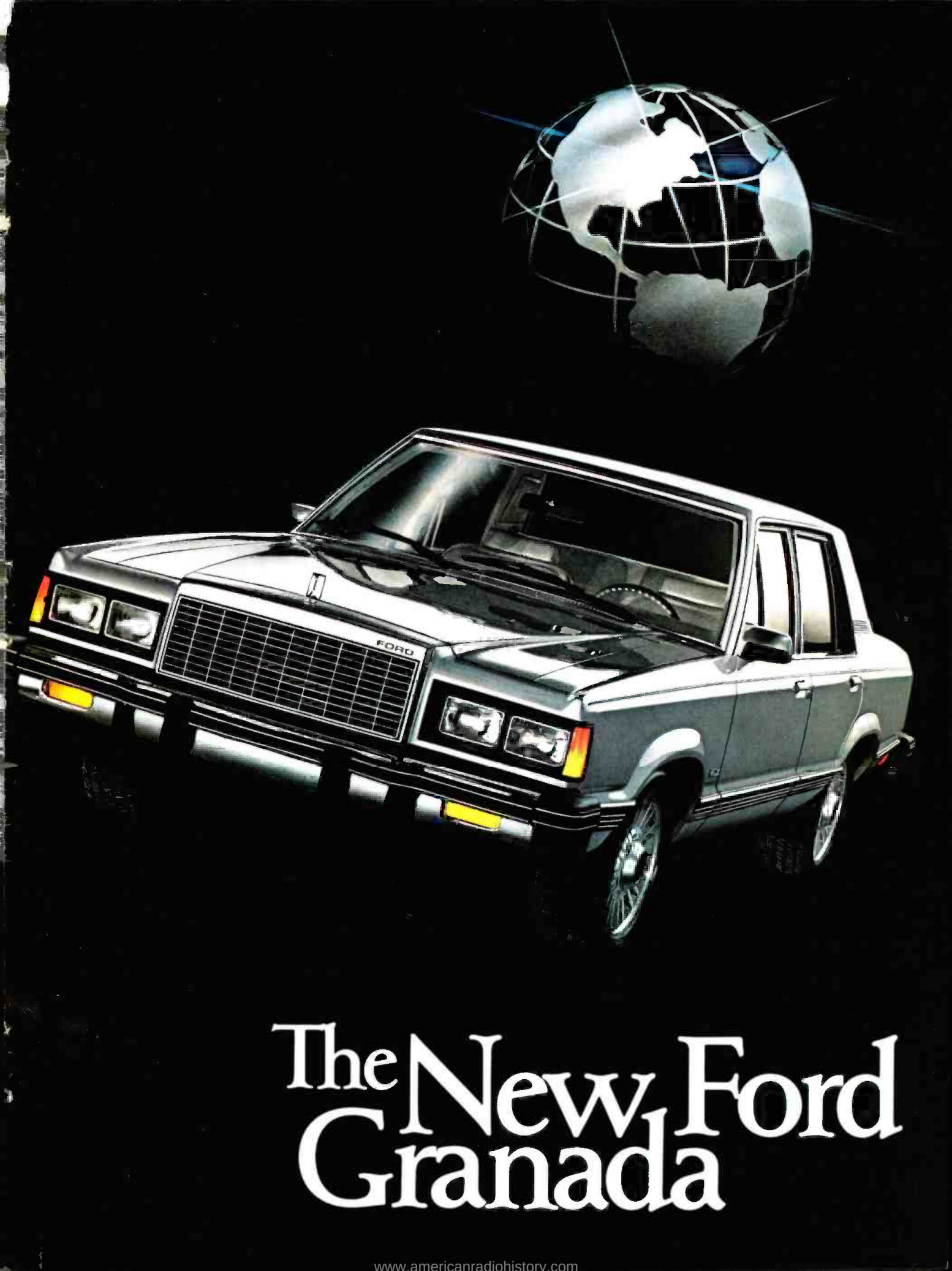
Design. Mileage. Engineering. See the changes in the 1981 Granada. It's a new Granada from the ground up.

Your Ford Dealer can discuss buy or lease arrangements and tell you about Ford's Extended Service Plan.

Ford Granada: Built for a changing world.

FORD GRANADA

FORD DIVISION Ford



The New Ford Granada

TARGET

The Social Force of Television

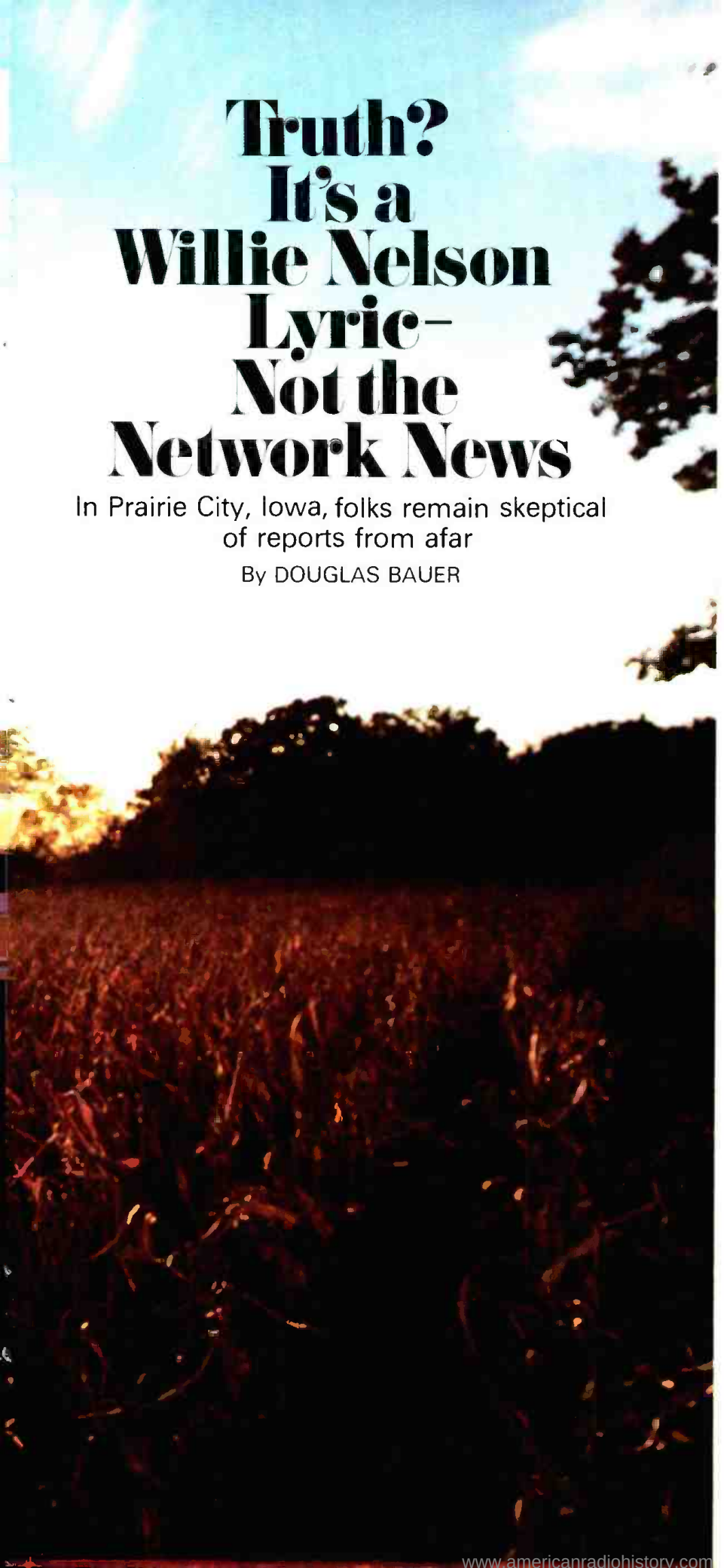
AMERICA

(First of a series)

Truth? It's a Willie Nelson Lyric— Not the Network News

In Prairie City, Iowa, folks remain skeptical of reports from afar

By DOUGLAS BAUER



I often suggest, when anyone asks the location of the tiny farm village where I was raised, that he should recall the way the map of the United States used to be, and perhaps still is, inevitably set across a two-page spread in geography textbooks. With that picture in mind, I then say to the questioner, "Prairie City, Iowa, lies exactly in the seam, in the gutter of the book, halfway down the page." A visitor to Prairie City cannot help but feel almost immediately that he is standing—figuratively, if not exactly—at some dramatic intersection of the country's cultures. The impossible flatness of the land, the overwhelming sweep of sky, sets the little town, 1200 people, farmers and merchants, against a physical environment huge in its implications of vast, insulating distance. New people and new ideas must make extra effort to find Prairie City and, if they do, must wait still longer to see if they are needed. For a town so set off and resourceful develops longstanding habits of work and thought, habits not easily bent by anything so perishable as trend or fashion.

I saw this first, of course, when I left Prairie City for college, 20 miles away, at the edge of the earth, and I have seen it repeatedly, during returns of varying length and purpose, over 15 years. So it is fascinating in this context—the world slow to find a place; the place slow to change—to consider what influence the phenomenon of television has had on Prairie City, and on the thousands of Prairie Cities dotted mosaically across the country. How do the people of Prairie City regard television? And, equally, how does television regard them—quiet people, devoted to work, possessing a plain and immutable intelligence, living lives of seasonal rhythm that run deep and hard?

At 9 in the morning, on a bright September Saturday, the front door of Dick Charls TV shop is propped open to admit the splendid end of summer and early weekend customers. Inside, there's already plenty of both. There is a measurable portion of dawn in the very genes of a rural Midwesterner, an instinctive chemistry that wakes an Iowa farmer at about the instant (or just before) his sun appears and grows quickly huge, like a monstrously fertilized orange, past a distant field's horizon.

At the front of the store, relaxing in a chair, a man much larger and older than Dick Charls watches the sidewalk traffic. On the other side of the town's

central park, a line of tractors and trucks brings the year's first grain to Prairie City's storage silos on the southwest corner of the square.

"Dick around?"

"He'll be down in a minute," the man says and smiles. "Bringing something down for these folks to look at." His thumb, like a gauge, flips left to a couple walking among consoles.

Charls TV, like the other stores on the north side of the square, is long and narrow and, for me, holds a warehouse of memories. In 1954, when I was 9, Dick Charls drove his pickup truck to our farmhouse, four miles east of Prairie City, with the family's first television set. Seventeen inches; mahogany veneer; a rose-colored speaker cloth crisscrossed in gold; "Got these doors so you can close the screen right up when you're not watching." I have no memory of the doors being closed.

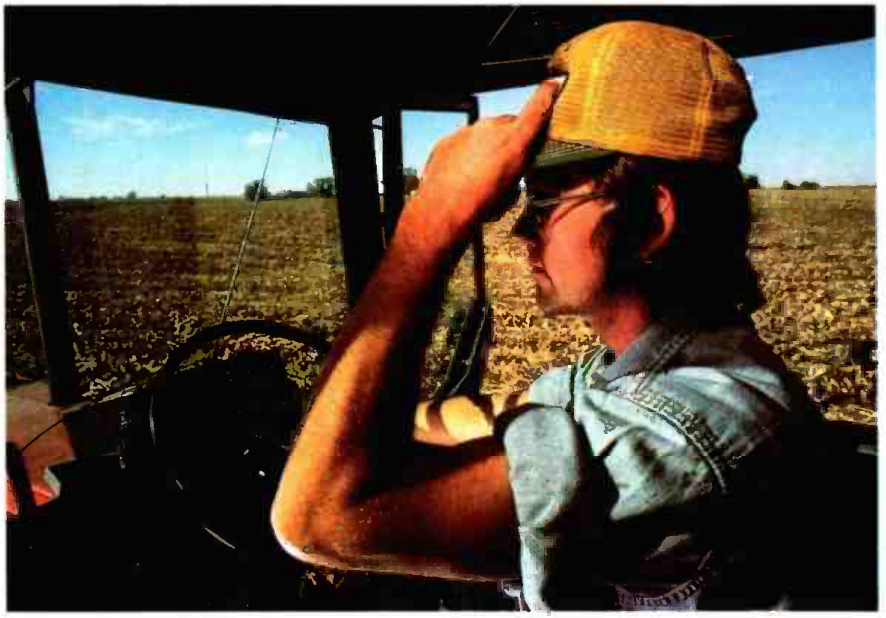
I was, I believe, the last among my classmates to have television. Certainly, I was *among* the last, for I remember clearly sitting at lunch, during recess, between classes, and listening to friends speak with high-pitched glee of the shows they'd seen the night before on the single channel that had found its way to the middle of the country. Infrequently, on Sunday nights, my cousins and I were allowed to visit a friend of my grandmother's, in Colfax, who had television. She served us softly fried eggs and white bread while we watched, on a screen the size of a rear-view mirror, Roy Rogers pummel black-hatted evil into the dusty ground outside the Double R Bar Ranch. And though I loved watching television, loved the act itself, I was aware even as I sat in front of the screen that what I loved even more was being privy to a unifying language. So I studied the screen, *hard*, memorized its images, and at school the next morning burst into conversation:

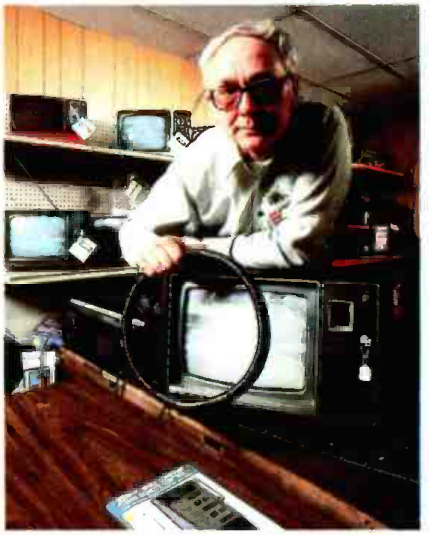
"Did you see Roy Rogers last night?"

"Sure."

"Wasn't it great, when Nellybelle stalled and Pat had to run for help . . . ?"

Twenty years later, I lived again in Prairie City for a time. Its population still hovered at slightly more than 1000; its economy, its life, was still grown in the fields. It is a place fed by, and a captive of, its soil. Fed in the obvious way. Captive in the sense that Prairie City sits surrounded by farms and fields, a castle circled by a loam-rich moat, so that Des Moines (only 20 miles west) and the world rub up against Prairie City hardly at all. Many





Soybean and corn farmer Jerry Kane peers out at his family-owned business from the driver's seat of his TV-equipped tractor in the outskirts of Prairie City (top). Right: Says Dick Charls, proprietor of Charls TV: "I don't think there's the addiction [to television] there used to be. Except with sports. . . ." Below: Charls makes a television "house call" while pal Skip Bud brings up the rear.

of its young people, in style and dress, could be lifted from its sidewalks and set down to blend with a Fifth Avenue crowd. That season, in five o'clock conversation in midtown taverns, the subject returned repeatedly to the phenomenon of *Saturday Night Live*, while, on Saturday night, at 10:30 Central Standard Time, at the Cardinal Inn in Prairie City, farmers sat on bar stools, staring at the screen with a deep brow-furrowed curiosity as Chevy Chase fell off the podium.

The point is not that television's messages are similarly received and interpreted in cities and insulated villages. Not at all. Its rhythms and dialects, its tropes and metaphors, vary wildly. But television, as a language, as *symbols*, unites the country just as it gave me, as a 9-year-old, entrance to a circle of peers.

Dick Charls, pushing a cardboard crate, enters his front room. He's changed little in appearance over the years, a man of average size, with black-rimmed glasses and a distinctive permanent hoarseness in his voice. His crew cut has grown and grayed. The man and the woman crowd around the crate and Charls lifts it away, unveiling a color set as big as a doghouse.

"I'n't that purty," says the man.

Dick hooks it up, turns it on. Everyone assesses the chromatic fidelity of *Spider-Man*.

"Good color," pronounces the man and that, apparently, seals the sale. Charls not only delivers, he still makes house calls as well. A few weeks earlier, he drove to my parents' farm and cured their set's anemia with a single small tube. Four dollars and change.

After his customers leave, he speaks of television's influence on Prairie City.

"I don't think there's the addiction there used to be," he says. "Except with sports. People bring in their sets to be fixed and they say, 'Better have 'er ready by Monday night.' Otherwise, not so much." He laughs, "Lord, back in the '50s, when it was brand-new, people used to walk uptown to Trav's [another store that sold sets] to watch the test pattern on Channel 5.

"On the other hand, there's no question it's changed the habits of the town. Snub's [the square's café, the town's social depot] used to be open till eleven, twelve o'clock every night. Now he closes right after supper."

He also notices a pattern of ownership that now leaves little to chance. "Most families have two sets. And they won't spend more'n 20 bucks to fix a black-and-white set. More than that, they buy a new color."

Otherwise, there's not yet a demand for the newer technologies. Charls has sold only three VCR systems, including one to himself, and Prairie City has no cable outlet, though nearby towns do and people expect cable's arrival, though not without reservation. Charls points out that, like any utility, once in place, its cost can be expected inevitably to rise, threatening those most likely to appreciate cable's welcome variety: older citizens living on fixed incomes. At the other extreme of concern, several Prairie City women expressed a fear that, as the number of working couples steadily rises, children left to watch cable's freer programming without parental supervision might see too much, too soon.

It's fitting that concern centers on the town's young and elderly for, speaking very generally, they are the groups that watch the most television here. A community so small, yet self-sufficient, as Prairie City faces the elemental fact that, in order to continue, it requires a great deal of service from its small population. City councils, chambers of commerce, church groups, civic clubs, school boards and student organizations, all contribute essentially to the daily business of a community and all of this labor is volunteered. This pattern begins when a teen-age student joins teams, plays music, signs up for various clubs. (I vividly recall, as a bad, but necessary, high-school football player, trooping sorely off the field at the close of the second quarter of a game, only to see several members of the opposition putting down their helmets and picking up their horns to join their marching band's half-time salute to soybeans, or something. My God! I thought. And suddenly, I didn't hurt anywhere.) And it continues through adulthood until, simply, one no longer has the health to participate so widely. What this means, obviously, is that many people here just aren't home at night as regularly as one might suspect. And, so, they watch little prime-time television.

I've often thought that, among all the country's cultures, the rural Midwest might most naturally welcome the presence of television. Television, that is, as a personality, defined in human terms: aggressive, dominating, frenzied in its attempt to entertain; never, for a moment, silent. All these traits find their nearly exact opposite here; Midwesterners, who have refined passiveness to an art, find instinctual ease in a still, silent, fiercely observant manner. This pose of such unadorned curiosity about any one or anything nearby becomes overt, active behavior. "The Midwesterner," a friend of mine once said to me, "has made casual observation a spectator sport."

"That's not quite it," I replied. "He's made being a spectator a *physical* sport."

It goes, then, that nothing so complements this impulse as something that absorbs all that passive energy; something that offers no opportunity for conversation, places no burden on reciprocal expression of any kind.

To a degree, I believe the Midwest *has* easily accepted television. But only in the way it accepts any outsider (even though he speaks the same language)—with an eternal, protective skepticism. Letting him speak as long and as loud as he wishes, treating him fairly, being nice. But because television, a stranger, acts in unfamiliar ways and sends images from alien worlds at one end of the earth or the other, it is never—or rarely—quite believed.

I sensed this most clearly when speaking with a class of juniors and seniors at the town's new high school. These students have small time for television. When they watch, they watch *Eight Is Enough* ("It's about families." "It has cute guys") and *Dallas*, and *The Dukes of Hazzard* ("It has cute guys"). They find *Three's Company* "stupid" and *Mork & Mindy* "*getting* stupid" and the whole spinoff strategy (*Flo, The Ropers*) "*really* stupid." Like their parents, they watch sports and, when they can, the news.

"When you watch television news," I asked, "do you believe it?"

There was a pause, and then a senior boy, dressed, as has long been custom here on the day of a game, in his Plainsmen football jersey, said, "The *local* news, I do [news of the state from stations in Des Moines or Ames]. The national, I don't."

There was quick, eager agreement. Something deeply felt had been touched. From that distinction between things close and far away came several admissions that, while they took some clues from television (that mimicry of style I'd seen), these young people felt, nevertheless, that little on their screens made sense to them, had relevance to their local lives.

