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THE 526TH LINE

D.C.'s WETA Serving The Public?

"You're writing an article about local programming at WETA? It'll have to be a blank page...and you can quote me on that." —Ellen Stern Harris, ex-WETA Board Member.

Considered one of the five flagship TV stations of public broadcasting, Washington D.C.'s WETA is not yet a national model of public participation and local programming.

WETA produces two programs on a regular basis, both aimed at a national audience: *Washington Week in Review* and *MacNeil-Lehrer Report*, as well as the summer series *In Performance at Wolftrap* and occasional Congressional hearings.

It airs only one program geared for Washington viewers. That program was produced independently by the D.C. Public Schools. Last year, with over \$1.8 million raised from contributions, \$382,000 went for local programs. That's a smaller

percentage than went back into fund raising.

WETA president Ward Chamberlin's comment on WETA's local programming was, "We have to get ourselves in order before we can start doing extras." What Chamberlin considers "extras" the first Carnegie Commission cited as primary when it called for "a bedrock of localism."

Chamberlin claims that "people who send in money don't care about local programs. They aren't interested." WETA says its programs "appeal to limited audiences with broad, highly developed cultural tastes."

In 1977, the WETA-FM (radio) Listeners Committee was established to serve as a means of communications between the station management and the members. A list of recommendations composed by the committee was sent to Chamberlin offering suggestions on ways to improve programming, finances and communications.

In a confidential memo circulated to select station officials, Chamberlin described the committee as trying to "control WETA-FM." He went on to ask how to "protect the staff from improper pressures."

The extra scan line presents our Point Of View on the state of communication arts, business, and public action.

There was no evidence that the listeners committee was trying to control WETA in any improper way.

The problem of public participation extends to the composition of WETA's Board of Directors. WETA has 50 members on the board. Only 15 are elected by subscribers. The 35 remaining members are appointed by the board itself, and most are corporate presidents and officials.

With 80,000 members eligible to vote in the last election for board members, only 1500 voted. A station that claims it is "viewer supported public service broadcasting" should certainly have a better track record than that.

—Sarah Ordover

The Courts vs. Public Access: The St. Louis Decision

Historically the legal and legislative basis for public access to cable television systems has always been tenuous. The 1972 rules mandating access channels, written by the Federal Communications Commission, have consistently been challenged by the cable industry, both at the FCC through formal petitions for revised rulemaking and in the courts.

But the heaviest blow both to access advocates and the FCC alike came on Feb. 21st when the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis ruled that the Commission must strike all its current access rules.

This judgement stems from a case brought by the Midwest Video Corp., a cable operator, which challenged the authority of the FCC to require access to cable.

The key and very simple issue of the case rests on whether the latest regulations—which requires a minimum of one access channel on all systems over 3500 subscribers and subsequent provisions for cable operators to provide equipment for tape playback and production—exceeds the Commission's rulemaking authority in view of the jurisdictional parameters of the 1934 Communications Act.

The court ruled most emphatically that the Commission overstepped its jurisdiction and stated that all access rules are invalid. In addition to the jurisdictional question the court claimed that the Commission's access rule "...totally ignored the preferences of cable consumers who are 'real people'." The court criticized the FCC for attempting to "create a right" for access, sarcastically reminding the Commission that it is not the "Federal First Amendment Commission."

The court went on to say that even if the FCC had jurisdiction over cable, the court could not consider the rights of access users and viewers because the court feels there is no evidence that

there are any access users or viewers.

Where then does the Midwest case leave access users now and in the future?

On March 23rd, just five days before the court's ruling would have taken effect, the Commission elected to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court. The vote was 4 to 3 with Chairman Charles Ferris, Abbott Washburn, Margita White, and the newest commissioner Tyrone Brown voting in favor of appeal.

The first step in the process is a request by the Commission for a "stay of mandate" to the appeals court. This stay asks that the current access rules remain in effect until the entire appeals process is completed. According to Jerry Jacobs of the FCC's Cable Bureau, this type of request is routinely granted. Even if it is not, the Commission will still carry the case forward.

The next action the FCC must take is the filing of a brief requesting the Supreme Court to hear the case. If the court accepts the brief, oral arguments would probably be heard in the fall with a final decision by the end of the year.