"Nobody really talks like that." (*Charlie's Angels*)

"It's just dumb. A family as rich as that all living in the same house." (*Dallas*)

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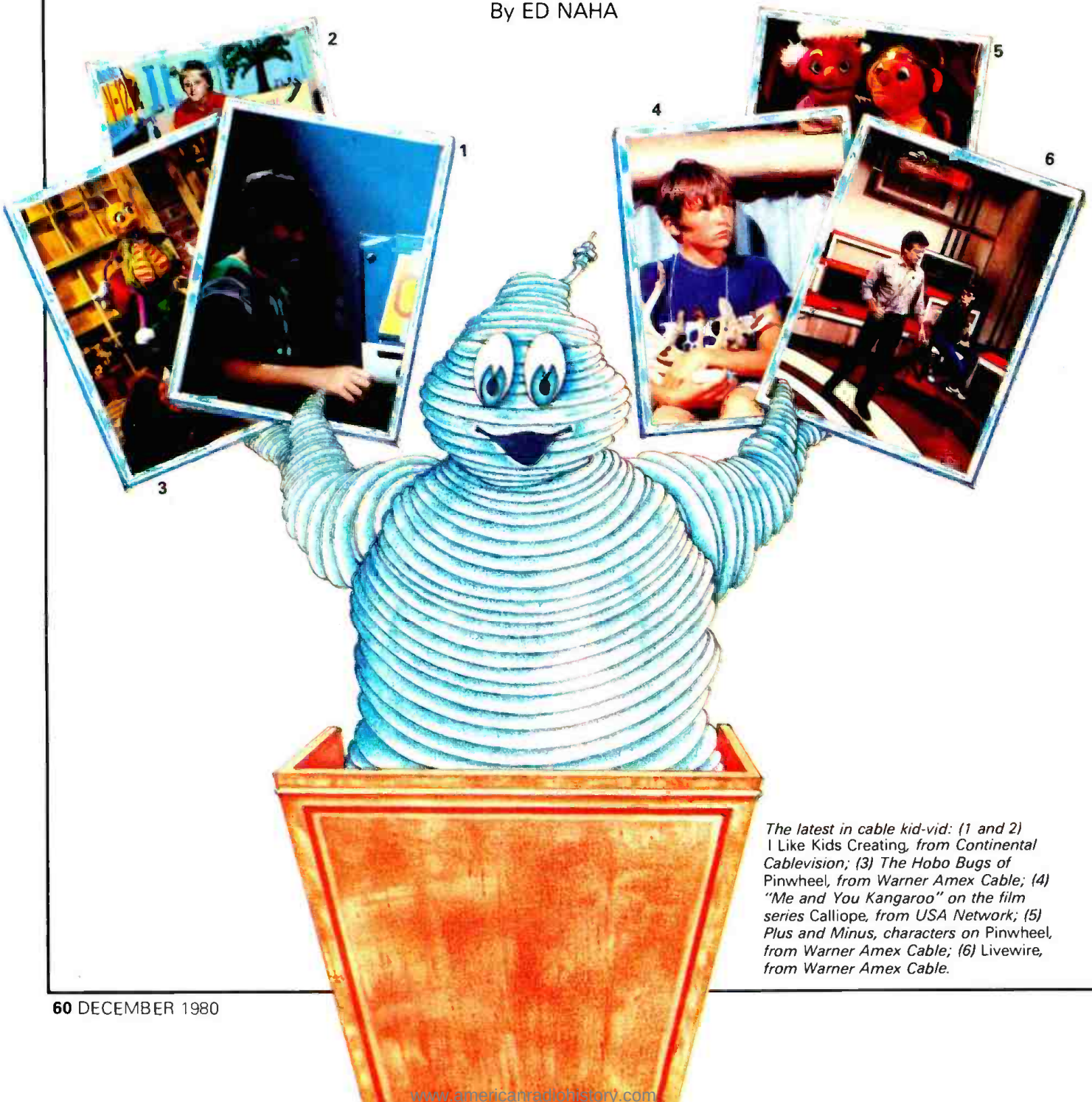
Cable Aims at Children

Watch the New Kid on the Block Show Off

There's excitement—and controversy—as the budding industry's programmers try out fresh ways to reach youngsters

By ED NAHA



The latest in cable kid-vid: (1 and 2) I Like Kids Creating, *from Continental Cablevision; (3) The Hobo Bugs of* Pinwheel, *from Warner Amex Cable; (4) "Me and You Kangaroo" on the film series* Calliope, *from USA Network; (5) Plus and Minus, characters on* Pinwheel, *from Warner Amex Cable; (6)* Livewire, *from Warner Amex Cable.*

Back in the early days of television, when only one in 100 families had a television set and network programmers were trying desperately to capture the imagination of America's children, along about 5:30 each evening windows in local appliance stores across the country would start to steam up. That's when *Howdy Doody* came on—and children who hadn't yet talked their parents into buying a television set would run down to the local store that had sets playing in the window, push their noses up against the glass and for the next half hour enter the fanciful town of Doodyville.

Television was young then, dizzy with its own potential and hungry for viewers. Energy, imagination and variety became the cornerstones of its children's programming—cornerstones that, over the years, crumbled under the strain of success.

Now there's another dizzy kid on the block. During the past two years, in the flabby, repetitive world of children's programming, a quiet revolution has been taking place—not on the commercial networks, but on the ever-expanding facilities of cable television. Cable is now providing over five million children with a nonviolent, nonsexist, almost entirely commercial-free alternative to sugar-coated Saturday mornings.

"Cable may be the only hope American families have left for diversity in children's shows," says Peggy Charren, president of the consumer organization Action for Children's Television (ACT). "With cable, and the possibility of so many channels, you have the potential for what we call narrowcasting. That's what children need. You can't think of children as one group from 2 to 15 years of age like most broadcasters do. In order to program successfully to children, you have to separate your audience into distinct segments. Childhood is the most diverse period of human development."

The concept of narrowcasting led to cable's most ambitious experiment in children's programming to date: a noncommercial, 14-hour-a-day, all-children's channel called Nickelodeon. Offered free as part of a subscriber's basic cable package, Nickelodeon is divided into sections designed to appeal to different age groups. Warner Cable Corp. introduced it in April of 1979 as the first all-children's channel and the first complete channel of children's programming made exclusively for cable.

Going out to roughly three million households, Nickelodeon begins each programming day either with *Dusty's Treehouse*, a puppet-filled half hour designed for ages 4 through 7; or *Pinwheel*, a five-hour "electronic sandbox" aimed at preschool children. Music, animated children's films, puppetry and live action are linked together by the goings-on at Pinwheel House, a phantasmagoric structure topped by a giant pinwheel on the roof and populated by an army of singing vegetables, a group of alien Wonkles, a resident mime and a kindly musician named Jake.

"Children can play with *Pinwheel* until they get tired of it, leave it, and then come back without feeling that they've missed anything," says one of Nickelodeon's creators, Dr. Vivian Horner. "We don't try to keep a child in front of the set for hours at a time. We want him to turn it off after a while and go interact and relate to his peers."

After *Pinwheel* comes *Video Comics*, a half-hour show that features comic strips (thought balloons and all) shown frame by frame while actors read the parts aloud with the 6- to 12-year-old viewers. Designed as a reading aid, the show has segments for both slow and advanced readers. Then for the next hour there's *Hocus Focus*, an "exploration" show aimed at ages 6 through 10 that explores the world through the eyes of a medieval character named Kryspen. For preteens and teens, *What Will They Think of Next* is a fast-paced half hour that uses film and animation to explore the world of science. And for teen-agers, the one-hour talk/variety show *Livewire* features guest stars and is taped live before a studio audience.

"We didn't try to be educational with any of this in the sense of being curricular like *Sesame Street*," says Horner. "We're trying to do children's entertainment that's enlightening, but we don't set specific teaching goals." But she agrees that Nickelodeon bears the influence of PBS's forays into enriching, unorthodox children's productions. During the late Sixties, when she was an early childhood specialist in language acquisition at the graduate school of Yeshiva University, Horner began to notice a change occurring in children across the country. "They weren't fitting into their traditional roles," she recalls. "They were more aware in areas that were new to them. The change in their lives was called *Sesame Street*. That jarringly called to my attention the impact television could have on children."

Around that time, Horner left teaching to become director of research for *The Electric Company*. But after a five-year stay, she decided that even PBS didn't devote enough time to children. "PBS does the best job in the

broadcast business," she says, "but they're always hurting for money. Kids are still a small part of what they do." In search of an alternative, she turned to the new territory of cable television. Joining Warner's two-way cable Qube outlet in Ohio as a consultant (she eventually became vice president of educational and children's programming), she and Sandy Kavanaugh created the children's programming there that grew into Nickelodeon.

"The one thing that cable has is a lot of time and space," Horner says. "Not a lot of money, but as cable grows, that will improve. Besides, it's surprising what you can do with imagination and time. We started out with a lot of bright dreams, and we're seeing it happen little by little."

Horner was not alone in her quest for alternative programming for children. In September of 1978, Kay Koplovitz and Robert Rosencrans at UA-Columbia Satellite Services (now called USA Network) created *Calliope*, a weekly 90-minute show, geared toward ages 6 to 14, that featured award-winning children's films from around the world. Within two years, it expanded to five 60-minute shows per week, plus three hours on Saturday mornings, and became the first cable children's show to win an award from ACT for its "significant contribution toward improving children's television."

A typical week of *Calliope* offers some four million subscribers such thought-provoking films as Kipling's "How the Whale Got His Throat," "The Mime of Marcel Marceau," James Thurber's "A Unicorn in the Garden" and Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," along with such lighter pieces as "Foibles," "The Case of the Elevator Duck" and Alan Arkin's "People Soup."

"Here you have films that have won Academy Awards, films that have been shown at the New York and Cannes film festivals," says Andy Litsky, director of public affairs for the National Cable Television Association, the cable industry's major lobbying organization. "They were available for airing, but broadcasters didn't feel that there was a place for this type of entertainment on network TV and they put them on the shelf. *Calliope* has shown there's an audience of kids out there hungry for this stuff."

"The kids' response to the show has been overwhelming," says *Calliope* spokesman Mark Braff. "We haven't taken a ratings survey yet, but our host, Gene Francis [who is represented on the screen by an animated figure], asks the children questions about the movies and invites them to write in. He gets hundreds of replies, and we answer every one of them. He tries to get the kids involved so they're not just sitting there in front of the TV like vegetables for an hour."

> "Broadcasters didn't feel there was a place for award-winning children's films on network TV. . . . *Calliope* has shown there's an audience of kids out there hungry for this stuff."

The prospect of children getting involved in their programming is a special advantage of cable TV. "There are hundreds of local channels that are attempting to come up with alternative community programming," says Litsky. "In Concord, New Hampshire, Continental Cablevision has a show called *I Like Kids Creating*. It's a 30-minute show produced by the children in the Millville school. It's a show made by kids for kids."

Cable children's television seems to be a panacea for those viewers disgusted with network offerings—but it has its limitations and critics. With few ad dollars and less than 10 percent of the Nation's TV households receiving the children's shows, budgets are lean and the number of children reached (and therefore potential impact) minuscule by network and PBS standards. Some critics charge that the shows are overrated. "There are a lot of similarities between the cable children's shows and PBS productions," says one PBS employee. "They have the luxury of having more time to devote to their children's programming. But what they're doing isn't new."

At the networks, children's programmers are virtually ignoring the arrival of cable. "I don't feel any competition from it," says NBC's vice president of children's programming, Mary Alice Dwyer, "because I don't think cable has that wide a subscription—and, furthermore, there's only one channel that caters to children exclusively. That's a valid attempt and it's good. It's another opportunity for more and different kinds of children's programming. But competition? No."

Faith Frenz-Heckman, Dwyer's counterpart at CBS (Frenz-Heckman has since been replaced by Mark Waxman), thinks the current rage to praise cable and slight the networks is unwarranted: "We've been attempting to provide entertainment experiences that are enriching in a variety of formats for years. We've been doing a series of specials called *The CBS Festival of Lively Arts for Young People* and *The CBS Afternoon Playhouse*. We have a new series, *The CBS Library*, which began last season, in which we dramatize sections of books and then ask the audience to pick up the books and read the whole stories for themselves. We've instituted a project called *CBS Children's Mystery Theater* that, again, is in an entertaining format, but stresses the importance of

deductive reasoning. The quality is certainly here if you want to find it.

"Our Saturday-morning fare has a lot of educational elements. But Saturday morning has always been a whipping boy. No matter what we do, we're not going to change that attitude. There's a certain negative attitude toward cartoons, no matter what you have in them."

NBC, says Dwyer, is also a victim of the trendy anti-network campaign. "We've been improving our children's shows constantly. On our Saturday-morning fall schedule, for instance, we've expanded *Ask NBC News* and *Time Out*. In the heart of our two mainstay shows, *The Flintstone Comedy Show* and *Space Stars*, we've got a series of short elements that we're calling play-along elements. They are designed to get kids actively involved with what's happening on their television sets. We also have dancing, riddles, word games, scrambled faces, arts and crafts, space facts and mysteries."

In addition to "upgrading" their Saturday-morning shows, NBC is planning to do a series of *Project Peacock* prime-time specials that may include Charles Schulz's live-action "The Big Stuffed Dog," Joseph Papp's new musical version of "Alice in Wonderland" and Ray Bradbury's "The Electric Grandmother." CBS, meanwhile, is working with both Bill Cosby and the Children's Television Workshop on two possible afternoon series.

Many of the networks' critics don't think too much of these new "improvements." They are old hat, some think: blatant lifts from PBS, designed only to placate ACT and the FCC. "The networks will spend a certain amount of time and money to keep the FCC off their backs," says Clare Lynch O'Brien, educational consultant to *Big Blue Marble*, a commercial-free children's show underwritten by ITT and syndicated worldwide to both commercial and public TV stations. "But look where they put their quality shows. They schedule them in the least popular time slots, where commercial time is cheap. As an educator, it makes one want to throw up.

"You won't see ABC trying to imitate CBS's *30 Minutes* [a magazine show aimed at teen-agers] on Saturday afternoon, because the show isn't successful in network terms. It earns CBS brownie points, but it's shown at a bad time and earns lousy ratings. NBC put *Hot Hero Sandwich*, an imaginative, multiformat show, in a similar time slot last year—and what happened? The show was canceled, and then won an Emmy. There is practically no outlet for quality children's programming," continues Lynch O'Brien. "Cable is still in its infancy and the networks don't want to hear about quality."

> "It's a dangerous time for cable. There are a lot of forces at work that would like to turn it into a carbon copy of the networks."

Some consider cable's infancy its main asset. "Cable today is in the position of network television 30 years ago," says Peggy Charren of ACT. "Television programmed creatively then in order to get people to buy sets. Today the people have their sets and the networks program to advertisers. They don't think of children as people; they consider them a market to be sold. For the most part, cable still thinks of its subscribers as individuals and is trying to entice them with diverse programming. But it's a dangerous time. There are a lot of forces at work that would like to turn cable into a carbon copy of the networks."

Charren is particularly incensed at *Calliope*'s recent decision to accept four minutes of commercial advertising per hour, although *Calliope* producer Monia Joblin insists they're "not opening *Calliope* up to candy bars and sugarcoated cereals." "We're being highly selective about what we accept," says ad manager Jeff Lawenda. "We'll have messages that benefit kids, not exploit them. We're not interested in ones that are hard-sell or in products that are generally perceived as detrimental."

"But who's doing the perceiving?" asks Charren. "That decision is a disaster. I understand economic pressures, but if they have to have ads, why don't they pitch them to adults instead of the most vulnerable audience in America? It's just the kind of problem I hoped wasn't going to happen with children's cable. Just about the time it gets off the ground, the advertisers start to move in. At first it won't be so bad, but then the ad people will start putting pressure on the programmers to reach a wider audience. The shows about, say, chess will start to go because not enough kids like it. You start to lose the diversity—and pretty soon you're achieving the exact opposite of what cable ought to be. You're on the road to network mediocrity."

With cable projected to be in 46 million TV households by the end of the decade, the dilemma cable children's programmers face is how not to get old—how to think of the huge numbers as audiences and not markets and remember that it is the hungry, imaginative rumblings of youth that make kids stick their noses up against a storefront window. "Kids need shows that feed the imagination, that help them expand and learn," says Dr. Horner. "Cable has the greatest potential for providing that—if it can just stay on track." ■

For All the War's Bloodshed, the Spiritual Wound Cut Deepest

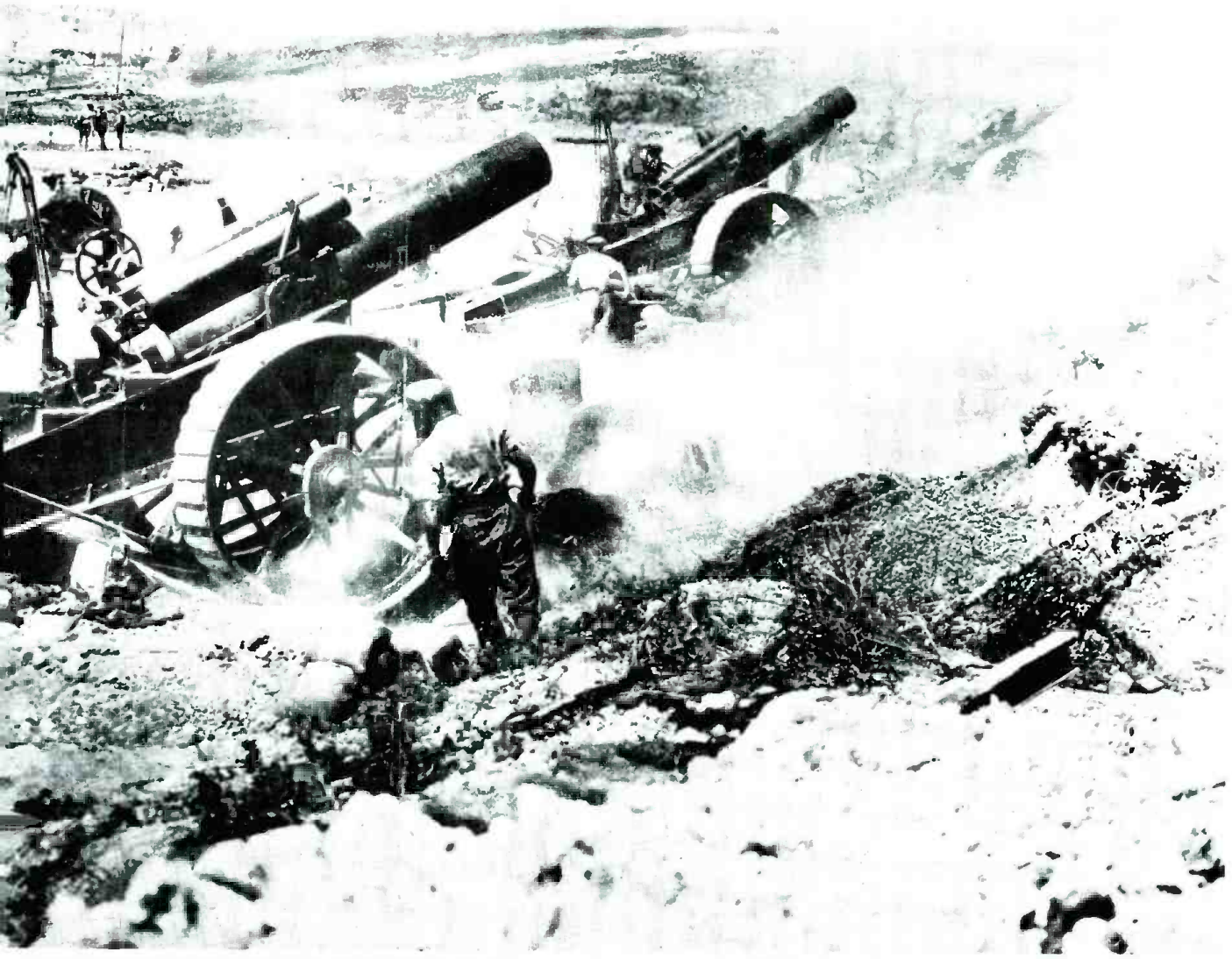
As a World War I nurse, Vera Brittain (played by

"Testament of Youth" re-creates — through a young woman's memoirs— the prolonged trauma inflicted by World War I

By PAUL FUSSELL

The First World War scored a deep, ugly line across history, violently dividing the prewar world of monarchies, certainties and domesticities from the postwar Waste Land. Historians know this from documents. The British writer Vera Brittain knew it from experience. "It seems to me," she wrote in 1917, a 21-year-old nurse in a military hospital, "that the war will make a big division of 'before' and 'after' in the history of the world, almost if not quite as big as the 'B.C.' and 'A.D.' division made by the birth of

__Paul Fussell__ won the National Book Award in 1976 for his book "The Great War and Modern Memory." His new book, "Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars," has just been published by Oxford University Press.



Cheryl Campbell at left) tended wounded soldiers. At right, an archive photograph of British heavy howitzers engaged in battle.

Christ."

It was not just her experience of tending mangled bodies and psyches that turned Brittain into a writer and started her on her brave career as a pacifist and an internationalist. It was the meaningless slaughter in the trenches of her lover and her brother and most of her male friends, the destruction of all her love and all her hopes. She discovered that the 20th century seems to be an institution that, for reasons best known to itself, indulges periodically in the mass murder of boys. Brittain relived the terror and pathos of that time in her brilliant memoir, "Testament of Youth," which she intended as "the indictment of a civilization." This factual account of a bright, stubborn girl at war, first published in 1933, has now been dramatized by the BBC in five hour-long parts, running through December on *Masterpiece Theatre*.

The series is not pretty, as Vera Brittain herself was not. But in the same way that Cheryl Campbell, who plays the heroine, manages to convey exactly Vera's sharp-nosed intensity and intelligent focus, so the BBC has been strikingly successful in rendering the mood and tone of those grim times. The sets are persuasive, the costumes and military details authentic, but more than that is involved: the gloomy-ironic effect of the whole is assisted by voice-over readings of poems by Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, and there are effective clips from contemporary newsreel footage—the Kaiser strutting about, troops marching, the famous poster of Lord Kitchener appealing for 100,000 volunteers, British troops going over the top at the Somme and, with puzzled faces, being cut down. Even the music plays a vital part in the drama: the bugle calls with which the war so bravely begins turn sour by the end. As the world turned sour for an entire generation.

The shock of the First World War so traumatized its victims that it was 10 years before many of them could recover enough poise to write about it. In 1928, a decade after the Armistice, the British pastoral poet Edmund Blunden published "Undertones of War," a gently ironic account

Words like "honor" and "glory" took on a hollow sound in a world of cold and rats and massed artillery

of the horrors of trench life as he had known it with the Royal Sussex Regiment. In the same year, a German veteran, Erich Maria Remarque, pulled himself together and recalled the war as a ghastly Children's Crusade in his best-selling novel, "All Quiet on the Western Front." Then, in 1929, three vigorous ironists issued their classical critiques of the war, emphasizing its mismanagement and the resulting stupidity and cruelty: Hemingway published "A Farewell to Arms," Robert Graves "Good-bye to All That," and Richard Aldington "Death of a Hero."