The appeals process is important, but the fact that mandated access is in severe question puts the burden of proof directly back on individual access users.

The outcome of the appeal will affect: 1) the role of local franchising authorities in developing mandated access, and 2) if access will fit into legislation now being drafted in Congress to update the 1934 Communications Act.

If FCC access requirements are permanently struck down, local municipalities would probably be free to write whatever franchise provision for access they pleased. Currently, the municipalities cannot exceed the Commission's own rules. Local control, however, can work both ways for access. In some communities, the municipality may take a positive roll; in others, the municipality may ignore access. The main problem is that many communities have not written assertive access requirements into franchises because of federal pre-emption. When it is time for franchise renewals, access will be subject to the whim of the cable operators, unless the community puts the operators on notice that "no access; no renewal."

In Congress the Communication's Act rewrite is now being drafted. The question of access and cable development has not yet been clarified.

The most active organization lobbying for the rights of people concerned with access is the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers. In a special bulletin on the Midwest case, David Hoke and Michael Aronson of the Federation's advocacy committee argue the case for access users and detail specifically what can be done.

For further information contact David Hoke, NFLCP Advocacy Committee, 46 S. Newbury Street, York, Pa. 17404. Phone (717) 843-7722.

—Maurice Jacobsen

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RESOURCES

PRINT

Media Imperialism: Reactionary, Liberal and Radical Perspectives

Influences on international communications

By WALTER CARROLL

William H. Read. *America's Mass Media Merchants*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1976. ix+209 pp. \$10.95.

Herbert I. Schiller. *Communication and Cultural Domination*. White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976. 127 pp. \$7.95.

Jeremy Tunstall. *The Media are American: Anglo-American Media in the World*. New York: Columbia University, 1977. 352 pp. \$14.95.

The United States Information Agency (U.S.I.A.) and the cultural affairs branch of the State Department have recently combined into the International Communication Agency (I.C.A.). While U.S. officials have minimized the significance of the change, it may be perceived in other parts of the world as a further step in concentrating and coordinating the U.S. government role in international communications. Many Third World nations are increasingly sensitive to the threat of cultural and informational domination. Several years ago some of these countries began planning their own news service as a response to that threat. Reaction in the U.S. was swift and adverse. The new service was seen as leading to censorship and subversion of the principle of free flow of information.

International communications and cultural domination are major themes of these three books. The authors assess the concept of cultural and media imperialism. From differing viewpoints and in analyses of varying strength, imperialism refers to economic and political domination of one nation or region over another. Cultural imperialism can be simply seen as cultural domination. It should not be seen as an isolated phenomenon, but as part of an imperialist framework.

Read's *America's Mass Media Merchants* fits the genre aptly titled the "Muzak of social commentary." The author is a U.S.I.A. employee and, according to the book jacket, a "seasoned newsman." Read omits the standard disclaimer that the book represents only his views and not those of his employer or funding source. While the omission may be an oversight, it is ironic and mildly entertaining. There is nothing in this book to discomfit the U.S.I.A., or its successor, more properly, the I.C.A.

Most of the book consists of descriptive histories of what Read calls "transnational" media. These include the New York Times, the Washington Post, Readers Digest, the TV networks, and the wire services. These descriptions are, unfortunately, not linked to his main argument: "that commercial American mass media are tools of accommodation in a world being at once integrated by modern technology and fragmented by the pursuit of diversity" (2). Therefore he upholds the principle of *free flow* of information. Arguments for the *information sovereignty* of nations do not persuade him. He acknowledges that:

To some critics of the current world order, the real issue goes beyond forms of accommodation, for they contend that commercial American mass media circulate abroad as just another part of an inequitable system that must be fundamentally reordered. But skeptical Americans wonder whether a system other than their preference for an open international marketplace, with its pressures on buyers as well as sellers would be better, and, if so, for whom?(2)

There you have the essential Read—an ideologue, making the barest pretence

Damming the information flow. A catalog of people, meetings, books, survival techniques, and directions on how to find what we left out.

at reasoned analysis. The numerous weaknesses of his book are not surprising. For Read, while there are problems with the present system, these can be worked out. That system—democracy—is clearly superior to the alternatives.