Despite different visions and styles, all five of these writers, who had experienced combat directly, agreed in their understanding of the war as ironic, for it had begun in an atmosphere of naive high spirits. Most young people, entirely ignorant of the effects of high explosives, embarked on the war with the enthusiasm appropriate for a wholesome camping trip. College students competed to become boy officers in the choicest units of the Army, and young workingmen in the English Midlands volunteered by whole towns. Everyone was going to go over and rebuke the Hun—expel him from France and Belgium in a few months—in a hearty display of British superiority in athleticism and spirit. It was to be a thoroughly "good show."

But in the trenches these young volunteers discovered the actualities of modern war. Words like "honor" and "glory" took on a hollow sound in a world of cold and rats and massed artillery and gas and machine guns. A gain of a hundred yards of mud cost thousands of dead and wounded. And the worst was that nobody at home seemed to understand the facts of life at the front; it was all too terrible for them to understand.

Pacifists urging a negotiated peace were considered simply traitors, blind to what Sir Oliver Lodge called "the great spiritual significance" of the war. To him, ending the war by negotiation would be merely "premature stoppage":

> I hold this war to be an eruption blazing forth from hidden sources of evil, so that its premature stoppage would be as dangerous as the choking of Vesuvius or the checking of an inflammation—which could only drive the disease underground to accumulate still further. . . . We are only too apt to allow the apparent tragedy of it all to obscure the great spiritual significance.

To the soldiers in the line, the tragedy was not apparent but real, and after a few days of watching their friends being torn apart by shells and bullets, the great spiritual significance escaped them. Bitterly, they came to understand that if they were fighting the Germans, they were also fighting people like Sir Oliver Lodge.

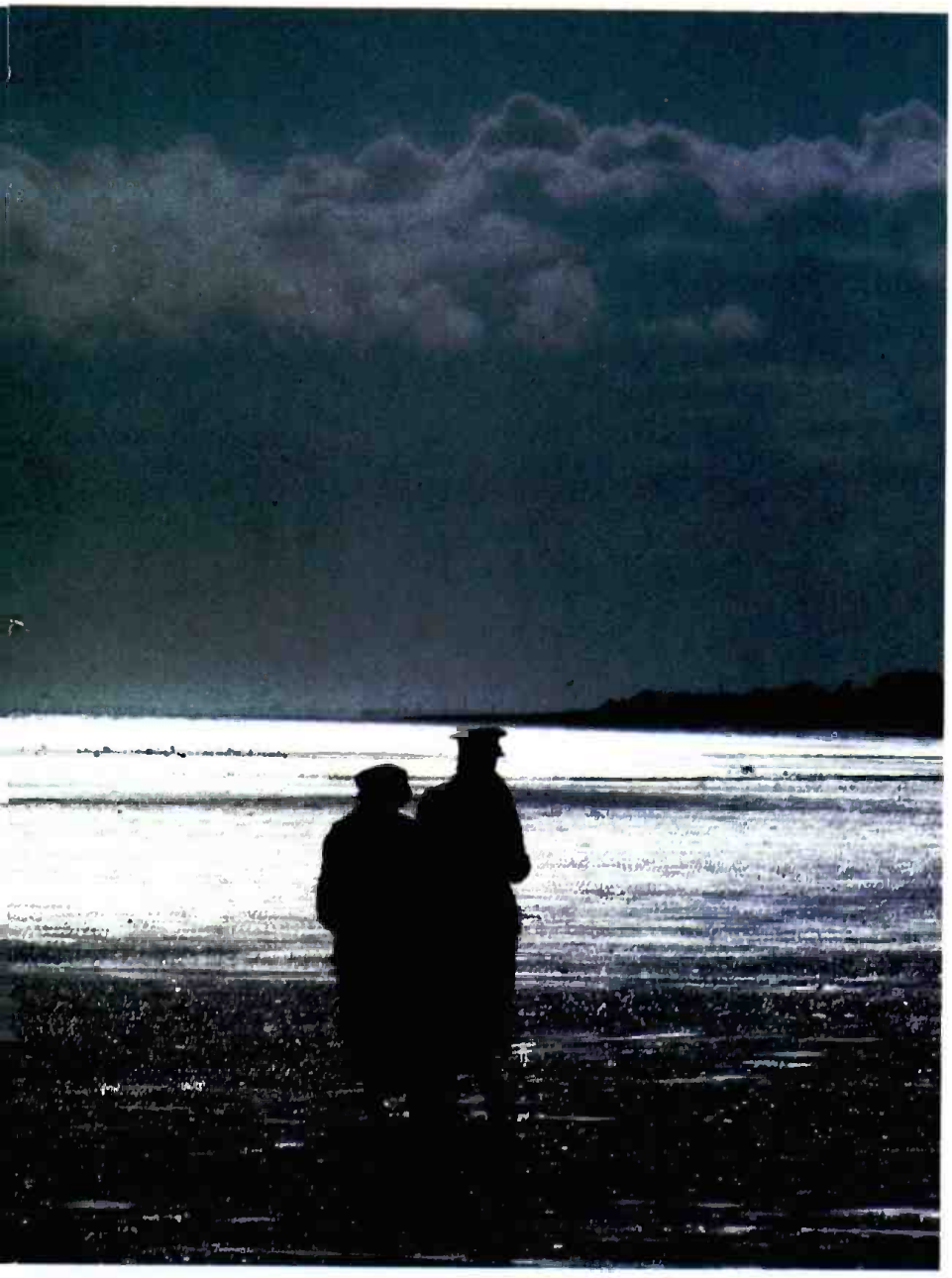
The great spiritual significance escaped Vera Brittain too. Having begun life as the intelligent, strong-willed daughter of a middle-class Midlands manufacturer, she started wondering early why boys entered universities and the professions but girls did not. Chafing at the stupidities of her parents' provincial society, which regarded women who knew anything as "mannish," she provoked its displeasure by winning a scholarship to Somerville College, Oxford. When the war broke out, she was as innocent as anyone else, imagining that she could calmly continue her education while the war took place elsewhere. After all, she assured herself, "We've had wars before."

It did not take her long to perceive that industrialism and mass organization made this a different kind of war. "Testament of Youth" traces her growing realization that the boys who volunteered—including her brother Edward, a promising musician—were really throwing their lives away. She falls in love with a student, Roland Leighton, and when he is sent overseas she leaves Oxford to begin nursing in military hospitals. Roland, too, goes off as an innocent, convinced that his destiny is military glory, à la "The Charge of the Light Brigade." A brief experience of the trenches enlightens him, persuades him that the war involves not glory but, as he puts it, "stink, mud, muddle and squalor." He dies in agony, machine-gunned in the stomach while leading a routine wire-repairing party. He and Vera were to have been married. "I don't understand," was all she could say at the time.

Cheryl Campbell (bottom) and Peter Woodward as Vera Brittain, author of "Testament of Youth," and her fiancé, Roland Leighton. Right, the couple's final hours were spent in innocence of the agonies of the front, from which Roland never returned.

She volunteers now for hospital work in France, where she swabs wounds and comforts the dying and listens to the rasps from the throats of the mustard-gas cases. The murderous absurdity of the war comes fully home to her as she works in a ward full of German prisoners; later she would remember "the sharp gray features of a harmless little 'enemy' dying in the sticky morass of his own blood." In due course, her brother is killed, and

Back at the home front, Vera's mother is complaining about the scarcity of prewar jam



his friends Geoffrey and Victor, Victor having been blinded first. Back at the home front, Vera's mother is complaining about the servant problem and the scarcity of prewar jam.

The Armistice leaves Vera in a "blind rage." "I get so angry," she wrote, "I could shake myself to pieces." In an attempt to make sense of all that's happened, she returns to Oxford to study modern history. But the postwar world rushes toward pleasure and forgetfulness, and Vera feels virtually alone in the dance-mad Twenties. She writes and lectures and agitates on behalf of the League of Nations, to her the only possible preventive of a new war. She speaks as a veteran as deeply scarred as any of the men who returned. At the end of her memoir, she has finally achieved some measure of stability with the arrival in her life of "G.": a philosopher committed to pacifism and social reform, destined to join the faculty at Cornell—and to be Vera's husband. But her life has been ruined. As she wrote, "Everything that had hitherto made up my life had vanished with Edward and Roland, with Victor and Geoffrey."

Like Blunden and Remarque, Hemingway, Graves and Aldington, Brittain knew the world had changed irrevocably, and without self-pity, but with a grim determination to disclose the awful truth, she registered the impact of the war on one woman. Hemingway would agree entirely with her conclusion: "The world was mad and we were all victims; that was the only way to look at it."

All this has been wonderfully realized in the BBC series, for which, appropriately, women have assumed the important tasks Vera Brittain wanted for them. (In this way the dramatization serves as a double memorial to her.) Elaine Morgan has written the screenplay, Moira Armstrong has directed, and both have done fine work. They have remained remarkably faithful to the text and the spirit of Vera's memoir.

The series' one weakness comes in the fifth episode, which is not, strictly speaking, dramatically necessary at all. The fact is that interest in Vera's story falls off once the war has ended: once, that is, her men and her hopes have been smashed. This makes of the ending largely a tame tidying-up, with hints that things are going to improve for Vera once her affair with "G." gets into gear. But by this time we're so used to seeing her struggle within a world of explosions and wounds and heartbreak that she doesn't seem quite real in peacetime.

But if the dramatic structure of the series falters at the very end, British acting still carries the day. The country apparently continues to swarm with sensitive, well-trained character actors of all ages, skilled in dialects, able to submerge themselves entirely in a period atmosphere. In *Testament of Youth*, the atmosphere is achingly real, the period unflinchingly portrayed, as Brittain herself portrayed it. Viewers who don't mind the presence of ideas on television—and who don't demand that everything they see cheer them up—will find themselves saddened, illuminated and satisfied. ■

It's Fourth and Two—and the Call's Up to You

Armchair quarterbacks always know best—here's what happened when a cable system called their bluff

By WILLIAM MARSANO

At this point in the NFL season, almost every fan in the country stands united by two thoughts: (1) a desire to throw Howard Cosell to the linebackers, and (2) a foaming conviction that he can run a football team better, or at least more imaginatively, than any head coach can.

"It's fourth and two," comes the TV announcer's voice, "and, with the ball on their 15, of course they'll punt." And millions of fans start pulling their hair out and screaming: *"Go for it! Go for the two lousy yards! Fake the punt—you'll catch 'em flatfooted!"*

Every fan alive knows he is more daring, more colorful and more imaginative than the coaches are. Turn the game over to us, the armchair quarterbacks implore, and we'll put more excitement into the game. The hell with always going for the safe, dull, percentage plays. Let's experiment and try something different once in a while. Let's go for the gusto!

Five months ago, "they" got their chance to prove it. On that night, some 5000 anxious fans called the plays for the Columbus Metros in a minor-league game with the Racine Gladiators in Columbus's Franklin County Stadium. And they did it all from the comfort of their own homes.

This came about because of Qube, the interactive, or two-way, TV system known to poets (and doomsdayers alike) as the cutting edge of 20th-century communications. Established in 1977, Qube is now wired to some 30,000 Columbus-area homes. On the surface, it is very much like ordinary cable TV: for $11.95 a month, subscribers get clear reception of broadcast stations and cable-originated "community" channels. Thanks to the interactive nature of the system, they also get pay-per-view channels.

Each Qube home is also equipped with a small computer box that allows viewers to talk to their sets. Let's say *Columbus Alive,* Qube's cable-originated around-town show, has a civic official as its guest who is waxing aldermanically enthusiastic about a tax hike. When the show's host flashes a signal, viewers can push buttons on their computers to give their opinions of the tax increase: *Yes! No!* or *Not Sure.* Up to five responses can be handled, so other choices, like *Give Us a Break!* or *Get Out of Town, Turkey!* may one day be added.

When the buttons are pushed, Qube's central computer tabulates the results and provides, almost instantaneously, a survey of that official's chances of surviving the next election.

Last June, the process was taken a step further when Qubers paid $10 apiece for a live telecast of the Sugar Ray Leonard-Roberto Duran welterweight championship fight in Montreal. Blending pay-per-view with two-way computers, Qube had its subscribers *score* the fight. For their fee, subscribers got an official scoring card and tips on how to use the point system from Floyd Patterson, who spoke on a prefight show and during the fight itself.

When it was over, the computer showed that the subscribers' point totals almost matched those posted by the judges at ringside; the decisions varied only to the extent that the fans gave the higher total to Leonard, while the judges—bereft of computers and forced to rely largely on ball-point pens and little yellow pencils topped with pink erasers—picked Duran.

From having Qubers judge an athletic performance to having them *control* one is but a tiny, transistorized step.

Thus we come to the night of July 12, 1980, when, after a day of rain that fell like bullets, a football game was played that had one of its teams wired up to 5000 coaches. Having had a look at the game films, we can say with confidence that we have seen the future, and it doesn't work. It is, on the other hand, funny as hell.

In that spirit, let us proceed to the highlights of that moist and fateful night.

The field was what? Flooded? Inundated? Awash? Synthetic turf is fine, but in spots this field was so wet the breeze made little waves, and the game was delayed for nearly an hour. But, at nearly 9 P.M., the cheerleaders splashed off the field and the first arm-

chair football game experiment was underway.

The fans called defense as well as offense; by and large, the offensive selections were Run Outside, Run up the Middle, Play-Action Pass, Medium Pass and The Bomb, or Nuke 'Em! (On some occasions a Screen Pass was substituted for Play-Action, or The Bomb was omitted in favor of Team Choice, which let the real coach call the play in tight spots.)

At the command "Touch Now," the fans would punch their buttons. Seconds later, the results would be tabulated, Metros' coach Hal Dyer would pass them to his field leader, and the play, for good or ill, would be run. It took 45 seconds to a minute for each play, but the officials waived delay penalties for the Metros.

For the first historic play of "Your Call Football," there was a lack of razzle-dazzle from the folks who normally pass their days asking, "Why not use the on-side kick to *start* a game?"

The vote was:

Run Outside: 21%
Run up the Middle: 43%
Play-Action Pass: 20%
Medium Pass: 9%
The Bomb: 7%

And so a nice, safe, conservative, cautious, percentage play was run up the middle for a two-yard gain.

Next, they tried a screen pass, and then a run outside: Metro quarterback Tom McLaughlin handed off to ace halfback Grape Juice Johnson who was pounced on by three Gladiator tacklers. Still, the fans didn't panic—they'd do that later. They got a play-action pass to the six, a one-yard run up the middle and, finally, an end run that scored a touchdown. The kick was good, and it was Metros 7, Gladiators 0. But that was not to be, as Howard Cosell would say, a portent.

Now on defense, the fans had three choices: Straight Defense (an all-purpose alignment), Blitz (for the hard-nosed crowd) and Team Choice (for the chickens).

In their first defensive series, the fans called a straight that gave up seven yards, a straight that was incon-

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Angry...Driven...Guilty

That's not your usual picture of Ed Asner, but friends of the "Lou Grant" star worry that his compulsive crusading will harm his health

By GLENN ESTERLY

Here is Ed Asner, supine, benumbed, helpless to move or speak, seriously considering the possibility he might be dying. Also sorely embarrassed for creating such a scene at his nephew's pre-wedding party. Cold sweat seeps through his shirt. His wife and children are frantic. His nephew, a medical student, keeps hunting, unsuccessfully, for a pulse. Relatives hover over the chalk-white body, speculating on the stricken celebrity's imminent departure from this world. It's common knowledge that Asner works much too hard, what with all his acting, charitable and political commitments; perhaps he's finally overdone it.

Then someone shouts: "Get him to a hospital!" And at that moment, though he seems paralyzed, embarrassment overrides fear. Asner's eyelids flutter; after a mighty struggle he wills his mouth to pucker and rasps—with words worthy of the tetchy Lou Grant—"Y-y-y-yah tuh-tuh-take ummmmeee tooo hos . . . hos-pit-al, ahllll k-k-k-kill yah."

"After all," says Asner now, three years after the episode, "I had already made a big enough jerk of myself. What happened is that I was on a liquid protein diet, lost 35 pounds, but made the mistake of going to the party on an empty stomach and then throwing down carbohydrates right and left, along with some stiff Scotches. Suddenly my blood pressure plummeted and *pow*—I hit the floor. Humiliating. And terrifying. Finally, my nephew just kept rubbing my body and slowly, very slowly, the feeling came back."

A year later, in 1978, at the pinnacle of his 30-year acting career, another jolt. He'd finished his first season as the star of his own series; *Lou Grant*, after a rocky start, had rallied to become a hit in both ratings and reviews. Asner was just about to leave on a Caribbean cruise with his wife Nancy and the Ted Knights. But first, at age 48, he took a routine physical with a new doctor—who staggered him with the pronouncement that he probably needed a pacemaker.

"Some quirk in my heart circuitry had developed," Asner recalls. "I took it like a real man, carrying on and sobbing, 'Oh, my Godddd!' But I played the big hero on the vacation, didn't tell anybody so it wouldn't spoil the fun. Meanwhile, I couldn't sleep and I had weird-ass thoughts like, 'If I have to wear a pacemaker, will I short circuit myself if I go snorkeling?' After all of that, I went to a cardiologist when I got home and he told me to forget it, no big deal."

Here is Ed Asner in his dressing room at CBS Studio Center, sans trousers. The door to his dressing room is open and the drapes are not drawn, so anyone who happens by can catch one of television's biggest stars, a seven-time Emmy winner, the honcho of a show that's itself won Emmys the last two years as best drama series on TV, in nothing but his shorts and socks. What if some unscrupulous photographer caught him like this and splashed him half-naked across the front of some sleaze sheet? Doesn't the actor realize he's got to be careful now that he's emerged as a romantic leading man? After all, there's all that mail coming in from women insisting Lou Grant is far too sexy not to be having more romantic liaisons on the show, and there was that role as Meredith Baxter Birney's lover in the TV-movie "The Family Man," and when you ask Asner's producers about his sex appeal, they're able to answer with perfectly straight faces.

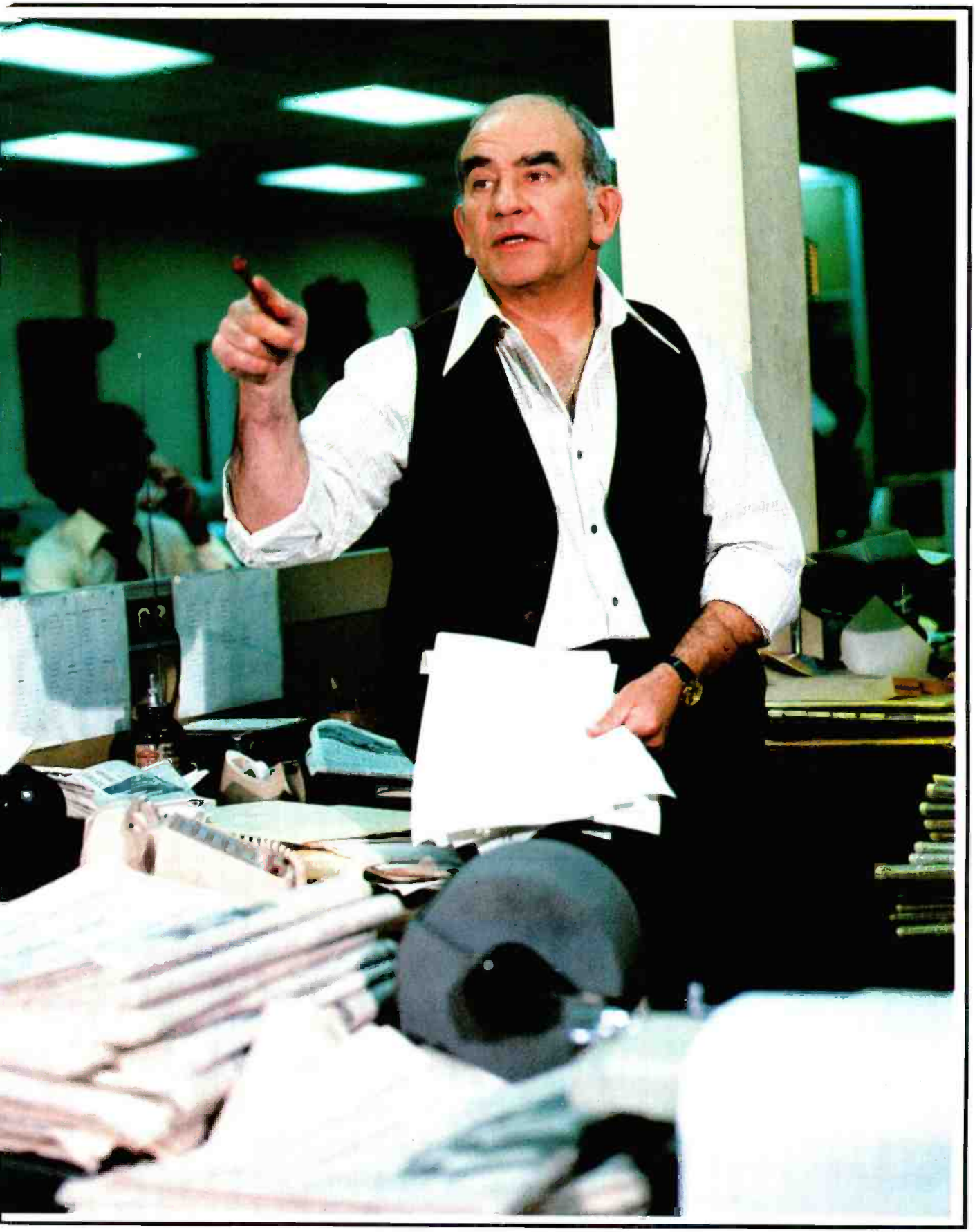
Still, there is some amusement among cast members over an incident a few days earlier, in which Asner was blatantly nuzzled and kneaded by a crew member's sister-in-law. Now Jack Bannon (Donovan) spots Asner changing clothes, and the kidding continues.

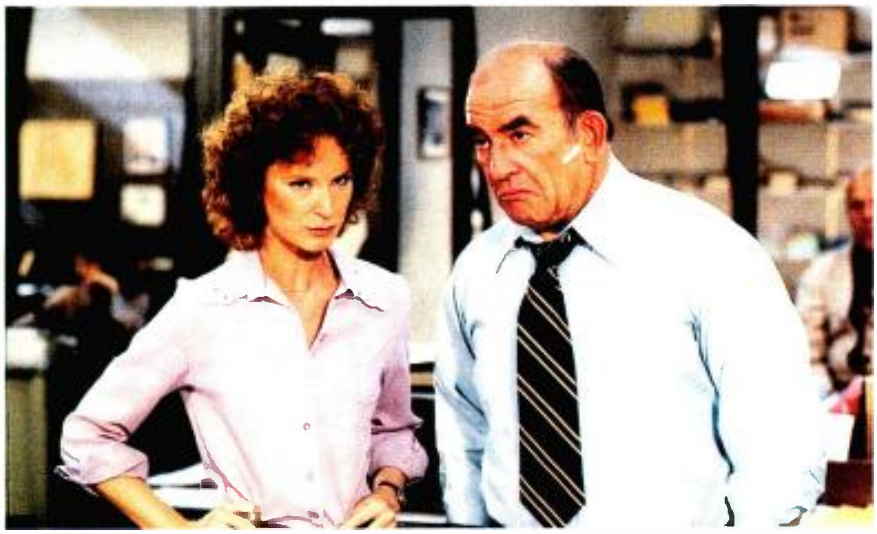
Bannon: "I hear she really liked you."

Asner (matter-of-factly): "I still have the marks."

Another side of Asner emerges on the set, where between scenes he becomes, as MTM president Grant Tinker puts it, "Everybody's rabbi." He chats with the family of an Oregon realtor who has sold him resort property near Portland; he hugs a female acquaintance and needles, much to her amusement, that her son is most certainly destined to become a child molester; he orders crew members, via a series of grunts they actually appear to understand, to partake of the baklava an Armenian restaurant has delivered to the set. Uncomfortable with routine social amenities, Asner has perfected a style of verbal roughhousing: people expect good-natured insults from him; he delivers.

He and other members of the *Lou Grant* ensemble are asked so often how much Ed is like Lou that by now the query makes their eyes glaze. Asner himself says "a lot." Nancy Marchand (Mrs. Pynchon) says, "Ed's not as gruff as Lou. Ed's really a pussycat." Tell that to Daryl Anderson (Animal). "I never saw him till our first reading together," says Anderson, "and I expected him to show approval of me. But he kind of shuffled in and gave me





Linda Kelsey (Billie) and Asner in a baleful moment on Lou Grant. *Unlike the gruff Lou, says Nancy Marchand (Mrs. Pynchon), "Ed's really a pussycat."*

a sideways glance and, oh, I was scared to death of him." Anderson says it took two-and-a-half seasons for him to relax in Asner's presence.

What cast members have come to feel for Asner is genuine affection—and concern. Concern for the frenetic pace the man, now 51, maintains, on and off the studio lot. Despite the scares he's experienced about his own mortality, he keeps the schedule of a political candidate who's a point down in the polls the day before the election. "Somebody's always at his office asking him to help with a cause—saving whales, using snow tires, *something*," says Marchand, "and he can't say no."

This very night, in fact, Asner will be up past 2 A.M., pitching on a cystic fibrosis fund-raising TV auction. "How many charitable causes does he work for? *Scores*," says the actor's P.R. man, Mike Mamakos. "Plus the political stuff—stumping for liberal candidates, working for the ACLU, Common Cause, SANE, Americans for Democratic Action, the Political Rights Defense Fund, the National Committee for an Effective Congress .... Let's see, they start to blur in my memory."

And then there are his other acting commitments; Asner is already booked up with jobs for the next two years. During this summer's hiatus from the series, he played a police captain to Paul Newman's policeman in the theatrical film "Fort Apache: The Bronx"; next year he's set to play 18th-century German banker Meyer Rothschild in a miniseries and Herman Graebe, a German who helped Jews escape the Nazis, in a TV-movie.

Looking at his friend's schedule, Ted Knight, who played Ted Baxter on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, sounds dubious: "The burden he's placed on himself is aging him a lot. He's lost more hair, gotten grayer, more lines in the face. The man is driven, relentless. And he's alienated a lot of people because of his convictions. I guess that's noble, yet there's a paradox: he's so competitive and makes shrewd business moves in his career, but there's conflict in his outside activities with that career. I don't know how he resolves that."

Here is Ed Asner, about to accept an award at an American Civil Liberties Union dinner. The chandelier-lit hotel ballroom is packed as emcee Jane Fonda commends the actor for his outspoken defense of First Amendment rights and praises *Lou Grant* for dramatizing "an enormous range of issues the ACLU finds itself fighting for each day." (Example: an episode exploring implications of the U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing police to obtain search warrants for newsrooms.)

Asner then launches into an appeal to "keep up the decibel level" for constitutional rights. He quotes Abe Lincoln, remembers with scorn various "repressive measures in this country's history" (the Espionage Act of World War I, the McCarthy era blacklistings), rails at the Supreme Court's "assault on a reporter's office, notebook and even his state of mind," and beseeches the audience to "defend the rights of those who want to deny ours." He departs to a standing ovation.

If the man seems inordinately sensitive to issues of individual leeway, it might have something to do with his intense feelings of being controlled and squelched as a boy growing up in Kansas City, Kan. Edward Asner was the youngest of five children in an authoritarian, "ultrareligious" Orthodox Jewish family. He was no rebel. In fact, he pressed hard to please everyone: his immigrant parents, especially his Lithuanian father, "a withdrawn bear of a man" who worked as a junk dealer; his older siblings; a large clan of older cousins; the rabbis at the Hebrew school he attended daily after public school let out. "I had 18 goddamn bosses," he remembers. And later, when chubby Edward attempted to ingratiate himself with his non-Jewish peers in high school, they responded by blackballing him from a prized fraternity.

Brushes with anti-Semitism no doubt also contributed to the Asner one sees now delivering rousing admonitions at an ACLU meeting. He expresses disgust at having "acted like a wimp earlier in my life—Jews walked very softly in those days. I was a whore, even trying to please people I didn't give a damn about."

He developed one fierce, overriding goal: "I had to get away from all of the constraining influences; I was so dominated and overwhelmed, I couldn't find out who the hell I was." Escape came in two ways: physically, by going off to the University of Chicago; mentally, by pursuing acting. A classic case of someone who doesn't much like himself seeking relief by becoming someone else.

After a few years in Chicago theater groups (broken up by a two-year hitch in the Army), Asner headed east to the New York Shakespeare Festival, supporting his acting all the while with odd jobs ranging from auto-plant polisher (right rear door) to steel-mill worker (where he encountered more anti-Semitism) to encyclopedia salesman. There were numerous off-Broadway roles and one shot on Broadway in "Face of a Hero" with Jack Lemmon, but Asner was not enchanted with the mavens of New York theater: "I found most of them to be full of crap."

What did engage him was the company of a stylish literary agent named Nancy Sykes, whose Connecticut Yankee polish tended to offset the rough edges of the immigrant's son from Kansas City. "She's always had graciousness and vivacity—qualities I'm still trying to learn about," he says. They were married in 1959.

In 1961 Asner flew to Los Angeles to tape an episode of *Naked City* and received "a lot of greasy hypocrisy about how wonderful I was. I ate it up. After all the rejection and runarounds in New York, I was ready for some sweet words, even if insincere." He called Nancy on the spot and talked her into moving west, where he felt television and movies offered lots of jobs for a solid character actor. They did. He made the TV rounds from *Mr. Novak* to *Gunsmoke* to *Mission: Impossible*, most often playing heavies, and had a regular role for a year as a Capitol Hill reporter in *Slattery's People*.

Inexplicably, during 1967 and 1968, the jobs dried up. "I felt like a failure. I wound up looking at the want ads in the paper, thinking maybe I could find something to bring in a little income. That was horrendously depressing—I found out my own lack of qualifications and the fact that in many cases I was already too old."

At last, in 1969, some parts came along, and then the turning point: producers Allan Burns and James Brooks cast him as the TV news director in Mary Tyler Moore's new comedy series—over the vehement objections of CBS executives that Asner was a dramatic actor, period. But in the first show, in the crucial scene in which Mary and Lou Grant meet for the first time, "a little bit of magic happened," according to Burns, and their relationship became the cotter pin that held together the whole ensemble for the run of the series.

The rewards for Asner were manifold: Emmys and numerous other awards, choice parts in TV miniseries and movies (*Rich Man, Poor Man; Roots;* "Huey Long: The Late, Great Populist"), and, in 1977, his own series, for which the Lou Grant character was revamped—the only time an actor has played the same character in a comedy, then a dramatic series. Lou became much more serious, concerned, involved. So did the man who plays him.

Here is Ed Asner, in the living room of his Bel Air home, just back from prodding his 210 pounds up and down the meandering streets of the neighborhood. Clad only in his jogging shorts and shoes, he trundles across the parquet floor and deposits himself on the elegant rattan couch, wrapping a towel around his pale, hairy torso to keep sweat off the cantaloupe-colored cushions.

Nancy Asner bustles by in the course of her housekeeping tasks, stops for a moment to inspect her husband and comments on this new business of him as woman-killer. "Sure," she says good-naturedly, "I can see where he'd be very sexy to a number of women."

At this, his bushy left eyebrow, as if choreographed by Sam Ervin, executes a self-satisfied dance. But despite viewer demand for more love interests for Lou Grant, if Asner himself were to urge anything of the writers and producers, it might be for more of the irascibility of the old *Mary Tyler Moore* Lou to surface. "I've sometimes gotten tired of playing Lou on this series," he admits. "That's the cross of being the one who serves as a feeder to the rest of the cast while they carom off you. That can be limiting."

One major difference between Lou and Ed is that Lou is basically a loner; Ed is not. Thus, when "marital and family difficulties" nearly shattered his household four years ago, Asner took stock and began psychoanalysis. The lovable sourpuss people saw at work wasn't so lovable at home. "I had always carried a huge amount of anger around, festering just below the surface," he says. "Actually, a combination of anger and fear. There was a fear of alienating the wrong people, of failing to get ahead. That fear bred anger, because I wasn't being honest. And there was the fear of what would happen if all that anger ever was unleashed. That only happened to me a couple of times, but it was to the point where I didn't care if I killed or got killed."

One such time came after a teen-age boy nearly hit Nancy with his car in a parking lot. Asner shot the boy a dirty look. The boy responded with the finger. The boy got out lucky—Asner kicked the bejesus out of the car, not him.

At home Asner found himself pressuring his children (twins Matthew and Liza are 17 now; Kate is 13) and succumbing to fits of screaming. At one point Matthew "was getting lousy grades and frankly I thought he just didn't have the ability. Eventually, we discovered it was a learning disability, small motor-skill blocks, which were overcome, and now he's a straight-A student. Later, at his bar mitzvah, he shone like a beacon. I never cry, but he got to me—I just broke down and bawled, both because I was ashamed of my unfounded doubts about him and because I felt I had failed at my own bar mitzvah and he had redeemed me."

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Rock to Video: Upbeat All the Way

Stars, agents and promoters are looking to cassettes and discs as an explosive new market

By BRUCE POLLOCK and JONATHAN TAKIFF

Bruce Springsteen occupies the concert stage as if it were his back-yard boardwalk in Asbury Park, N.J.—now leaping piano benches like water fountains, now sprinting into and through the spotlights as if prowling some fantastic penny arcade. With the uncoiled rapture of a boy set free on summer vacation, he summons a cast of characters named Crazy Janey, Rosalita and Killer Joe, and together they dance wild jigs in front of Clarence Clemons' mocking horn.

Inveterate rock fans and initiates agree, hearing Springsteen on records is not enough. To become a believer, you have to see the man perform. But how much of a believer can you honestly become when you're tucked away in row double Z, bemoaning the cost of your admission ticket, with Springsteen no more than a dancing miniature in your opera glasses, seen dimly through a thick smog of yellow-brown intoxicating smoke? Wouldn't it be much more satisfying to view Bruce without risk of life and limb, in the privacy of your own home, on the tube?

I'm not talking about a three-minute stint on *The Midnight Special*. I'm talking about The Boss in concert, in all his combustible sound and fury, for an hour or more. Fact, not fantasy—at this very moment, a shakily made, black-and-white study tape of the man in performance is drawing hushed huzzahs in the industry underground. If even that print were to see the light of day, music moguls agree, not only Springsteen would reap international benefits. It could be just the spark the video-rock world needs to ignite into mass consumer consciousness.

Though the music business has slowed to a crawl, along with the rest of the economy, major record companies have continued to pour money, time, talent and research into the suddenly red-hot field of video music: cassettes, discs, cable TV. For years, labels have been shelling out at least $10,000 per for top-quality promo tapes of bands performing their latest single, meant for in-house or in-store play. Lately, though, these videotapes have been showing up on foreign TV, on cable, in rock nightclubs and in the collections of video-rock junkies. A new breed of independent distributor has been putting videocassettes of bands taped in concert or off vintage TV variety shows out on the market, where they've been meeting with unqualified success. Even as the VCR has begun to alter the Nation's viewing habits, these tapes could serve to reverse the prevailing negative attitude toward rock music as presented on the little screen.

Because what's out there is juicy stuff, indeed; even the promotional-only vehicles, like Marvin Lee Aday (a k a Meat Loaf) doing his sweaty-palms rendition of the back-seat symphony, "Paradise by the Dashboard Light"; and the Boomtown Rats' stark realization, in *cinéma vérité*, of their tale of a teen-age mass murderess, "I Don't Like Monday." A couple of viewings of the neat and nasty little flick on the BBC's weekly *Top of the Pops* program was all it took to make the band's deranged ditty number one.

And new products are arriving on commercial videocassettes virtually every day, on a variety of labels. CBS Video Enterprises has a concert by James Taylor, the film "Rude Boy" by The Clash, and an ELO concert at Wembley. EMI Videograms has Marty Balin's opera "Rock Justice," the first of such efforts written specifically for the new medium. And WCI Home Video offers what may be the classic of the lot: Deborah Harry's steamy imitation of a blonde bombshell, emoting to cuts from Blondie's "Eat to the Beat" album, a videocassette that had long been unavailable in the U.S. *continued*

Blondie, featuring Deborah Harry, is one rock group moving to the TV screen via the videocassette.

***Bruce Pollock** is the author of five books on music, the most recent of which, "When Rock Was Young," is due out this spring; **Jonathan Takiff** is the theater and music critic of The Philadelphia Daily News and a free-lance writer on video.*

A glimpse of Gladys Knight and Ray Charles, from a Gladys Knight and the Pips concert originally produced for HBO, now distributed by Time Life Video for the home-video market.

When it comes to videodiscs, the product is much less abundant: MCA, whose Magnavision player (distributed by Magnavox) is now available in some 50 markets, has concert footage of Elton John, Abba, Loretta Lynn and Olivia Newton-John; RCA's SelectaVision recently obtained rights to that same Blondie tape WCI has on cassette. But when the SelectaVision players come out, early in 1981, and the company starts offering discs like the Rolling Stones' "Gimme Shelter," the Grateful Dead concert film and the reggae movie musical "The Harder They Come," public response could blow the lid off the pressure cooker.

While current estimates place VCR ownership at a modest 1.5 million (as opposed to 100 million record players), today's established superstars are not about to be caught flatfooted when (and if) the boom comes. They can afford to pay top rates to the best directors, people who have a feel for their music as well as for TV's rigorous demands. Paul McCartney, David Bowie, Fleetwood Mac, Peter Townshend and Rod Stewart all are heavily involved. Their efforts give every indication that this new approach to depicting rock music has the potential to be just as brash and irreverent as the music itself.

The music is a call to arms; the image, a beat-up pickup truck, loaded with rock-'n'-roll outlaws, careening along a backwoods two-lane blacktop. Cut to these bad dudes sashaying down a stretch of railroad tracks toward a pair of female legs, which go, according to main honcho Rod Stewart, right up to her neck. Hunkering down at an abandoned gas station, Rod launches into a leering, lip-smacking tribute to "Hot Legs," and the various joys of the one-night stand.

While video-rock proponents, like saved winos, have been heard to blather incessantly about the righteousness of their cause before, they are finally being taken seriously this time around—the heavyweights are at last falling in line. Consider: MCA's DiscoVision is currently releasing rock music as well as movies on discs that can be played on Magnavox and Pioneer playback units, which offer two-channel stereo among their options. Even more dramatic is the CBS agreement to produce discs using RCA's currently monaural SelectaVision system.

"It's not every day the world's largest record and tape manufacturer [CBS] and one of the world's leading electronics manufacturers [RCA] agree on a format," acknowledges Stephen Traiman, executive director of the Recording Industry Association of America. In the past, these two giants locked horns on record speeds, quad sound, color TV and home-video technology.

Warner Bros. is also knee-deep in the fray. "The basic idea of the promo tape has always been to get acts exposure on international TV," explains Jo Bergman, director of TV and video productions for Warner Bros. Records. "It's only in the last year or two that record companies have gotten serious about building libraries, getting rights and getting organized."

Predictably, in uncharted territory, legal wrangles abound. "We're in a stalemate situation with the talent and craft unions over jurisdictional issues and fee schedules," Bergman relates. "No one has determined how to allocate the royalties." This is the very dispute that is at the nub of the recent SAG walkout of screen actors who wanted their share of the monies to be accrued from the new medium.

And so, while these problems are being slowly and painfully resolved, the video-rock scene of the 1980s resembles nothing so much as the rock-'n'-roll scene of the early '50s, with the majors all shuffling their feet in reams of red tape, and an intrepid squad of eager and hungry creative artists, operating through independent companies, coming away with most of the action. Sometimes willing to work on speculation, these artists and companies have already racked up an impressive archive of great moments in rock-'n'-roll. An example: Chuck Statler's pseudo-documentary, "Devo: The Men Who Make the Music," released by the Time Life Video Club. And plucky Advance Television, which has cornered New York City's new-wave market, with tapes of 150 hot and not-so-hot acts.

"None of my friends watch regular TV any more," states Advance's Emily Armstrong. Typically, one of the company's crews goes on location to a club with a color camera and a U-matic recorder; the U-matic also takes a good mono mix off the house sound system. The shooting method is crude, and the product at times disorganized, but the price is right—the act pays nothing if their tape shows up on Advance's cable-TV program *Nightclubbing*. "And as an historic document, it's priceless," says Armstrong. "Pretty soon every act is going to need a video of at least their single."

"Our efforts are predicated on the thinking that the VCR will be as pervasive in the home as the toaster, the television set, the phone or the stereo," said Sam Szurek, formerly Time Life Video's entertainment programming director, shortly before he left the company. When the stockpile of old movies runs out, he expects rock-'n'-roll to provide much of the audience fare. In anticipation of this takeover, Time Life not only acquires existing software, but also develops original productions. "One for the Road," for example, a videotape of the Kinks in concert, has been released to coincide with the band's double album of the same title. "Research tells us that by 1984, 30 percent of America's homes will have a videotape or videodisc playback unit," said Szurek. "George Orwell would have liked that."

Ah, but when 1984 really rolls around, we may find out that machines have

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become the true liberators of creative folk, rather than their jailers. For a new type of artist is emerging in this country. You've heard of the singer/songwriter—now there is the performer/videomaker. Included in these burgeoning ranks are Leon Russell, the Osmond family, Todd Rundgren, Blondie's Chris Stein and ex-Monkee Michael Nesmith, all of whom are busy videotaping themselves, and waiting.

"Somewhere, somebody is making a special video music production that will get this thing rolling big," Nesmith predicts. "Remember, the LP existed long before anything happened with it. It wasn't until the original cast album of 'South Pacific' came out that people felt the need to upgrade from their 78-rpm players. The same thing will happen with video. We have to find a star, a property, a new 'Broadway' to bring this thing home."

On the sound track of Michael Nesmith's much-lauded videotape, "Rio," guitars, bass and drums offer a samba beat as an airport announcer calls the flight south. In profile, Nesmith, in shades and a Panama hat, with rainbows fanning out from his head, begins to sing. As he does, laser suns swirl behind his head, his sunglasses reflect the image of crashing waves. He departs for the land of his fantasies in a chair that wings across the ocean. Three Brazilian ladies pop into view and Nesmith suddenly finds himself flying with them. Just as quickly, the quartet is beached in Rio, sipping piña coladas. That's all in the first 30 seconds.

On the basis of this technicolor tour de farce, the single, "Rio," went to number one in Australia, and Nesmith landed a gig at Warner Amex Cable to produce a music show, *Popclips*, for its Nickelodeon TV channel.