Jeremy Tunstall is a British sociologist whose *The Media Are American* is a much more serious and solid work than Read's. Indeed, many of the lacunae and defects in Read's book can best be seen in comparison to Tunstall's book. Tunstall investigates the origins, growth, role, and influence of "Anglo-American media in the world." He deals with the invention of popular commercial newspapers, the beginnings of motion pictures, the origins of wire services, and the development of radio and television.

His treatment includes the descriptive material Read provides, but in a more succinct way and tied in to other world developments. His grasp is wide. Not only does he describe the development of Anglo-American media throughout the world, he devotes specific attention to the developing media systems influenced by their growth. His analysis touches on Eastern Europe, East Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and on Western Europe. Some of these are but capsule treatments and Tunstall freely acknowledges that a reader will probably know more about any particular country than he does. Here lies a major strength and a weakness of the book.

The Media Are American is a masterful overview of the nature and development of international media, and should be a starting point for anyone interested in the topic. However, it is just a *starting* point. There is certainly nothing wrong with this, but it leads to a tension in the book between Tunstall's explicit conclusions and the implicit arguments of much of his material.

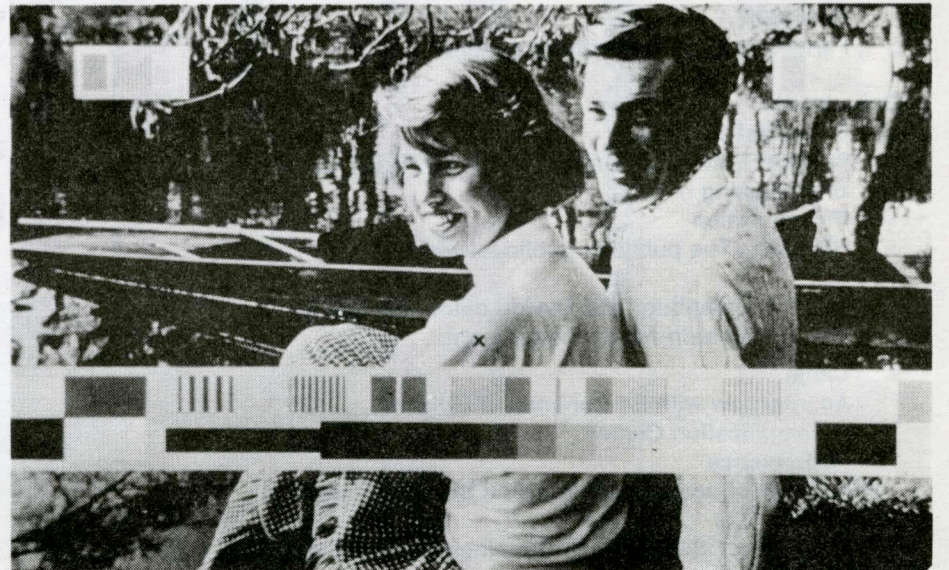
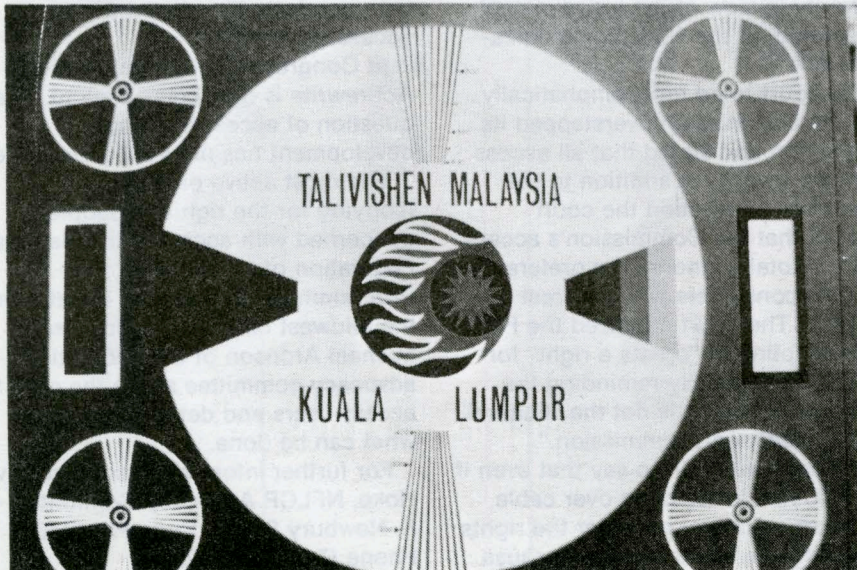
He is particularly concerned with the impact of American media on the styles and patterns of foreign media, the impact of these media on those receiving it, and the role of advertising. These crucial issues are ignored by Read. Tunstall examines in detail the implications of the export of types of media systems developed in America to other parts of the world. He questions, for example, whether less developed, basically rural countries are served well

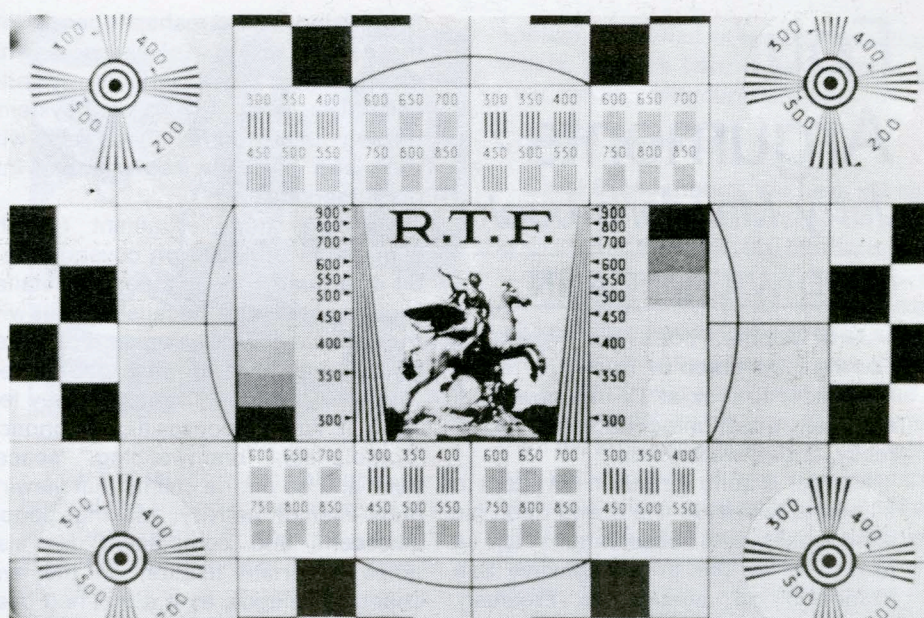
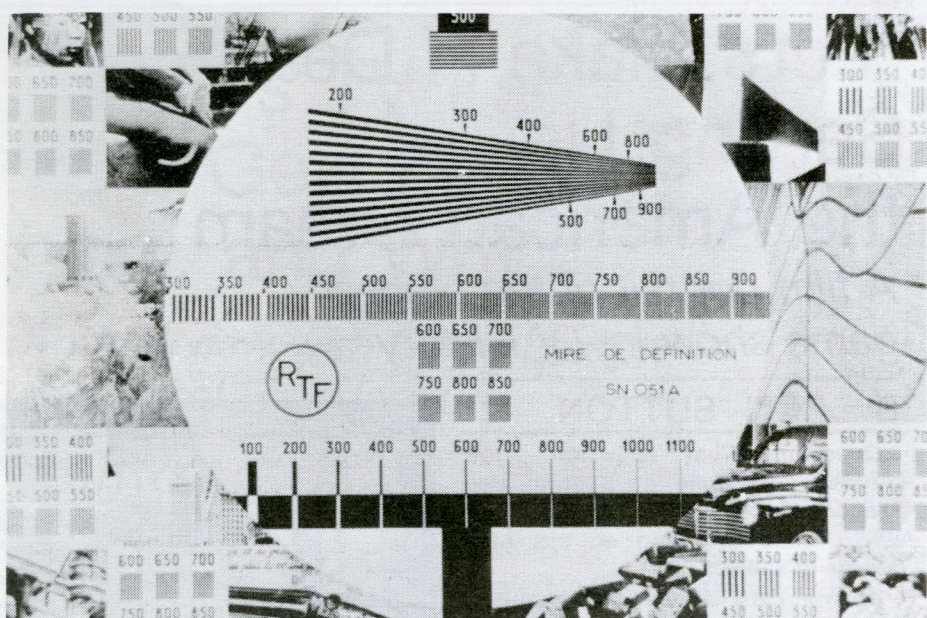
by daily newspapers based on the urban, commercial American pattern. He also discusses U.S. government media policy, and in a very interesting chapter, traces the development of American social science research on media effects and international communications. He points out that UNESCO, in formulating its policies on international communications, relied heavily on American media research "despite the commercial advertising and Washington foreign policy strains in the financing of the research" (208). Read is, predictably, silent on this point.