"The problem with most of the pieces being done now," Nesmith says, "is that they're visually static, as if all you need to do is show a picture of the artist singing and playing." Indeed, one of the biggest fears of prospective buyers of a video music program is that, at around $40 a tape at present (discs should come in at approximately half that price), it won't stand up to repeated viewings. "What makes it so you can look at a painting by Rousseau time and again?" Nesmith argues. "There's so much happening all over. Well, the videodisc must be designed the same way, almost as a mini-motion picture. There's got to be a painterly ethic if you want something lasting."

The expectant video-rock consumer is advised to temper his hopes while the infant medium undergoes growing pains

Between the idealism of the artist and the pragmatism of the struggling rocker who can't get a record contract—let alone his mug on the screen—lies a vast and problematic realm of dead air. Current costs alone preclude widespread activity; although an entire concert, shot in high-band color, can be brought in for $20,000, elaborate post-production flourishes generally up the ante well beyond that. The expectant video-rock consumer is advised to temper his hopes while the infant medium undergoes growing pains.

(Impatient spenders, beware: many video outlets offer only tapes of material previously seen elsewhere, most often the tube; others are less than reliable when it comes to quality, quantity, customer service. Your best bet is to visit the local record store to find out what's out, what's new and what's worth the money.)

The wait for worthy product at an affordable price may yield more than just sensual pleasures. The videocassette and disc could become vehicles for making some important statements, a means for the homebound rock fan to express his disdain for the moldy establishment voice that radio has become—while at the same time showing his utter contempt for network TV. Video rock can open concert halls to those who long ago swore never to return there in the flesh. It can enable aging superstars to get off the road, and yet still be seen by their public. It can bring vitality and creativity to a lackluster music scene, with the merger of experimental film techniques and TV's enormous impact. And that's just in the first three to five years.

"Right now the videodisc is a playback-only system," says science writer Stewart Kranz, author of "Science and Technology in the Arts," "but 10 years from now there could be open tracks on the disc, so that you could record music of your own and integrate it with tracks of established stars. Instead of having to sing into a mirror and pretend you're Elvis Presley, you can literally become part of the presentation. It would be participatory video."

Needless to say, artists, fans and industry heavies intend to stay tuned. "As when motion pictures went from silents to talkies, so will a number of musical artists make the transition into video," says Walter Yetnikoff, president of the CBS Records Group. Then, with a sly chuckle, he adds, "We've been signing our musical artists for audio/video rights for the last 15 years." ■

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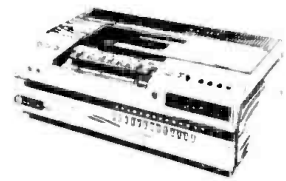

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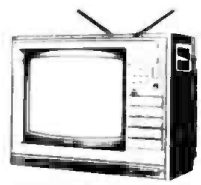

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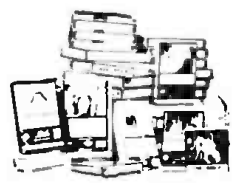

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MENACHEM BEGIN

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"Lately," he says, "I had an interview with the Dutch television after their embassy was withdrawn from Jerusalem and the Dutch people were very sad about it. I was very grateful that they are for Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. So I gave them an interview, and, of course, I spoke to the American media. I had one important meeting with Mr. [Bill] Seamans of ABC. I appeared several times on [ABC's] *Good Morning America* live from here. They put it on a satellite. They put a hearing aid here in my ear and then I hear them from Washington. It's wonderful to see this modern technology working.

"But," he cautions, "I do not make political decisions thinking about what will be the reaction of the media. I take decisions together with my colleagues which we deem to be just and right and in the interests of Israel. So whatever the reaction of the media is, we have to take the proper decisions. Of course, as every other human being, I always prefer to hear praise instead of the opposite. But that is not the decisive factor in our decision-making process. I always do my best, as far as I can, to explain our decisions. I have interviews, I am asked questions, I give my answers. I won't deny anybody an interview with one exception, which I am not going to mention. There is one gentleman who is not going any more to interview me. He can speak to my colleagues but not me. [U.S. sources say the reporter is CBS's Mike Wallace. — Ed.]

> "In our times, you have to talk indeed not only to governments but to public opinion."

"In our times, you have to talk indeed not only to governments but to public opinion because of the great changes in comparison with previous eras. In the 19th century, there was a press and the press was read by a very small portion of the public—by the intelligentsia and the aristocracy, which in those days meant the same. And the people lived in darkness. Therefore, there could have been a diplomacy of Monsieur Talleyrand, who used to say that the tongue was created in order to cover up the thoughts.

"Such a saying, secret diplomacy, behind-the-scenes moves, etc., were possible because the people lived in darkness. Not so in our time. Now the press has a great competitor in the electronic media. Even an illiterate man can know everything. He sits in his room; he listens. He doesn't have to read anything. So this is a time," says Prime Minister Begin, "when you have to speak to public opinion." ■

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series of commands, each of which you number. Here, I'll do a simple one. I'll give the computer just a few basic commands and get it to print Lori's name 20 times," he said, referring to my 4-year-old daughter.

And then he created 20 vertical LORIs on the screen.

"I'm sure that program could be endlessly useful, Sam," I said, "but every time I need 20 Loris, couldn't I just . . . well, type them out?"

"Oh, the computer can do lots of other things," he said, picking up the instruction manual. "Here, look at *this* program: house security. You program it and the computer asks you, 'Is the front door locked?' 'Is the back door locked?' Things like that."

"My wife asks me that every night," I said. "She was programmed by a nervous mother years ago. Sam, for 500 bucks, this thing should do more than a jittery Jewish mother."

"OK, here—look at *this*: you can teach it to play craps. I'll program it for you."

Sam then typed out 18 lines, including such statements as P. "YOUR POINT IS"; N GOTO 130 and P.P. "YOU ROLLED *** :A:" and "B:***" and F.I = ITON: J = RND(32767):N:,I.

"The computer will roll for you," said Sam, "because it has a random-number generator inside."

All he now had to do was type RUN and the screen filled up with:

```
YOU ROLLED 1 AND 4
YOUR POINT IS 5
YOU ROLLED 4 AND 5
YOU ROLLED 2 AND 4
YOU ROLLED 3 AND 2
YOU LOSE
```

"That machine doesn't have the brains of an electric razor," I said. "I *made* my point: I *win*."

"I know," said Sam with a puzzled look. "I must have made some mistake in the program. A single wrong character will do it, you know."

"I hate to sound old-fashioned, Sam, but a pair of dice costs only a buck."

Sam programmed for craps again. This time, the computer knew how to play, but the game was about as exciting as playing a parking meter. "Let's try the flying saucer game," I said.

Since this game was already programmed on tape, Sam simply wrote CLOAD on the typewriter, pushed the ENTER key to transfer the command to the screen, and then put the tape in the cassette player and pushed PLAY. A few seconds later, an asterisk appeared in the upper left corner of the screen; and then, within another min-

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Four-year-old Lori Schoenstein contemplates the mysteries of "Level I." Though her father complains that the TRS-80 has its troubles with the distance between San Diego and Boston, it can print his daughter's name 20 times.

What's a Novice to Do?

As the accompanying article shows, programming a home computer can be a tricky and exhausting business for the first-time user. How does a newcomer to the art learn to tap the machine's potential, both for learning and for fun? PANORAMA asked David Lubar, associate editor of Creative Computing magazine, for a few pointers:

The novice computer-user whose traumas are described on these pages really can't be faulted for eagerness. Most people want to see results immediately. But, after a few hours of trying the supplied programs, he should have sat down with the manual, gone slowly through it while trying the examples, and learned what the machine can and can't do.

For example, the computer, unless specifically programmed otherwise, can't understand English. To a computer, "HEY, I MADE A MISTAKE" is as meaningless as "SHUN THE FRUMIOUS BANDERSNATCH" is in normal conversation.

But, while running a program, you should be able to use English. In other words, a good program will ensure that the user can enter information simply, and also make sure that mistakes won't send everything crashing to Never-Never Land. Luckily, there are a lot of good programmers out there, producing good work; probably our besieged novice would have found some help in their products. For instance, a number of good word-processing programs are available. Words can be changed, inserted, deleted, or moved with little effort. New combinations can be tried on the screen. At any time, the text can be saved or printed out. Not bad for a machine that doesn't know the distance to San Diego, is it?

What else could our novice have done? Well, he could have experimented with the machine a little more. He could have tried different combinations of statements in the BASIC language, varying the examples in the manual to see what happened. There are computer magazines available, such as Creative Computing, that contain lots of advice and tips for both the novice and pro.

How else could he have used his computer? Home computers can play a game of chess at a level high enough to challenge most players. They can simulate situations of any sort, allowing the player to take the role of a health official fighting malaria, or a warrior exploring a mazelike dungeon. They can take you to the Moon or let you fly over the Earth. They can teach you a foreign language or synthesize an unending variety of sounds. In thousands of homes they are doing this and more every day.

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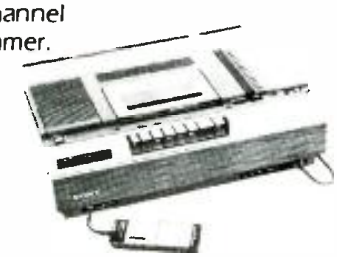

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ute, a second asterisk appeared and the machine said:

READY
›

Sam wrote RUN and the screen filled with the rules for the flying saucer game, some of which were:

LARGE SAUCER 1-10 POINTS
SMALL SAUCER 20 POINTS
USE ‹ AND › TO AIM

Jane played the first game. With the missiles set at the slowest speed, she made 24 hits in 136 shots, a score that would have made the Russians wish that American women faced the draft.

After my other two daughters, 16-year-old Eve-Lynn and Lori, had played the game, Sam switched us to a programmed tape for blackjack. Once programmed, the computer then asked the number of players in the game and also their names. With Sam and Jane playing, the computer flashed SHUFFLING and then said:

JANE: WHAT IS YOUR BET?

When both bets were placed, the cards for Sam, Jane and the dealer were flashed on the screen. The players had a chance to 1 = HIT, 2 = STAND, 3 = DOUBLE, 4 = REVIEW CARDS.

Sam drew one card too many and the screen said BUSTED; but Jane drew to 19, beat the dealer, and had her winnings flashed on the screen: $2,985,643. The daughter of a free-lance writer has to dream big.

At this point, I found myself growing tired of mere games and was anxious to use the computer for some higher pursuit, like beating the IRS. However, there didn't seem to be a tax-evasion program, so I decided to try the only aesthetic program in the manual: the poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," by Robert Frost.

With anticipation, I began to type it out, the first computer programming I had ever done: 54 lines, including such entries as 1400 P.AT 525 "MY LITTLE HORSE MUST THINK IT QUEER" and 6070 IF Y = 24 + IG. 6020." The typing was tedious; and halfway through I mistakenly pressed ENTER twice, making the computer skip a line and flash READY. Flustered, I quickly wrote THAT WAS A MISTAKE.

And the computer said WHAT?

I TOLD YOU, I wrote. THAT WAS A MISTAKE. IGNORE SECOND "ENTER."

And the computer said WHAT?

"Right now it doesn't know what you're talking about," said Sam. "You have to correct a mistake like that by writing LIST and *then* redoing the line. You have to speak to a computer in the language of BASIC—and it can't originate thoughts."

"An electronic congressman," I said.

When, at last, I had finished the 54th line of the Robert Frost poem, I typed RUN and saw WHOSE WOODS THESE ARE I THINK I KNOW appear at the top of the screen. And then the letters slowly floated down and turned into snowflakes.

"Rosebud," I said and walked away.

The following morning, I wanted to see how the computer solved problems in math, just in case the girls ever decided to do any homework again. And so, I gave the computer the manual's simplest problem: the finding of a distance by multiplying the rate of speed by time. The first line of BASIC that I was told to give the computer, 40D = R * T, was followed by three others containing figures that would let me find the distance from Boston to San Diego if a jet traveling at an average speed of 500 miles per hour makes the trip in six hours.

> "Wait a minute!" I said to myself. "Why am I typing out four lines of gibberish when I can solve this one in my head?"

Wait a minute! I said to myself. *Why the hell am I typing out four lines of gibberish when I can solve this one in my head?* Nevertheless, enjoying the feeling of being smarter than the computer for the first time, I typed RUN and then pushed ENTER to see if it knew the answer. However, the computer responded not with the answer but with READY. Was it insulted by the simplicity of the problem?

Then I saw that the manual had been testing me. One more line of programming is needed, it said. Since I had no idea what that line could be, I went right to the answer on the following page: 50. PRINT D. After typing RUN, I pushed ENTER and the computer told me 3000 miles. At once I began to look for the Radio Shack guarantee because the distance from Boston to San Diego is 2900 miles. The computer's answer was right only if you had killed 100 miles in a holding pattern over La Jolla.

That evening, I decided to take another intellectual fling. I already had made the alphabet snow. This time, I took a crack at speed-reading so that I would be able to read the TRS-80 manual faster than a paragraph a day. The manual's speed-reading program contained 35 lines for entering the opening passage of "Gone with the Wind." With consummate care, I began to type; but after line 12, the computer suddenly said WHAT? and I saw that my care had been only semiconsummate: I had left out a single / in line 9. I tried to replace the whole line by typing LIST and then a corrected entry for 9, but the computer again said WHAT? It was maddening to be having a conversation with something both so smart and so dumb.

At last, I realized that I didn't know how to erase a line buried back in the text, so I erased everything and started again. However, now a new problem arose to test the circuits wired in me: when I tried to type the continuation of an entry that was too long for a single line, the computer refused to accept more than five characters.

The following day, I went back to Radio Shack and the clerk explained that a Level I computer will take no more than five characters on a continuation line. The solution was to give the line a new number, which I did when I got home. Then I took 15 truly boring minutes to type out the whole speed-reading program. When I had finally finished,I excitedly wrote RUN and the computer said

HOW MANY WORDS PER MINUTE DO YOU READ?

"Two hundred," I replied.

And then the computer said SCARLETT O'HARA WAS NOT BEAUTIFUL, BUT MEN SELDOM

WHAT?

STOPPED AT RUBBING HER THIGH, I ad-libbed in reply.

WHAT?

Instead of giving me a speed-reading course, the computer had lured me into a bawdy conversation.

Now what the hell is this? I thought. *I'm trying to explain sex to a machine?*

The next morning, I took out the three Level I cassettes in the IQ building program that I had bought at Radio Shack. I realized, of course, that this

program was designed to elevate *my* IQ, but the computer needed it too. More important, I wanted a program that would detour the girls from gambling and lead them back to scholarship. The only homework that the TRS-80 can do is math—unless you're attending blackjack school.

The instructions that came with the IQ builder said that each lesson would give me a chance to work with as many problems as I wanted; and if I made a mistake, the program would give me a hint about the answer and then I could try it again. With a stirring in my cerebrum, I put the tape on analogies in the computer, wrote CLOAD, and saw:

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO START? (1-30)

Choosing a point of medium difficulty, I wrote 15 and the computer responded with:

PROB. 15 THIS IS WHAT KIND OF ANALOGY?

PEN IS TO INK

(1) THINGS DEPENDENT ON ANOTHER
(2) SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS
(3) TOOLS TO WHAT THEY CREATE
(4) CAUSE AND EFFECT
(5) THINGS WITH A FEATURE IN COMMON

Twenty years of professional writing plus a Bachelor of Arts from Columbia College enabled me to narrow the answer to either 1, 3 or 5; and after another two minutes of thought, I hit 1 and ENTER and the computer said:

CORRECT! DO YOU WANT TO CONTINUE? (1 = YES 0 = NO)

Intellectually in heat, I hit 1 and got:

PROB. 16 THIS IS WHAT KIND OF ANALOGY?

BREAD IS TO BUTTER

(1) THINGS DEPENDENT ON ANOTHER
(2) SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS
(3) THINGS THAT GO TOGETHER
(4) THINGS TO WHAT THEY DO
(5) THINGS WITH A FEATURE IN COMMON

Since 1 had been the answer to problem 15, I shrewdly figured that the computer would try to beat me with a number I wasn't used to, so I hit 3. And the screen said:

CORRECT: DO YOU WANT TO CONTINUE? (1 = YES 0 = NO)

I wanted to say 1 but I accidentally hit 2, causing the screen to accept a 2 and not move to problem 17. Quickly trying to correct my mistake, I hit ENTER to start a new line and then I hit 1; but a READY appeared instead of problem 17. Several more times I hit 1, creating an impressive list of READYs. The computer was waiting for me to do something while I was waiting for it: an impasse between a befuddled author and a bewildered automaton. At last, I tried to make the correction by writing LIST, but all I got was 12 definitions of different types of analogies. Suddenly I understood the creativity in my department-store bills.

The entire IQ building program had gone down the drain. And *this*, students, is the rub that becomes the rub-out: one wrong letter or number, one slip of your fingers on the keys, can turn a whole program into spaghetti.

On the day I bought the computer, I had wondered if the average family would be able to use it with regularity to solve certain problems; but now I knew the biggest problem to solve was getting through a program.

In a final effort to clear the computer for correcting my mistake in analogies, I wrote RUN and then pushed ENTER.

And the marvel before me said:

PART TO WHOLE
WHAT?
570 N.X.?

This time, I needed no manual.

QUOTH THE RAVEN, I wrote, NEVERMORE.

And then I got up and went to my desk, where I spent a few minutes counting up the sums of my outstanding checks on my fingers. ■

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clusive (a Gladiator caught a pass and then fell down while the Metros got nailed for a five-yard penalty), a blitz that gave up a first down and three more straights that led to a 25-yard pass, a six-yard run and a first-down scramble by the quarterback.

On their own 25 and worried, the fans tried a blitz. Fortunately for them, the interference in the end zone was undetected, or the Gladiators would have had a touchdown pass. The next blitz put the Metros offside, but then a straight defense broke up another pass in the end zone—legally, this time. With the Gladiators penalized 15 yards for no announced reason, the fans blitzed them again, but no judgment can be made on that call—a lightning bolt crashed down just then and blew every light in the stadium, leaving it in total darkness for 10 to 15 minutes.

When the lights came back on, the Gladiators quit fooling around. Against the best calls the fans could come up with, they tied the score in three plays, with a TD pass and a conversion.

After the kickoff, the Metros and their fans combined for this bizarre offensive series: on a play-action, the quarterback fumbled the snap and recovered it; a receiver stone-handed a pass over center; a medium pass got the passer trashed in the backfield, and a punt, of sorts, was tried.

It was fourth and long, and Coach Dyer had a morbid fear the fans would make good on their razzle-dazzle reputations when allowed to choose between Punt and Go for It! Dyer didn't give them a chance; he almost shouted the kicking team onto the field. No matter: the fans' daring had cooled off. They voted to punt by 84 percent. Not that it helped: a bad snap took the kicker back to the 30-yard line, where he was buried.

And those, folks, were the highlights—*all* of them, even stretching things a bit. After that it simply got worse, except for a Gladiator field goal late in the second quarter—the last score of the game and the winning margin in the Gladiators' 10-7 victory.

The Metros, for their part, avoided the scoreboard as if it were quarantined. Their field-goal man launched a kick that nearly killed an onrushing lineman, and their passing game was not a hot item. Their running game held promise—Coach Dyer twice addressed the fans directly from the field, pleading with them to "establish the running game," but their drives were crippled by numerous penalties, most of them silly.

"The fans had no game plan," Coach Dyer explained afterward, finding himself in the odd position of being a Monday-morning quarterback to his own team. "We never got into a coordinated sequence. I had hoped to have more direct contact with the fans, to talk to them as if they were assistant coaches, but when they didn't respond to my pleas to establish a running game, I stopped. I guess they thought I was just some dumb old football coach."

Clearly, the fans did not enthrone themselves as masters of strategy. On defense, they played predictably straight on first down, ran panicky blitzes on second (usually to no avail) and chickened right out on third down. Yes, when the going got tough, they left—they voted Team Choice most of the time. In all, they never organized their defense.

On offense, the fans lost their famed daring just as quickly. They finally got around to The Bomb late in the second quarter, just when the Gladiators expected it, and lost six yards on the play. A little later, they tried it again, and netted an interception—again because the call was so obvious the secondary was ready for it. At that point, Coach Dyer turned to the camera for a little talk. Keeping the tremor out of his voice, he advised against calling The Bomb, saying, a little evasively, that the ball was wet. Recognizing an out when they saw one, the fans took it. Only twice more, in the second half, did they again vote to Nuke 'Em. One of those bombs missed its target and the other was never launched, what with the passer being busy getting pounded into the backfield.

Steve Eyen, Columbus resident and Qube participant on the night of the big game, played football in high school and college and has "always been a fan." His wife Sherry "watches occasionally." Being that the Qube game was a *special* occasion of sorts, the Eyens watched together on the night of the big game.

"It was a pretty conservative audience that engineered the game," Steve Eyen says, happy to pontificate. "I don't know if that is because Columbus, Ohio, being the home of Woody Hayes, has a conservative football tradition. I think people get pretty conditioned from watching TV so much—the run on first down, the runaround on second down, the pass on third—

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QUBE FOOTBALL

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they think it's the right thing to do."

Nancy Beja is prone to agree. A housewife, a football fan and an employee of the Ohio State alumni association (her husband Morris is not interested in football), Mrs. Beja has very definite opinions about how the game should be played. "Ohio State has become a more comforting football team to root for under Coach Earl Bruce. Under Woody Hayes it was pretty frustrating for fans who like to see a more open-style game. He called running plays constantly and we were just ready to scream."

Did Nancy Beja, in her debut as an armchair quarterback, resist the Woody Hayes school of coaching?

"The pass play is what you really go to a game to see," she states with authority. "I was voting for The Bomb early in the game. But when the majority of the fans finally voted for The Bomb, I felt it was so obvious a call that the defense was ready for it."