Tunstall sees certain trends developing: "government involvement will increase; research will increase; and public relations will increase" (275). He has much of interest to say on numerous topics, but two are especially significant. First, he is not seduced by technology. He makes quite clear that technology reflects and embodies the social relations in which it arises and is planned. A second major focus is the issue of cultural imperialism, on which he is confused. Here we can usefully compare *The Media Are American* to Herbert Schiller's *Communication and Cultural Domination*.

Schiller, a professor of communications at the University of California at San Diego, has written several books analyzing domestic and international communications from a radical perspective. He has probably been the leading radical critic of U.S. media, but his work has exhibited serious weaknesses. These are at least partly rooted in the backwardness, until recently, of radical analysis in the United States and the relative lack of interest among Marxists in cultural phenomena. Both of these are changing and Schiller's newest book is a more sophisticated treatment. He has taken into account recent literature on social change and development. Tunstall has not done this and his analysis of cultural imperialism is correspondingly weakened.

Tunstall examines Schiller's earlier work which emphasized the U.S. as a media imperialist and stressed the role of the U.S. government in fostering this imperialism. While the government has played a key role, this is not the essence of media imperialism. Nor is it useful to





focus solely on the role of the United States. Tunstall is aware of this and points out that: *the countries which are strong regional exporters of media tend themselves to be unusually heavy importers of American media.* (62) (Tunstall's emphases).

The phenomenon of relatively strong nations in a region acting as junior partners of stronger nations is called sub-imperialism and is well-recognized in development literature. Only Schiller refers to that literature, and the point is decisive.

Schiller does not see cultural imperialism as an isolated phenomenon. He analyzes it as an aspect of a capitalist world-economy, structured in a certain—very unequal—manner on both

a world level and in individual countries. Communication

defines social reality and thus influences the organization of work, the character of technology, the curriculum of the educational system ... and the use of 'free' time—actually, the basic social arrangement of living. (3)

Thus, Schiller sees that to elevate the principle of free flow of communications in the existing world-economy strengthens those already in control. He in the existing world-economy strengthens those already in control. He details the processes of cultural domination, examines the diplomacy of international communications and considers the impact of emerging communication technologies and processes. He

assesses the policy alternatives available to nations and people attempting to break out of the current system.

From the Chilean experience he derives four policy conclusions: (1) "Pluralism in communication conceals class domination," (2) Since the "messages of the dominating system are corporately organized and commercially disseminated, their claim to circulate on the basis of individual freedom of expression is invalid;" (3) "National and socialist cultural policies are an essential prerequisite of cultural integrity;" (4) "Heightened individual consciousness is both an essential element in and the outgrowth of the liberating/revolutionary process" (108) (Schiller's emphases).

These policies will not be automatically successful, but as Tunstall points out, the only way out of the Anglo-American media box is to "construct a new box" (63). Tunstall is pessimistic, but Schiller sees various nations and peoples in them who desire to build a new box.

The box of international communications is part of the box of the present world order. Tunstall and Schiller have made important contributions to understanding both. Read's book can be safely avoided.

Walter Carroll is a Lecturer in Sociology at American University. He specializes in social change/development studies and teaches mass communications.

FEEDBACK

The Sting of "Midwest"

My compliments on your publication **TELEVISIONS**. I can't begin to tell how valuable the information has been to us. Certainly the most *interesting* media/television magazine I've come across.

We have put together a weekly half hour cable program with the help of CETA funding. The Rollins Cable Company has been very resistant to the public access idea. They are trying to develop

local origination into a money-making proposition—charging up to \$100/hour for cablecast time.

We have secured free time but only by bringing pressure to bear from the FCC. This was unpleasant and difficult. Thanks due to David Hoke in York, Pa. and quick replies from William Johnson at the FCC.