The field itself was, as they say, a "factor." The synthetic turf was laid out for baseball as well as football. On one side, the markers were on the third-base foul line instead of the sideline, leading to some confusion over whether a receiver was out of bounds or safe at third. The yard lines themselves had washed away into the foaming brown waters of the Scioto River, which made marking forward progress a matter of whim and good intentions. The invisible yard markers also led to strange penalty measurements. Six yards? For clipping?

The officials were somewhat distracted throughout. Some penalties were called and never explained, some called on the wrong players, and one wasn't called at all until the next play was about to start.

When it was all over, well past midnight, both coaches were interviewed, and both managed to remain composed and polite. Said Gladiator coach Bob Milkie: "I thought it was a pretty unique idea. The only thing I could say is that if it ever did happen in the future, I'd like to see the fans call *both* sides. You could have one community backing one team and another backing the other. But to have one do it, that's lopsided, you know?"

Losing coach Hal Dyer congratulated the fans on their early touchdown and elected not to dwell on their erratic strategy the rest of the game. He said losses are always tough.

Since then, football has returned to normal, and perhaps that's just as well. The real coaches are on the field and the amateur coaches are in their armchairs. Any connection between them is purely telepathic. ◉

PUBLIC TV IN CRISIS

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opera singers Luciano Pavarotti, Renata Scotto, Tatiana Troyanos, Placido Domingo and Leontyne Price; ballet dancers Aleksandr Godunov, Merrill Ashley and Natalia Makarova; and violinist Isaac Stern. The concert will bring in $2 million in membership donations when PBS televises it during pledge week.

But another, less fashionably dressed group stands outside the hall passing out leaflets. The group calls itself "The Coalition to Make Public Television Public," and its leaflet reads, in part, "[WNET] has no regular programming for, by or about: Blacks, Hispanics, Lesbians, Gay Men, Women, Veterans, Asian-Americans, Senior Citizens, Disabled, etc. . . . Where does your [membership] money go? Good question! Let's put it into real *Public Television." Lincoln Center's security police tell the group they're trespassing on private property, and they move off to a little patch of ground across the plaza, next to where taxicabs and limousines are dropping off more concert-goers.*

A host of pitfalls litters public television's path to financial security, but at root it all comes down to one fundamental dispute: nobody, least of all public broadcasters themselves, can agree on what it is that noncommercial television is supposed to *be* in this country. Some see the mission as strictly educational; others want to provide local community service; some want to give minorities and independent producers access to the medium; others dream of bringing the finest in arts and culture to as many people as possible; others want a place where unconventional ideas can be voiced. It's not only a question of whether the center will hold, but of what the center is.

One group, however, can be expected to have a pretty clear definition of what public television should *not* be, and that's the commercial entrepreneurs already fighting it out in The Marketplace. Simply stated, some of those entrepreneurs aren't anxious to see public television become yet another competitor, especially since Federal and state subsidies put PTV on the map in the first place.

A harbinger of potential controversy came last September when WNET, KCET, Chicago's WTTW and Washington D.C.'s WETA-TV introduced the Dial magazine. Distributed free to those stations' 650,000 members, the Dial carried along with its program listings lots of expensive advertising aimed at PTV's ever-present up-scale audience. Several publishers in those

cities who thought expensive ads were being taken away from their own magazines protested—and started talking to some of their friends on Capitol Hill about it. Sure enough, one of those friends tacked an amendment onto a PTV appropriations bill stating that any public station publishing a magazine that accepts paid advertising would have its Federal funds entirely cut off. PTV forces immediately began marshaling their own friends against the amendment, and at press time the amendment's inclusion in the final bill was in doubt. Nonetheless, the episode serves as a preview to the sort of battle public TV can anticipate the further into entrepreneurial turf it treads. "It would be a gradual thing that the commercial people would smell coming, and that they would bitterly oppose, you can be sure of that," says Lionel Van Deerlin, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Communications. "And probably effectively oppose."

As lively as these controversies may prove to be, perhaps the more significant and ironic issue is not what threat PTV's marketing moves pose to commercial interests, but what threat they pose to public TV itself. An internal PBS memo spells out some of the more practical considerations. "How would Congress view substantial income generation by public television?" it asks. "Would or should it be seen as providing ample financial support for PTV and, therefore, reducing or eliminating Congressional appropriations? Would subscriber charges for public TV be acceptable to the public? Would contributions stop? If so, would the income more than offset the loss of contributions? Would it be viewed as a regressive distribution system, available only to those who could pay for it, unfair to the economically disadvantaged?"

Ultimately, though, it comes back to the question of mission: will the pursuit of commercial gain cause noncommercial TV to lose sight of its more idealistic goals, whatever they may be? Almost every PTV executive admits that danger exists, though some worry more than others. "As soon as you start going after audiences, you're going to lose the community-access part of the system," says Michael Kelley, a board member of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. "You're going to start thinking, 'We can't start that kind of program, because it will offend our audience,' just like the commercial guys. And the minute they start using their facilities to make profits, they're going to have to start making choices between something that makes money and something that's a public service. The more they're thinking entrepreneurial, they'll choose the moneymaker every time."

Similarly, those who believe public television ought to be providing forums for the disenfranchised aren't optimistic that The Marketplace will offer them any more opportunities in noncommercial TV than it does in commercial TV. That word "up-scale" does keep coming up, after all. A member of KCET's Community Advisory Board raised the issue when he talked about *Cosmos*. "Thank God, they're doing *Cosmos*," he said, "but that kind of thing is the tail wagging the dog. If *Cosmos* cost $8 million, well then, how much is left for the Vietnamese refugees here, or the people who want to learn English, or the farm workers?" The answer to these charges is that *Cosmos*'s $1 million profit just might buy that English-language program. But at this early stage of PTV's Marketplace endeavors, it's too early to tell if, how or when that sort of redistribution will occur.

IV. THE PROMISE

"With our temples large sums of money are required. Think of the great work of redemption there performed."—Mormon pamphlet on tithing, or giving money to the church

Dallin H. Oaks is the new chairman of PBS. He took the job last June after retiring as president of the Mormon Church's Brigham Young University. He was one of the guiding forces behind PBS's repositioning for the future this year, and he brings to his administration of PBS a deep mistrust of government involvement "in any enterprise," be it religion, education or public TV.

But will entering The Marketplace defame the church of public television? Oaks thinks not. "I wouldn't be involved in PBS if I didn't think it could have an important role in elevating the standards of American television," he says. "I get that from my religious orientation. I think it would be very unfortunate if the pressure to make a buck and to get increased audiences caused one to lose that motivation. Very unfortunate."

Though there are many doubts, there

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PUBLIC TV IN CRISIS

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are indeed many reasons to be hopeful about the future of public TV. For one, *all* the institutions of television, commercial as well as noncommercial, can expect to have their foundations shaken by the new technologies in the coming decade. If public television is feeling the tremors first, it's not only because its moorings are weakest, but also because it is closest to the center of the quake. "The Eighties and beyond, if we do it right, are moving just into the territories we plowed first," says PBS's president Lawrence Grossman, "in terms of technology, in terms of specialized audiences, in terms of education, culture and information. Presumably we know more about these areas and have more experience in them than anybody else."

In fact, Grossman recently proposed that the Nation's opera, dance, symphony and theater companies and school districts join with PBS in "a momentous partnership" to set up programming services mutually beneficial for all involved. The proposal calls for investments by those institutions and sales of stock to PTV subscribers that would raise $55 million for a cultural channel. Furthermore, license fees from school districts might bring in $75 million each year for educational programming. In making his proposal, Grossman decried what he called "the fallacy that cable television, by itself, will inevitably create a new demand for arts programming." He added, "Unless public broadcasting gets in there and does something about it, cable will serve us no better in the future than the commercial networks did in the past, which is best described by Paul Klein, who said, 'If NBC would put on a live broadcast from the Metropolitan Opera, ABC and CBS would pay NBC to do it'."

Secondly, whatever the conflicting views about what public television's role should be, at bottom lies a consensus that it must remain an alternative to commercial television, and many public broadcasters are convinced that no matter how much diversity the new technologies bring to The Marketplace, they will not totally supersede all the missions of noncommercial TV. Says Grossman, "If you look at the history of support for culture and education, since the time of Leonardo and Michelangelo to the time of the Greek dramatists to the time of Beethoven and Mozart, there has always been public patronage; it has never been left to the commercial marketplace. Five, 10 years down the road, we will still have that field to ourselves. In my judgment, it takes a certain amount of dedication."

That seems to be the heart of it: dedication. Without question, as Oaks says, there is considerable dedication to the ideals of public television among the people within it, including those most ardent in their pursuit of The Marketplace. But it must also be said that there are those in public television whose dedication to those ideals can be fairly questioned—empire-builders as well as philosophers can be found. A final comment from one of the philosophers, Lewis Freedman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Program Fund, who, like Dave Davis, has been there from the beginning. "The 1960s was a decade when everybody was enthusiastic about public television—it would solve everything," he says. "The Seventies became the decade when everybody was critical because it hadn't lived up to expectations—the decade of disappointment. I am hoping we are entering a decade when people will be realistically enthusiastic about public broadcasting. And I'm hoping we'll warrant it." ■

WHAT'S HAPPENING continued from page 14

perhaps the one in your city—showed a pretax profit of $1 million. Nearly 90 percent of all TV stations were in the black.

These figures come from the National Association of Broadcasters, which received responses to an annual survey from 434 stations. The problem is that the figures are a composite—no individual stations are identified. The confidentiality of TV-station profits rankles some citizens' groups and members of Congress. They say that knowing the financial condition of a local station could help them determine if the station can afford to offer improved programming.

Rep. Ronald Mottl (D-Ohio) tried but failed this year to require financial disclosure by every TV station. "For individuals and citizens' groups to have meaningful discussions with their local stations about programming," Mottl says, "I believe it's essential that the public as well as licensees have information about the financial feasibility of programming alternatives."

Most broadcast station owners oppose the public viewing their profit-and-loss sheets. In fact, the NAB has asked the Federal Communications Commission to halt its annual collection of financial data. Even though the agency keeps the data secret, the NAB is opposed to what it sees as unnecessary paperwork.

For now, the composite figures from the NAB give some clue about programming expenditures. The average station spent about $3 million last year; 35 cents of each dollar went for programming. Payroll ate up about one-third of the $3 million, distributed to a full-time staff of 69 employees.

Net revenue, though, was slightly more than $4 million, accounting for the $1 million pretax profit.

LONDON

Richard Gilbert reporting

"Faction"-alism. "Faction" is the British word for docudrama, the blending of fact and fiction in TV dramatic shows. And currently, faction is very much in the air.

For one thing, the "Death of a Princess" controversy has yet to die down. "Death of a Princess," you'll recall, is the fictionalized version of the real-life execution of a Saudi princess convicted of adultery. (It appeared in the U.S. on PBS last May.) Despite pressures from various groups inside Britain, the film was shown on commercial TV last April and—as anticipated—Saudi-British relations were badly damaged. They were so badly damaged, in fact, that Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington had to be dispatched to Riyadh to soothe the ruffled feelings.

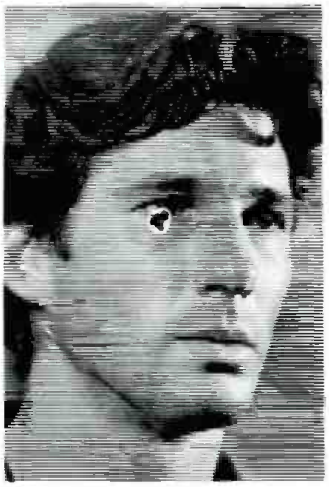
The irony is that even as Lord Carrington was in the oil sheikdom the controversy flared up anew. "Death of a Princess" was shown at the prestigious Edinburgh International Television Festival. Though the audience was composed only of professionals—the *crème de la crème* of the British TV industry—there was pressure to cancel the performance. Apparently, local businessmen with Saudi Arabian contacts felt they would suffer the consequences of any further worsening of relations.

Appropriately, the theme of this year's major TV festival was "Television and the Real World." Playwright and barrister John Mortimer gave the keynote lecture and defended television's right to put faction on the small screen. "This judicious use of fiction and fact is certainly as old as Shakespeare and is no doubt the way that various writers tackled the Old Testament, the 'Iliad' and the Icelandic sagas," proclaimed Mortimer. "The critics who denounced 'Death of a Princess' would have a field day with 'Richard III,' which by mixing history and invention tastelessly displayed a physically handicapped member of a royal household in an unfavorable light, and no doubt caused needless offense to the Plantagenet family."

Another ripple from the great faction debate has come from the government's decision to introduce a Broadcasting Complaints Commission. This will have the force of law and examine evidence from individuals (or their relations and descendants) and organizations who feel they have been unfairly treated by program-makers. The BBC and the independent television companies have attacked the proposal, fearing it could affect the making of historical and investigative programs. "A potential monster" is how one TV boss described it. The Commission could compel TV networks to broadcast an apology or a retraction by an aggrieved party.

Legal peephole. When is a blue movie not a blue movie? When it's on videotape. That's the finding of a London judge who acquitted a Soho film-club owner who was brought to court for showing explicit adult tapes in his club. The judge ruled that the Obscene Publications Act (the law designed to curb obscene books, magazines and films)

continued on page 96



***Richard Gere**: An American gigolo finds out it's not nice work, even when he can get it.*

***Julie Christie**: "Don't Look Now," but the kid is back.*

VIDEOCASSETTES

NEW RELEASES

MOVIES

American Gigolo (1980)—Richard Gere stars as a well-paid social and sexual companion-for-hire who becomes a convenient suspect in a sex murder. With Lauren Hutton, Bill Duke. (Paramount Home Video; *) (R)

Blow-Up (1966)—Michelangelo Antonioni's movie jigsaw puzzle centers on a London photographer who may have photographed a murder. Vanessa Redgrave, David Hemmings. (CBS Video Enterprises; $59.95)

Bon Voyage, Charlie Brown (1980)—Cartoon fun and adventure with the Peanuts gang as exchange students on a summer trip to France where they face danger in a mysterious chateau. (Paramount Home Video; *) (G)

The Boys in the Band (1970)—Mart Crowley's off-Broadway hit about shifting relationships at a gay birthday party. Kenneth Nelson, Cliff Gorman, Frederick Combs, Laurence Luckinbill. (CBS Video Enterprises; $59.95)

Don't Look Now (1973)—Daphne du Maurier's psychological mystery about a young couple haunted by the spirit of their drowned child. Julie Christie, Donald Sutherland, Hilary Mason, Clelia Matania. (Paramount Home Video; *) (R)

Downhill Racer (1969)—Robert Redford as an egotistical loner skiing with a U.S. team in Europe. With Gene Hackman, Camilla Sparv. (Paramount Home Video; *) (PG)

Little Darlings (1980)—At summer camp, Tatum O'Neal and Kristy McNichol are goaded into competition over who can lose her virginity first. With Matt Dillon, Armand Assante. (Paramount Home Video; *) (R)

Rio Lobo (1970)—John Wayne is directed by Howard Hawks in a tale of thieving carpetbaggers in the post-Civil War Southwest. With Jorge Rivero, Jennifer O'Neill, Jack Elam. (CBS Video Enterprises; $49.95)

Rude Boy (1980)—Unemployed and bored, a disaffected youth joins the road crew of British rock band The Clash, whose songs (filmed at actual concerts) only reinforce his disillusionment. Ray Gange. (CBS Video Enterprises; $59.95) (R)

Starting Over (1979)—Marital complexities of writer Burt Reynolds romancing skittish schoolteacher Jill Clayburgh while estranged wife Candice Bergen keeps tabs. With Charles Durning. (Paramount Home Video; *) (R)

Star Trek—The Motion Picture (1979)—The refurbished starship Enterprise, with its original TV-series crew, takes an eye-popping voyage through space to stop an Earthbound invader from destroying everything in its path. William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley, Persis Khambatta, Stephen Collins. (Paramount Home Video; *) (G)

The Sunshine Boys (1975)—Neil Simon's character study of two elderly ex-vaudevillians played by Walter Matthau and George Burns. With Richard Benjamin and Carol Arthur. (CBS Video Enterprises; $59.95) (PG)

Up in Smoke (1978)—Comedy team Cheech and Chong on an adventurous trip to obtain a profitable score of marijuana. Cheech Marin, Tommy Chong, Stacy Keach, Tom Skerritt. (Paramount Home Video; *) (R)

***Price to be announced**

Some movie descriptions courtesy of TV Guide magazine. Ratings are those assigned by the Motion Picture Association of America for theatrical showings.

Readers wishing to obtain more information from the distributors of the above-listed movies may do so at these addresses: CBS Video Enterprises, 51 West 52nd St., New York, N.Y. 10019; Paramount Home Video, 5451 Marathon St., Hollywood, Cal. 90038.

BOOKS

continued from page 16

That's Incredible, by Wendy Jeffries. (Jove; $2.50)—A tie-in with the ABC-TV series.

Total Television: A Comprehensive Guide to Programming from 1948 to 1980, by Alex McNeil. (Penguin; $9.95)—Descriptions of TV series past and present and noteworthy specials, plus prime-time schedules and ratings.

TV Ad Trivia Quiz Book, by John DiPrete. (A.S. Barnes; $3.95)—Over 1000 questions and answers about characters, slogans and stars of TV commercials for the avid TV-watcher.

***Tatum O'Neal**: How she spent her summer vacation in "Little Darlings."*

BEST SELLERS

This list of the top 20 prerecorded videocassettes is based on sales figures from a survey of retail outlets around the country.

*(1) **1. Alien** (1979)—Haunted-house drama in outer space. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

(3) **2. Coal Miner's Daughter** (1980)—Sissy Spacek in the rags-to-riches story of country singer Loretta Lynn. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; $65)

(4) **3. The Rose** (1980)—Bette Midler stars as a tragic Joplinesque rock queen. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $79.95)

(2) **4. The Muppet Movie** (1979)—Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy sing and dance their way to Hollywood fame. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

(6) **5. Superman** (1978)—Super-budget film starring the special effects. (WCI Home Video; $65)

(5) **6. "10"** (1979)—Featuring the Eighties' first sex symbol, Bo Derek. (WCI Home Video; $65)

(7) **7. Return of the Dragon** (1974)—Bruce Lee's last film. (Video Gems; $59.95)

(–) **8. A Clockwork Orange** (1971)—Stanley Kubrick's vivid drama, starring Malcolm McDowell. (WCI Home Video; $75)

(9) **9. National Lampoon's Animal House** (1978)—Zany misadventures of the Delta House fraternity brothers. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; $65)

(–) **10. The Godfather** (1972)—Francis Ford Coppola's Oscar-winning crime drama. (Paramount Home Video; $69.95)

(–) **11. The Main Event** (1979)—Boxing and romance vie for laughs. (WCI Home Video; $60)

(18) **12. The Electric Horseman** (1979)—Jane Fonda and Robert Redford in a romantic comedy. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; $65)

(–) **13. Every Which Way but Loose** (1978)—Clint Eastwood as a barroom-brawling truck driver with an orangutan as a buddy. (WCI Home Video; $60)

(–) **14. Star Trek Bloopers** (1966-69)—Offbeat outtakes from the popular science-fiction TV series. (Video Dimensions; $39.95)

(–) **15. Norma Rae** (1979)—Sally Field's Oscar-winning portrayal of a courageous Southern millworker. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

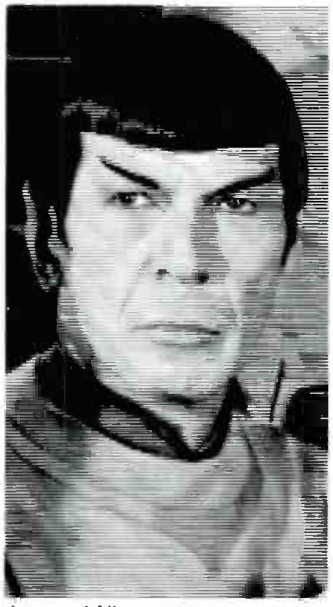
(19) **16. The Jerk** (1979)—Carl Reiner's wacky comedy, starring Steve Martin. (MCA Videocassette, Inc.; $65)

(–) **17. The Godfather, Part II** (1974)—More tales of the Corleone family. (Paramount Home Video; $79.95)

(20) **18. The Boys from Brazil** (1978)—Laurence Olivier hunts a mad doctor intent on creating a Fourth Reich. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

(–) **19. Phantasm** (1977)—Two brothers in a tale of murder and mystery. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

(–) **20. Saturn 3** (1980)—Farrah Fawcett and Kirk Douglas as research scientists at a space station near Saturn. (Magnetic Video Corp.; $59.95)

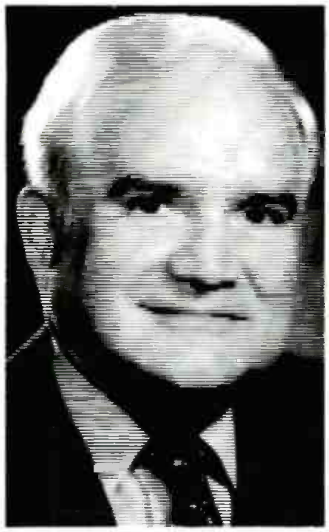


***Leonard Nimoy**: The voyage is on film, but it's still a trek.*

** **Position last month***

Sales figures are from the month of September. Retail outlets participating in our survey include: *Associated Video, Houston; Audio Video Craft, Inc., Los Angeles; Barney Miller's, Inc., Lexington, Ky.; Beta Home Entertainment Club, Las Vegas; Brenda's Movie House, Philadelphia; Cinema Concepts, Inc., Wethersfield, Conn.; Communications Maintenance, Inc., Litchfield, Ill.; Concord Video Center, Stamford, Conn.; Cyclops Video, Sherman Oaks, Cal.; Discotronics, Inc., Cranbury, N.J.; Giffen Video, Staten Island, N.Y.; Godwin Radio, Inc. Godwin Video Centers, Birmingham, Ala.; Henry's Camera, Los Angeles; Jantzen Beach Magnavox Home Entertainment Center, Portland, Ore.; Kaleidoscope Video Shops, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Okla.; Media Concepts, Inc., St. Petersburg, Fla.; Modern Communications, St. Louis; Newbury TV & Appliances, New Bedford, Mass.; Nichols Electronics, Wichita, Kan.; Precision TV and Video, Bellwood, Ill.; Record Rendezvous, Cleveland; Red Fox, Elizabethville, Pa.; Select Film Library, New York; The Sheik Video Corp., Metairie, La.; Stansbury Stereo, Baltimore; Televideo Systems, Richmond, Va.; Thomas Film Video, Royal Oak, Mich.; Video 2000, San Diego; Video Cassette, Phoenix, Ariz.; Video Cassettes, Etc., Lubbock, Texas; Video Corporation of America, Edison, N.J.; Video Dimensions, New York; Video Library, Torrance, Cal.; The Video Library Company, Bala Cynwyd, Pa.; Video Services, Towson, Md.; Videospace, Bellevue, Wash.; Video Specialties, Houston; The Video Store, Gretna, La.*

***Bob Hope**: His relations are human.*



***William Leonard**: Held over for another year.*

WHAT'S HAPPENING *continued from page 93*

as it stands does not cover video. The defense lawyer got his client off by pointing out that the seized videotape was not a "film or other record of pictures" as defined in the law, but "a piece of plastic, storing invisible electrical impulses capable of being converted into audio-visual signals." A senior BBC-TV engineer gave expert evidence in the case, which is bound to have many repercussions. The Christian moral-pressure group, The Festival of Light, demanded a change in the law because technology has overtaken it. In a related development, Mary Whitehouse, outspoken critic of moral laxity, has denounced video pornography as the biggest threat to the quality of life in Britain.

As for the club owners, they are rapidly copying their blue movies onto videotapes while the police wonder how to enforce the obscenity law in Soho's blue-film clubs.

Unusual roots. The commercial TV company ATV (maker of *The Muppet Show*) has conceived the most ingenious spinoff in years. It has made a pilot comedy show called "Roots." But this 30-minute epic has a slightly different storyline from Alex Haley's famed multigenerational tracing.

The latest "Roots" is about a Jewish dentist who wants to become a film director but whose father won't let him get away from dentistry.

If the pilot is well-received, a series could be seen on British screens next year.

PASSAGES

WED

Marilu Henner, Elaine on ABC's *Taxi*, and Frederic Forrest, Bette Midler's costar in "The Rose."

BORN

Zoe Emily Winkler, to ***Henry "The Fonz" Winkler*** of *Happy Days* and his wife Stacey Weitzman.

HONORED

Bob Hope, with the first annual Sherrill C. Corwin Human Relations Award, given by the American Jewish Committee for leadership in the entertainment field.

Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin (D–Cal.), with the first honorary lifetime membership to Women in Cable, for his contributions to the growth of cable television.

SWITCHED

Sid Davis, from chief, NBC News Washington bureau, to vice president, NBC News.

Ron Bonn, from documentary producer, CBS News, to producer, NBC News.

Pat Collins, from *Good Morning America*'s "Update" reporter to the show's entertainment correspondent and film critic.

SIGNED

Author and journalist ***Marshall Frady***, as correspondent and writer for *ABC News Closeup*.

Coretta Scott King, president of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Social Change in Atlanta, as a commentator for Ted Turner's Cable News Network.

Charles Quinn, veteran NBC reporter, as a Washington correspondent for *Independent Network News*.

Animal expert ***Joan Embery***, to appear regularly on ABC's *Those Amazing Animals*.

RE-SIGNED

William Leonard, as president of CBS News, for one year past his scheduled retirement in April 1981.

Jay Randolph, sports director of KSDK-TV, St. Louis, and TV voice of baseball's Cardinals, to a new multiyear contract with NBC Sports.

Charles Osgood, to a new, long-term contract with CBS News. Osgood will replace Ed Bradley, who is moving to *60 Minutes*, as anchor of *The CBS Sunday Night News*.

DIED

Producer ***Whitney Ellsworth***, 71, who began producing *The Adventures of Superman* TV series in 1953.

Lillian Randolph, 65, who played Madame Queen in *Amos 'n' Andy*; Randolph also appeared as Sister Sara in the miniseries *Roots*.

Stan Worth, 48, composer and conductor who wrote themes and songs for *The Bullwinkle Show, George of the Jungle* and the "Most Important Person" segment of *Captain Kangaroo*.

Fred Hamilton, 65, former child actor and a producer of *Omnibus*.

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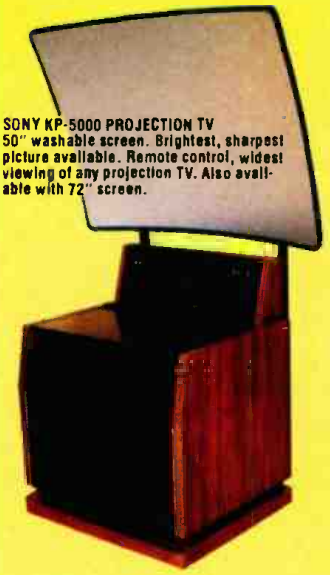

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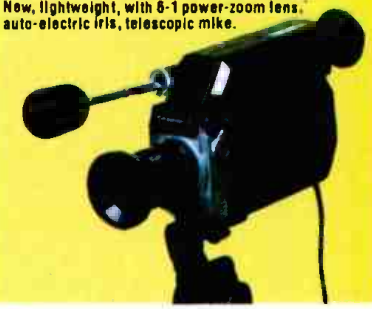

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SPORTS

Spoilsports

By JOHN SCHULIAN

I think America's television sportscasters are given a choice when they embark upon their careers: they can have either brains or blowdryers.

No wonder there are so many well-groomed airheads reading us the scores every night. They obviously realized that theirs is a visual medium and reacted accordingly. Thought doesn't count; looks do. Hence, the plague upon our screens—the ex-jocks who inspired the Tank McNamara comic strip, the home-team cheerleaders who consider themselves one with their local heroes, the mindless dolts who are forever taking us to the tape.

In my job as a newspaper sports columnist, I leave my home town, Chicago, all the time, visit as many as 25 other cities a year and spend something like 120 days annually in hotel rooms. Basically, I like hotel rooms; they have Magic Fingers and I'm not expected to make the bed. But the TV sets are always a disappointment because they never fail to confront me with clones of the clowns I left behind, sportscasters who have given new dimensions to the meaning of the word "insipid."

In New York, Warner Wolf makes 400 grand a year for showing game highlights and screaming "Gimme a break!" Detroit is stuck with Al Ackerman, who spends so much air time picking pointless fights with the local teams that scores, supposedly the staple of any sportscast, are now considered a luxury. Stu Nahan is odds-on to tell you the pride of Los Angeles television is Stu Nahan, but how can you believe a white man who refers to the city's black sportscasters as his "half brothers"? If you want an equal for such foolishness, you must travel to Houston, where Dan Patrick insists on dressing like Lt. Rip Masters, the hero of the old *Rin Tin Tin* TV series.

But is there any place that suffers as much as Minneapolis-St. Paul? On one station, the puerile Bob Bruce feigns enthusiasm over football and baseball while waiting to unload his computerized fishing forecast. On another station, Tom Ryther keeps his bemused audience wondering which is greater: his arrogance or his ignorance. And on yet another station, Dave Sheehan promotes himself as a journalist after printing up T-shirts for the North Stars, the local hockey team, and shamelessly peddling them.

"These guys are really a point of pride with us," says a bleary-eyed friend of mine who lives in the Twin Cities. "We think they're the worst in the country."

As a group, they most assuredly are in the running. Taken individually, however, none of them are as simpering, self-important, error-prone and ridiculous as the unfortunate Jim Brinson of Fort Worth. It was Brinson who once stood beneath an umbrella on a rain-spattered live remote from Arlington Stadium, the home of the Texas Rangers, and proclaimed: "As you can clearly see, there will be no baseball game here tonight." Naturally, the first pitch was thrown at 7:30 P.M., right on schedule.

The blame for the vacuous state of affairs deservedly falls on the sportscasters. You must realize, however, that there are also people responsible for sending them in front of the cameras—anonymous station managers and news directors who are as villainous as anybody in television. "What they want," says ex-Chicago sportscaster Mike Leiderman, "is somebody who'll be a clown. They want somebody who'll be controversial. Well, anybody can be controversial just by saying something stupid."

Leiderman, it should be pointed out, is neither clownish nor pointlessly hostile. He is merely good. And opinionated.

"The people who run television treat sports the way they do the weather," he says. "News is serious, but sports and the weather are for fun. Who thinks that way? Everybody—the networks whose ideas filter down to their affiliates, the researchers who tell you the best way to entertain people is with childish junk, the station managers who are being pulled every which way. Listen, very few stations make a serious commitment to sports. They assume there's no point in educating people because the people are already getting what they want."

Now I know why I turn on the TV sports news with such great trepidation when I arrive at my latest destination. Buying a newspaper, on the other hand, produces an entirely different reaction in me. Even in such relatively remote outposts as Columbia, Mo., and Jackson, Miss., I know I will find a sprightly, readable sports section. And in most of the major cities I visit, I am able to turn to a first-rate sportswriter—Leigh Montville in Boston, for instance, or Joe Soucheray in Minneapolis or Skip Bayless in Dallas. Simply put, they are the kind of stars local TV stations always brag about but seldom have.

The explanation for this, I think, is as plain as the egg on the sportscasters' faces: the writers feed on a tradition that the on-camera dolts can barely comprehend. For anyone with a love of games and a gift for putting words on paper, there is a standard of excellence that has grown richer and fuller over the last 30 years. In all that time, the best example of style and literacy has been Red Smith, who outlived the wonderful New York Herald Tribune and now graces The New York Times with such lines as these: "Not much larger than a growler of beer, [Will Yolen] stands tall in international

John Schulian recently won the 1980 National Headliner Award as the country's top newspaper sports columnist.

kite-flying society, where he has recognized himself as world champion ever since he tricked the Maharajah of Bharatpur into diving his kite into a rain forest during a fly-off in Central India."

Who on television ever set such a splendid example for future generations?

The only name that comes to mind, much as I hate to admit it, is Howard Cosell. Let me hasten to add, though, that Cosell's only good years as a TV journalist were his early ones. Back then, he used his newly sprouted muscles on ABC-TV to debunk the myths that had sprung up around the games people play. He feared nothing and no one, not even Sonny Liston, the erstwhile convict and mob goon who had ascended briefly to the heavyweight championship of the world.

"You ain't my friend," the baleful Liston told Cosell.

"That's right," Howard shot back.

Friendship didn't matter. What mattered was getting Liston in front of ABC's cameras and asking him if he threw his first fight with the pre-Muhammad Ali Cassius Clay and if he was owned by gangsters. And, by God, Cosell did it.

He was a polysyllabic wonder—irreverent, spiky, arch and, above all, tough. Then, gradually, he became a parody of himself—vain, shallow, only too happy to shill for any ridiculous sitcom the higher-ups at ABC told him to. The truth was, and is, apparent: the great Cosell had turned into a sad joke and ABC didn't give a damn about it as long as his ratings held up.

To be sure, ABC doesn't hold the patent on such crass expediency. The more I watch sports news on television—whether it is produced at any of the three major networks' headquarters or in some dinky station in Twin Falls, Idaho—the more I suspect that entertainment counts for everything and journalism for nothing.

On those rare occasions when the dumb bunnies paid to make decisions stumble across someone worth watching, they never seem to know how to react. Most often, they wind up kissing the gem goodbye. So it is that the clever, uncompromising Bryant Gumbel was given NBC's pro football warm-up show as a reward for exemplary service in Los Angeles and that Clark Booth, the reigning wordsmith of Boston television, is now as likely to cover a papal visit as he is the World Series. In the nutsy world of TV, there is just one other reward Gumbel and Booth could have received for their laudable skills. They could have been fired.

Don't laugh until you hear the story of Mike Leiderman. He toiled nobly for two-and-a-half years as the backup sportscaster on Channel 5 in Chicago, the NBC affiliate, and his work sparkled too brightly to be ignored. Gushing over the home teams wasn't his style and neither was just reading scores; he never failed to add that Julius Erving scored 37 points or that Steve Carlton won his 20th game—the nuggets of information that sports junkies crave and so many sportscasters ignore.

Leiderman also crafted mini-features on the sacrifices young gymnasts make in their lives, on pro football's long-shot rookies and, most memorable of all, on Paul Lindblad, a relief pitcher whose hobby was prospecting. "While everybody else was in the clubhouse playing cards before a game," Leiderman said, "he was cruising around the outfield with his metal detector." It was no surprise then that Leiderman won a local Emmy and awards from Associated Press and United Press International. What was a surprise was that when he came home from vacation last spring, he got canned.

I think the explanation for his firing is, to put it bluntly, that Leiderman was too good for Channel 5. For that matter, he was too good to be a sportscaster at any Chicago station.

Just look at the laughingstock that outlasted him. The only good thing about Greg Gumbel, who was always ahead of Leiderman at Channel 5, may be that he is Bryant Gumbel's brother; but even that couldn't spare him after he spent the past baseball

continued on page 102

First Aid for VCRs

By DAVID LACHENBRUCH

Things break down. Your videocassette recorder is no more exempt from this modern-age axiom than your car or your washing machine. The VCR is an extremely complex electromechanical device whose parts are machined to tolerances measured in ten thousandths of an inch. If you ever tried, heaven forbid, to remove the cabinet, you probably found it requires a special screwdriver. There's a reason. Only a qualified video-recorder technician should even attempt to go inside. It's even off-limits to good TV repairmen who haven't taken courses in video recorders, because the things most likely to go wrong are mechanical, not electronic, and require specialized knowledge and equipment to fix.

But this doesn't mean you have to sit helplessly fuming when the damn thing doesn't work, or run to the phone to make that dreaded $50-plus phone call. A substantial number of service calls can be avoided by making a few simple home tests. Then if the machine still doesn't work, you'll at least know that it (probably) really does need fixing—and you'll be able to describe the symptoms properly to the repairman. Here are the most common VCR problems and what may be wrong or how to solve them.

- *No power—pilot lamp off:* (1) Power cord not plugged in (don't laugh—this is one of the most common causes of service calls). (2) Timer switch is in ON position (it should be OFF).
- *RECORD or PLAY button can't be depressed:* (1) Safety tab on cassette has been removed to prevent recording—try another cassette. (2) No cassette in recorder. (3) Cassette compartment cover isn't pushed down into locked position. (4) Another key (such as REWIND or FAST FORWARD) is already depressed.
- *RECORD or PLAY button won't stay down:* (1) Tape is at end of its travel. (2) Excessive moisture in VCR—this is indicated by glowing "dew" lamp on recorders that have them. Keep power on for about an hour (or until lamp goes off), or consult instruction book.
- *Machine stops before end of tape in REWIND or FAST-FORWARD mode:* MEMORY switch is on.
- *TV broadcasts can't be recorded:* (1) CAMERA/TUNER or CAMERA/TV switch is in CAMERA position. (2) Camera or microphone connected—some machines won't record TV with these plugged in. (3) VCR channel selector tuned to a blank channel. (4) AFT button on VCR not depressed, or fine tuning is not properly adjusted. (5) PAUSE or REMOTE PAUSE button activated. (6) Defective cable or connection from TV set to VCR.
- *No playback with PLAY key depressed:* (1) TV/VCR or TV/CASSETTE switch in TV position. (2) PAUSE control on. (3) TV set tuned to wrong channel—it must be on Channel 3 or 4. (4) Cassette is unrecorded—try another. (5) Defective cable or connection from TV to VCR.
- *Streaky or snowy picture on playback:* (1) TV set mistuned; adjust fine tuning or engage AFT control. (2) Poor antenna or antenna connections during recording. (3) TRACKING control needs adjustment. (4) Tape may be poorly recorded or defective—try another cassette. (5) VCR's recording/playback heads are dirty, worn or misaligned—service required.
- *Objects at top of picture bend or wave on playback:* (1) TRACKING control needs adjustment. (2) Defective tape. (3) AFT circuit may be at fault in older TV sets.
- *No color or poor picture in normal TV viewing:* (1) TV/VCR or TV/CASSETTE switch not in TV position. (2) Poor antenna or TV-to-VCR connections. Check if problem is in VCR or VCR connectors rather than in TV set by disconnecting antenna from VCR and connecting it directly to TV set. (3) Accessory tuner for portable not plugged into outlet.
- *Picture tears or rolls on playback of movie cassette:* Adjust HORIZONTAL and VERTICAL HOLD controls on back of TV set. If this doesn't work, return cassette to dealer for exchange or refund—your set won't accept some cassettes that are encoded to discourage piracy.
- *Picture disappears for short intervals on playback:* (1) Defective or worn-out cassette. (2) Antipiracy encoding problems; see above.
- *No recording from camera:* (1) CAMERA/TUNER switch is in TUNER position. (2) Camera isn't switched on (allow warm-up time). (3) Lens cap is on camera. (4) Insufficient lighting or camera aperture improperly adjusted. (5) Incorrect or loose camera-to-VCR connections. (6) PAUSE control engaged.
- *Whistling or howling during recording from camera or sound dubbing:* TV volume turned up too high during recording (it's best to turn sound all the way down).

The part of the VCR most likely to need servicing is the head-drum assembly, particularly the tiny record/playback heads. These heads *should* last for at least 1000 hours of use—that's about two years for the average machine—and sometimes they stay in shape much longer. Now, heads can get dirty or clogged and may need cleaning before that time; however, they don't have to be cleaned nearly so often as the heads of an audio tape recorder. Because of the delicacy of the operation, head-cleaning should be left to experts. (Most VCR manufacturers are against the use of head-cleaning cassettes, which are designed to be inserted in the VCR and "played.")

All of the tests above don't necessarily apply to all VCRs. But if you tear out this page and keep it near your recorder, it may save you grief and money—and help familiarize you with your recorder. ■

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SPOILSPORTS

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season kissing the hip pockets of Dave Kingman, the Chicago Cub slugger with a penchant for dumping ice water on reporters. Channel 7, the ABC outlet, employs Tim Weigel, the sportscaster who should be Chicago's best. Weigel, however, has forgotten about the smarts that got him through Yale and the guts that made him a first-rate sportswriter at the old Chicago Daily News. Now he seems content to play cutesy-poo until I want to fwow up.

That leaves Johnny Morris of CBS's Channel 2 to save the city the way he used to save the Chicago Bears when he was their star pass catcher. Alas, handsome Johnny isn't up to the task, and never will be as long as he fawns over high-school cheerleaders, forgets about scores and asks football executives questions like this: "Give me a yes or no answer: what percentage is a quarterback worth to a team?"

It is unimaginable that Leiderman was deemed unworthy of knocking heads with such competition, and yet that is precisely what happened. He has a handsome job now as co-host of the city's new *P.M. Magazine*, but he found that only after a summer of fretting that he wouldn't be able to pay his mortgage or support his wife and two kids. I hope he will never be insulted so badly again in his career.

For that matter, I hope I will never be insulted so badly again, either. But why should I torment myself with leaky dreams. There is no rainbow in sight. When I want scores, I know I will get giggles. When I want to see if Reggie Jackson has anything new to say, I know I will get clichéd questions guaranteed to bring forth clichéd answers. It doesn't matter where I am—in Chicago, in Dallas, in Los Angeles. I am just another of sports' lost souls, cursed to go through life flipping the dial and crying, "How long, oh Lord, how long?" ■

"PALMERSTOWN"

continued from page 53

of any ethnic strain who has a mama would be torn up by that scene.

But the program doesn't deal bravely with the mixture of intimacy and humiliation that was race relations in the old South. I wish it would, because I grew up with that mixture and I never will entirely grow out of it, and I don't want to turn loose of it until I understand it.

I grew up in the deep South, but in a good-sized town. For the most part, black kids kept to their own neighborhood, which was called, I'm afraid, Eskimo Heights. We laughed and shook our heads when our maid's son quit his high-school football team because the band had snazzier uniforms. He would get arrested for stealing and my father would get him out on probation. I only saw him a couple of times, and he snubbed me. Eventually he got shot to death.

Several white Southerners I know had temporary friendships along the lines of David's and Booker T.'s. My friend Parker was astonished, though he can't imagine now why he was astonished, when his mother wouldn't let his black friend Loomis come in to have lunch at the table. Twenty years later he got a phone call, out of the blue, from Loomis, who had moved to Chicago and found a good job. Loomis urged Parker to look him up the next time he was in Chicago; Loomis was in the telephone book. Parker did happen to be in Chicago not long afterward and was eager to see Loomis, but by that time he had realized that he'd never known Loomis's last name.

When Jimmy Carter was a little boy, he tells us in "Why Not the Best?" all his playmates were black. He worked in the fields with them. "Their mothers had complete authority over me when I was in their home (I don't remember that their fathers did)." That parenthesis, and other small details that float up in people's memories of real black boys and white boys romping and fishing together, get closer to the heart of interracial relations than *Palmerstown, U.S.A.* ever does.