Question for you—a representative of our local cable company (Rollins, Inc.) told me recently that the cable company has no public service programming or access obligations; that this was borne

out by the recent "St. Louis decision." What is this "St. Louis decision?" It is not unusual for the cable company to claim no public access/programming obligation, but I would like to know to which court case he is referring.

*Absalom Jones Center
Wilmington Delaware*

Ed. Note: See 526th Line, and page 13.

Friend of Philo

I am writing concerning your Epilogue on page 19 of Volume 5, No. 4 where you mention more friends. The information provided you is completely wrong except my name. I have had my Ph.D. degree from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. I am presently an assistant professor of Speech-Communications at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston. I would appreciate you making these corrections.

*Stephen F. Hofer
Eastern Illinois University
Charleston, Illinois*

"Don't Call It Loxton's Lottery"

I would like to correct the impression given in last issue's 526th Line article about the Independent Documentary Fund which implied that the review process was an arbitrary one. The article began with "They're calling it Loxton's Lottery".

David Loxton, as the project director and I as the project coordinator spent a considerable amount of time trying to

figure out the most efficient, complete and fair process for evaluation of the proposals submitted to the Independent Documentary Fund. We received more than 880. Each received the careful attention it deserved. Twenty-eight film and video programmers from all over the country were involved in reading the applications and in screening the sample works. David and I then reviewed all of their comments and screened about 150 films and tapes.

We narrowed the list to 27 proposals which were sent in their entirety to the Advisory Panel. We also sent them a book with a listing of each of the proposals, giving the applicant's name, the description of the project and the amount requested. From that total list, they selected an additional seven to be added to the 27 which we gave them.

On February 6, the Advisory Panel met and reviewed the 34 proposals. We looked at the samples and reviewed the written materials, seven received funding.

Any selection process involving the review of 885 proposals in six weeks is a complex one. We tried to be as responsive as we could be to the needs of the applicants, particularly in regard to the time that we took to arrive at the decisions. We know how frustrating it can be to wait months for word and to have prints or copies of your tapes unavailable for rental. We do believe that the process which we established insured that the same careful attention which went into the preparation of the application was given to its review.

*Katherine Kline
Project Coordinator
The Independent Documentary Fund*

Ed. Note: See Survival for description of the seven documentaries funded.

TELEVISIONS

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You may now buy **Televisions** in New York 8th Street Bookstore, Soho Books, New Yorker Books, Cinemabilia, Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF); Washington, D.C.: Kramer Books and Afterwords Kramer Books; Madison, Wisc.: Pick a Book, Strubbs, University Bookstore, Madison Book Coop, Little Professor; Milwaukee, Wis.: Broadway Reader, University Store, City News; Los Angeles: Larry Edmunds Books, Papa Bachs Paperbooks; San Francisco: S.F. Museum of Art Bookshop, La Mamelie Arts Center, Modern Times Bookstore; Portland, Oregon: Fifth Ave. News; New Orleans: New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC).

Four Arguments

Jerry Mander's book

By DAVID McCANN

Jerry Mander's book *Four Arguments For the Elimination of Television* forces the reader to look at TV in a new light, seriously questioning its value, legitimacy, and pervasiveness.

Mander is quite serious in his intent to eliminate television. He draws upon his experiences and observations as an associate for the once exclusive San Francisco ad agency of Freeman, Mander and Gossage, to express the development of his unorthodox views. He writes about his desire for the "American Dream," and the paths he took to reach what he calls "fraudulent" success. His own painful realization of its inherent contradictions, and the awakening of new levels of thought and interactions which unfolded for many of us in the late 1960's, lead ultimately to dissolution of the agency.

Mander recites the litany of TV viewing statistics. On any given evening 30 million people sit in front of their TVs. When there is a "special" that figure approaches 90 million. TV saturation in America is virtually total, making ours the "first culture to have substituted secondary mediated versions of experience for direct experience of the world." Also mentioned is the exorbitant cost of television advertising, particularly during prime time—\$125,000 for minute in 1977—totalling more than 25 billion dollars yearly, and the effect this has on just who gains access to the airwaves.

Mander's central theme is that technological development is neither benign nor neutral. "Far from being neutral, television itself predetermines who shall use it, what effects it will have on individual lives, and if it continues to be widely used, what sorts of political forms will inevitably emerge."