But maybe I just resent the fact that TV so seldom helps me figure out anything about life. I wonder whether old Jerry is in the book anywhere. ■

PRAIRIE CITY

continued from page 59

And then a small, energetic girl said, "And nobody knows what it's really like here. Every time they want to show a hick they say, 'He's from Iowa.' On *M*A*S*H*, Radar acts real boyish, like he hasn't learned anything, and they say he's from Iowa."

". . . Yeah," said a boy. "And on the news, when they want to know what some 'dumb farmer' is thinking, they stick a microphone in somebody's face and underneath on the screen it says, 'So and so, Iowa farmer'."

"Yeah!"

"That's right!"

I found myself caught up in their well-deserved anger and said to them, "The only time I've seen Iowa honestly done on television was in the movie 'Friendly Fire'." And those who remembered it agreed. (And I believe this. Ned Beatty brought an incredibly intelligent dignity to the character of Eugene Mullen, interpreting for the first and single time a rural plainness as something pure, rather than something ignorant.)

So it seems that a predictable distrust for the moonscape strangeness of television exists in Prairie City. A kind of defensive filtration that lets in only those images originating no further away than Des Moines. All else is odd and condescending and one should watch it, study its movement, with the same concentration as one watches the larcenous motions of a shell-game hustler: watch to see what he does with the pea.

Certainly, I heard around town specific exceptions to the rule. In Snub's café, over coffee, I spoke with Art Stremfel, an old friend of my family's, a colleague of my father's at the factory on the west edge of town. He faithfully watches *The White Shadow*, and he laughed at the recent memory of something "Ol' Ken" had done, speaking of that program's leading actor as one would speak of a true friend.

Perhaps the most revealing assessment of television I heard in Prairie City, though, came later that day, when I stopped at the Cardinal Inn, the town's single working tavern, strategically situated on the busy highway that bisects the village, east and west, carrying local and national traffic, plain folks and strangers.

The Cardinal was quiet. Too early for its after-supper crowd, too late for the factory workers who stop to quench a hot 7-to-3:30 thirst. At the end of the bar, the television set was on and a few local men were clustered, by coincidence, near it. They spoke to each other, ignoring the opening teletype rhythms of the evening news. When John Chancellor began to speak, however, they found themselves interrupted, in spite of themselves, and all in unison began to watch. Carefully. Silently. For a few minutes. Until one of them reached into his overalls and walked to the jukebox. He gave it his money and found his tune and, momentarily, the sweet, clean lament of Willie Nelson filled the room.

Rejoining his friends, the man nodded briefly in the direction of John Chancellor and said to the bartender, "Turn that crap off, would ya? I just paid a quarter to hear somebody tell me the truth." ■

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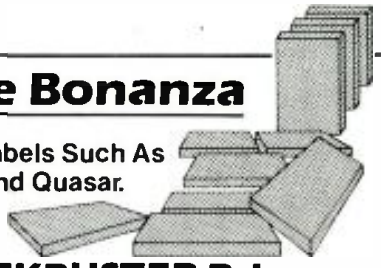

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Now, with the help of continuing therapy, Asner says, "I love more strongly, and when I get angry I try to make sure what or whom I'm angry at. We're a lot happier around here."

Other people, people who know him well, also are interested in what makes Asner run, the reporter tells him. And all those people keep bringing up the same word when asked what motivates his unflagging pursuit of causes: guilt.

"Ed's so guilt-ridden," says Ted Knight, "he'll agree to do a hangnail telethon." Allan Burns and Daryl Anderson mention "Jewish guilt"; others speak of "liberal guilt"; still others talk of "just plain old guilt."

This rankles Asner. His face registers a twist of impatience. He shrugs. "I don't know, don't ask me." Then a long breath. "I've been the first to talk about my 'guilt,' tiresomely so, but I would also ask those people who either seriously or comically refer to my doing all these things out of guilt: 'What have *you* done for your fellow man lately? To what extent have *you* gotten off your ass?' "

Asner is warmed up now. "It's a *horrible* world out there. A million Cambodians have died in the last year; during the next year it'll be a million somewhere else. We're running out of oil, out of food. In one way or another you should take a stab at improving the world."

He mulls that over for a moment, then adds: "Two things. First, having grown up during the Hitlerian era, I'm blessedly fortunate to have been born a Jew in America. I owe somebody for that. Number two, when other actors were being blacklisted during the McCarthy days, nobody bothered me because at that point I was small potatoes. And I ran scared. I owe somebody for not having paid the price then."

Today Asner has enemies. His TV commercials against a California proposition that would have barred gay schoolteachers and for a pro-busing Los Angeles school-board member generated plenty of irate mail. In Atlanta, at a Family Weekly publishers' meeting, he told the newspaper owners "what a loony lady I thought Anita Bryant was." Almost visibly shuddering, still incredulous, he says, "Half of them booed me. These are the controllers of the press in the middle-sized cities of America: people who should know better, but they're supportive of this woman's terrible encroachment on others' civil liberties. *There's* your answer on the guilt—the monster is lurking out there. How the hell can you go tootling along, believing it's a wonderful life, not doing everything you can? Jesus . . . ."

His series has sometimes caught flak on issues, too. The nursing-home industry pressured sponsors and CBS affiliates to keep a show dealing with care for the elderly from rerunning. (Only two affiliates caved in.) Asked how his activism affects *Lou Grant*, Asner says, "There hasn't been an issue show where it wasn't clear what side I was on."

> "When other actors were being blacklisted during the McCarthy days, nobody bothered me. . . . I owe somebody for not having paid the price then."

Ah, the series has a liberal bias?

Uncharacteristically, he hedges. "Uh, I'd prefer to say 'moderate.' I think a vast body of Americans agree with the sides Lou comes down on, but they would not call themselves liberals. Liberal is not fashionable in this country, never was."

One reason, it's suggested to him, is that over the years liberals have acquired a reputation, justified or not, for letting themselves off the hook when a tough issue strikes home. Like busing for school integration. How does he justify doing TV spots for a pro-busing candidate, then putting one of his own daughters in a private school rather than have her bused?

He rubs his face and replies deliberately: "She would have been on the bus each way 45 to 60 minutes. I didn't want it. I didn't feel brave about it. A California legislator I trust told me anything over 20 minutes eats into a child's learning. It had nothing to do with going to a black school. If it had been a 20-, 25-minute ride,' I would have fought for it, even at the risk of dissension within the household . . . . Anyway, I'd like to see greater concentration on fuller employment and a militant stance on open housing and not worry about busing kids out of and into the ghetto . . . ."

A lot of people, the reporter suggests, would term that a cop-out, call him a limousine liberal.

"Mmm . . . . Yeah, I had a lot of worry and concern over it. I can afford to send my kid to a private school and not worry about a thing . . . ." He goes on a while, sounding ambivalent, though insisting he doesn't regret any stands he's taken to date. *But*—"I am learning I have to take time to put a fine lens on people and positions I get behind. There has been that aspect in the past, not being able to say no and jumping in too soon."

In that respect, he took a long look at John Anderson before actively campaigning for the Presidential candidate, having decided "we need more third-party activity to threaten the two main parties, to move them off dead center." And, after careful consideration of the principles involved in the actors' walkout, Asner emerged as one of the most militant, outspoken strikers, which made him a villain to many people whose paychecks were affected. His name was shouted, in unflattering context, at counterdemonstrations. Asner didn't flinch. "Once I've read the fine print," he says firmly, "and I'm satisfied I'm on the right side, I'll fight. I won't run scared any more. I'd rather die fighting good fights than live sitting on my ass."

So here is Ed Asner, who's off his ass and fighting hard in an age of political apathy and cynicism; a full-fledged liberal barnstormer with inconsistencies that invite attack; a campaigning conscience-tweaker with bald pate aimed directly into the political head wind. He spent much of his life trying to please everyone; now he's trying to stir everyone up. On some people, his effect is not precisely either, but something in between. Take the effect he had on a woman at the ACLU awards dinner. A disillusioned political dropout who doesn't even bother to vote any more, she was there only because her boyfriend wanted to attend. After she listened to Asner's appeal for activism, she was asked if he had made her feel anything. Grudgingly, nodding, she said: "Guilt." ■

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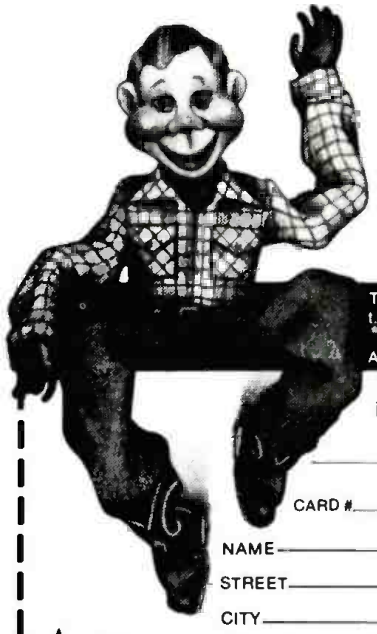

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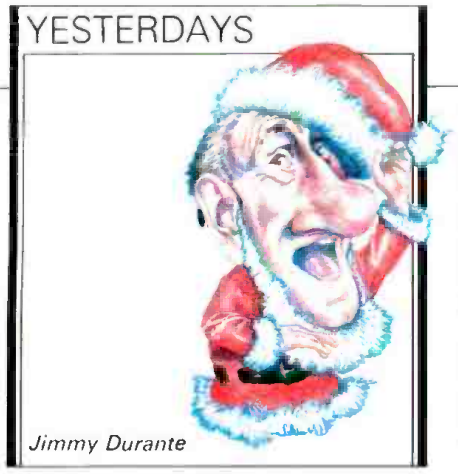

Jimmy Durante

25 Years Ago: December 1955

To forestall television's move west, Rockefeller interests are buying two square blocks in midtown Manhattan near Radio City to build a "TV City." . . . On *The Jimmy Durante Show*, Betty Hutton plays helper to the schnozzola's Santa. . . . Frank Capra Jr. gets his show-biz break as assistant director on *Gunsmoke*. . . . "The Lone Ranger" will soon gallop onto the Nation's movie screens, spurred by a $1 million promotional campaign—the cost of 33 episodes of the TV series. . . . Bela Lugosi and Ava Gardner tangle with The East Side Kids on *Hollywood Playhouse*'s "Ghosts on the Loose." . . . Ida Lupino becomes *Four Star Playhouse*'s fourth star, joining regulars Charles Boyer, Dick Powell and David Niven. . . . An Ohio husband is granted a divorce because his wife will only let him speak during commercials. . . . Ogden Nash guesses celebrity identities on *Masquerade Party*. . . . Carl "Bobo" Olsen faces challenger Sugar Ray Robinson for the middleweight championship. . . . George Meany, president of the newly merged AFL-CIO, fields questions on *Face the Nation*. . . . Paddy Chayefsky announces that his next TV play will be titled "The Man Who Knocked Off Ed Sullivan." . . . Viewers watching WRCA-TV sign off in New York can see model Nancy Berg climb into bed and go to sleep on *Count Sheep*; wags call it "NBC Blankets the Nation."

10 Years Ago: December 1970

Laugh-In gives William F. Buckley "equal time," since Gore Vidal was host the week before. . . . Howard Hawks directs George Plimpton's acting debut opposite John Wayne in the TV-film "Shootout at Rio Lobo." . . . Mr. Magoo plays Cyrano, Don Quixote and all seven dwarfs on his seasonal special. . . . Harry Reasoner joins the *ABC Evening News*, and is replaced on *60 Minutes* by Morley Safer. . . . Peter Lawford will star as supersleuth Ellery Queen in an "NBC World Premiere" movie. . . . Stewart Granger becomes a rancher on the spruced-up *Virginian*, retitled *The Men from Shiloh*. . . . CBS program chief Fred Silverman disputes Nielsen findings that drama is preferred and commits the network to 10 more sitcoms. . . . Rock Hudson signs to play a deputy police commissioner on NBC's new *McMillan & Wife*. . . . On *The French Chef*, Julia Child prepares roast lamb on the "Waiting for Gigot" episode. . . . Bob Hope's 20th overseas tour takes him to Vietnam. . . . *The Governor and J.J.* is being axed in favor of a satire titled *All in the Family*.

5 Years Ago: December 1975

Henry Fonda plays Douglas MacArthur to E.G. Marshall's Harry S Truman in the ABC drama "Collision Course." . . . ABC drops *Saturday Night Live with Howard Cosell, When Things Were Rotten, That's My Mama, Mobile One* and *Matt Helm*, making room for *Donny and Marie, The Bionic Woman*, a *Happy Days* spinoff called *Laverne & Shirley* and a miniseries titled *Rich Man, Poor Man*. . . . George Kennedy stars in a new police series, *The Blue Knight*, based on Joseph Wambaugh's best seller. . . . Mental patients at Framingham Union Hospital watch soap operas as part of their group therapy. . . . Novelist William Saroyan turns down a chance to play in "Ohanian," a series pilot about an Armenian detective. . . . CBS loses $10,000 to self-styled "hit man" Clarence Newton Medlin, who claimed he could lead them to Jimmy Hoffa's body. . . . TV chef Graham Kerr becomes an evangelist, finding God and forsaking claret. . . . Monty Python goes to court to keep ABC from televising the group's second special; they were "appalled" by the editing job done on the first one to make room for commercials. . . . TV is gearing up for the Bicentennial. Andy Williams, Howard Cosell, Frank Sinatra and Ray Charles are already filming a flag-waving extravaganza called "Celebration: The American Spirit."

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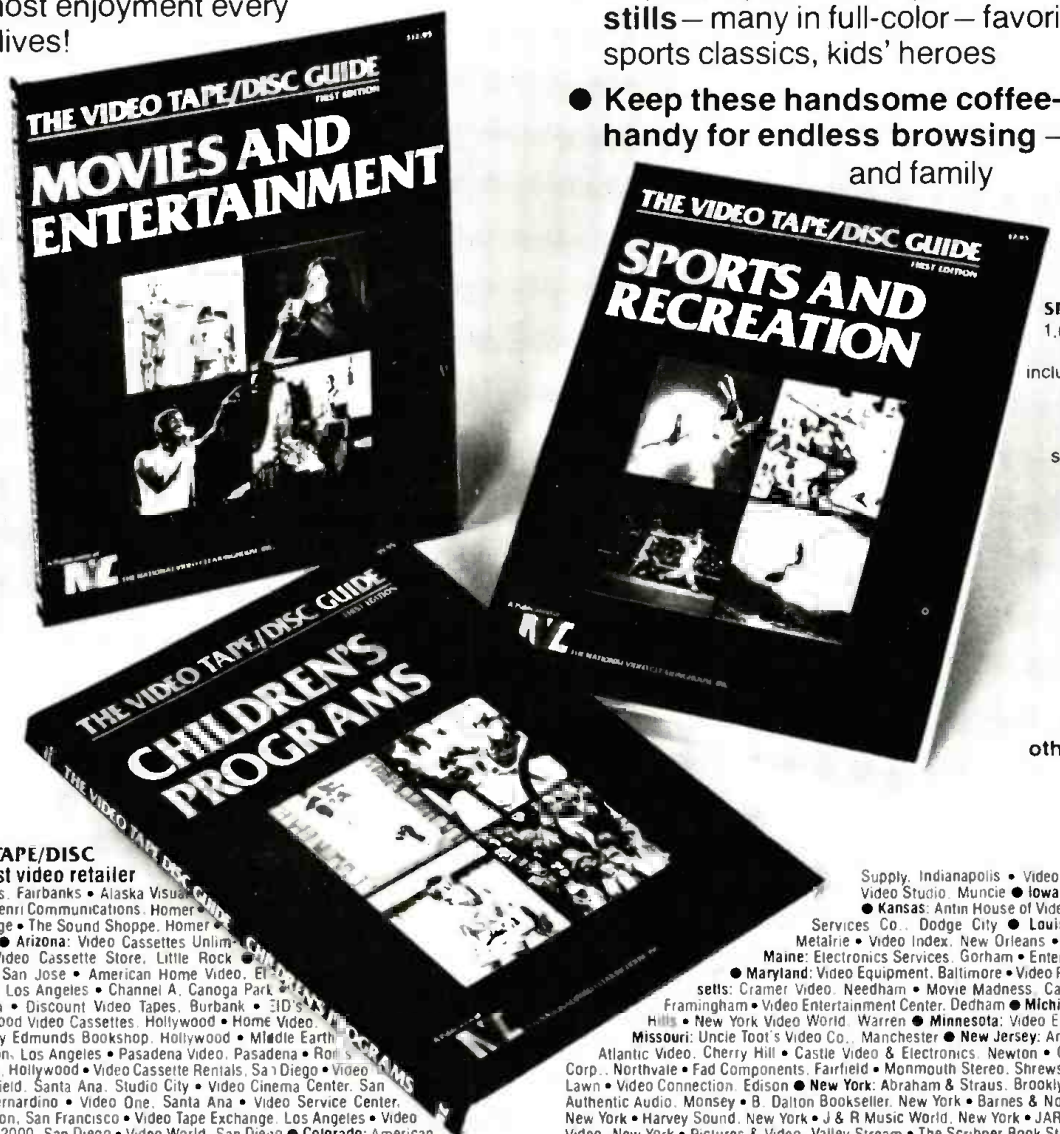

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REAR VIEW

By HARRY STEIN

Food for Thought

One day when I was 8 or 9, my friend Howie announced that he had decided what he wanted to be when he grew up: a worker in an aircraft-assembly plant. Now this might have disheartened his parents—his father was a prosperous attorney, his mother an associate professor of psychology—but it made perfect sense to me. It was, after all, what Chester A. Riley and Gillis did on *The Life of Riley.* Didn't Robby intend to be a wagon master, and Philip—poor Philip, with his rotten self-image—a private in Sergeant Bilko's motor pool? (That was, by the way, Philip at his most confident; a few years later he decided to be the car in *My Mother, the Car.)*

Me, I took my time deciding. "Well," I finally announced on my 10th birthday, "I am going to go into the dog-food game."

This had been no easy choice, what with all the other options that TV showed existed in the world—space cadet, clown, bus driver, sewer worker, maker of headache remedies, to name just a few. But I was a sensitive child, and in the end I had been more moved by the pitches for dog food than by all the rest; by phrases like "responsibilities to your dog"; by the concern they manifested for "happy, healthy pets" and "strong teeth" and "shiny coats"; above all, by the looks of unspeakable gratitude those glorious creatures always had in their eyes at the end of the commercial spots.

Thus it was, with my friends' encouragement, that I began to bone up on the various brands on the market. By the time I was 14, I could discourse for an hour on the relative merits of Laddie Boy and Alpo, on canned versus dry, on chewy versus mushy, and I was increasingly excited that dog food would be my destiny. "After all," as I would explain to my parents' horrified friends, "a dog's gotta do what a dog's gotta do, and mainly what a dog's gotta do is eat."

Then, that summer, as part of a "teens-abroad" program, I was sent to live with a family in rural France for six weeks. Being rural and French, these people had many dogs, but I was astonished to find not a single morsel of dog food in their cupboard, not even the cheapest brand. "But what," I asked the woman of the house in my awkward French, "do you feed *les chiens*?" The reply was elaborate, but it boiled down, after careful consultation with my dictionary, to "leftovers."

Leftovers? Dogs eating *leftovers*? I had heard of such a thing, of course, but I understood it to be a primitive practice, probably reserved for societies that engaged in polytheism or human sacrifice. After all, I had heard the message a thousand times—10,000!—"If you care about your dog, feed him . . ." Alpo, or Ken-L Ration or Gravy Train.

And yet these French people did seem to care about their dogs. They petted them just like we did, and played with them, and sometimes even kissed them on the mouth. (For three years afterward, I thought *that* was what was meant by "French kiss.")

I returned to these shores a troubled young man, and more than a little bitter. When people would ask, "Well, what's new in the dog-food game?" I would shake my head. "We were lied to. Dog food isn't necessary."

And, indeed, as I continued to watch TV throughout my teens and into my 20s, I began to feel that we were being lied to constantly. "Why," I would be asked, "have you become so cynical?"

"Oh, yeah," would come my reply, "in a lot of places they don't even use bathroom tissue. I know; I've researched this!"

"Bathroom tissue?"

"I mean toilet paper. My God, it's gotten to me, too."

People would shake their heads at that and smile. "Don't be silly."

By the time I was 30, I became upset almost every time I flicked on the TV. Vaginal deodorants. Designer jeans. Hair dyes. Name-brand chicken. I actually witnessed one ad for a product that scrambled eggs right in the shell. "No more slimy egg whites!" exulted the announcer. And what, I still want to know, do LightDays do?

One day a few weeks ago my friends Jerry and Jenny stopped by with their dog Malcolm to visit me and my dog Spot.

"Where," asked Jerry around dinner time, "do you keep the dog food?"

"Spot eats scraps."

"But we *love* Malcolm."

"Believe me, a dog doesn't know the difference. In France—"

"Malcolm's no frog!" interrupted Jenny.

I at last convinced them to try it my way, and laid out the previous day's egg foo yong in a couple of dog dishes. Spot looked at me dolefully and, tail between his legs, began to eat. Malcolm turned and laughed in my face.

"Tell him to try it," I insisted.

Malcolm rolled his paw into a fist and shook it at me.

So we drove to the supermarket and picked up some dog food, which Malcolm devoured with unabashed gusto. Later that evening, when I walked my guests to their car, I found Spot struggling to hide himself in the space beneath the seat.

"C'mon, boy," I urged, "c'mon back inside."

He raised his head and gazed at me imploringly. In his teeth he clutched a tiny American flag. ■

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