The first argument against TV, titled "The Mediation of Experience," is less about television than the variations of the natural human experience and the dynamics by which TV modifies and confines the manner in which humans perceive the world's infinite and subtle processes. Mander says we seem to have abandoned natural environments for corporate-controlled environments. A lack of trust in personal experiences results: "reality" is confirmed by specialized experts of scientific and technological institutions on TV. This sensory deprivation and distortion sets up ideal conditions, Mander feels, for corporate technological autocracy.

The second argument Mander calls "The Colonization of Experience." Technological and economic factors combine to give buying and selling a life of its own. Corporate powers, to maintain increasing profits, must create needs and experiences for mass markets. "The conversion of natural into artificial, inherent in our economic system, takes place as much inside human feeling and experience as it does in the landscape ... in the end, the human, like the environment, is redesigned into a form that fits the needs of the commercial format."

Just as raw materials are reshaped by industry into commodities people will buy so are the people reshaped into new forms to buy the commodities.

Advertising is what reshapes people into these new forms. Television is what disseminates the advertising. Mander calls advertising "the delivery system," turning local communities, each with their own particularized markets, into mass markets.

Mander's third argument for the elimination of television covers quite a bit of ground. This is the most detailed section of the book because it deals with the "Effects of Television on the Human Being." He reviews what people feel when they watch TV and how they feel about it. With responses like "hypnotic," "zombie-like," "brainwashing," "spaced out," and so on, he claims that viewing dims mental activity, making people quiescent, and complacent. He also notes a certain fixation on the ever changing images, as if a box had been invented to do all the dreaming for people. He even argues that there is a certain fixation on the phosphor glow that emanates from the set.

The fourth argument, "The Inherent Biases of Television," is an in-depth examination of the physical nature of the medium itself, and what happens to information that must be filtered through the electronic scanning process that is at the heart of what television is. Mander contends that the nature of the technological process places boundaries upon the contents of the medium.

The very *electronic* nature of television excludes certain forms of information. Mander feels that content of a subtle nature doesn't "work" on TV due to the non-clarity of the scanning process. "Because the images are indistinct, subtle feelings are more difficult to transmit through television than the larger emotions ... that can be depicted efficiently by larger facial expressions, or even by non-closeup body movements."

Mander writes that behaviors such as hate, fear, jealousy, violence, and competition work on TV because they are broad and vivid. Emotions like love, tenderness, and defeat are too subtle to be clearly conveyed. Hence, TV is perfectly suited for sports—especially football—action shows, and advertising. These are visually concrete, and therefore strong. It's simply the nature of the medium, Mander argues, and cannot be changed.

CALENDAR

April 17-21, 1978. Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT), Kansas City, Missouri. For information: (202) 833-4180.

April 24-25, 1978. Telemedicine, an intensive course on the use of telecommunications in the delivery of health care. Alternate Media Center, NYU, NY. ATTN: Ms. Donna D'Andrea.

April 30-May 2, 1978. Action for Children's Television's seventh national symposium on "TV Role Models and Young adolescents." Contact: ACT, 46 Austin Street, Newtonville, MA. 02160. (617) 527-7870.

May 8-9, 10, 1978. National Indian Medical Conference. Sponsored by the San Francisco American Indian Center, 225 Valencia Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94103. (415) 552-1070.

May 12-20, 1978. Atlanta Independent Film and Video Festival. Sponsored by the Independent Media Artists of Georgia, 608 Forest Ave, Atlanta, Ga. 30312.

More Calendar on page 5

"Let's Make A Deal": Serving Up the American Dream

A film portrait of the biggest game show in TV History

By RON SUTTON

Question: What television show knocked *Gunsmoke*, *Ed Sullivan*, *Red Skelton* and *Andy Williams* off the air waves while amassing an estimated income of \$44,800,000?

Answer: *Let's Make a Deal*, produced by Hatos-Hall productions, featuring master of ceremonies, Monty Hall, and starring the products of our consumer society!

For fourteen years, from 1963 to 1977, this show was scoffed at by critics and intellectuals while taken to the hearts of middle class America. At its peak it boasted 9 million viewers per week, daytime, and 27 million evenings. Nationally, it got an average of 35 percent of all TV sets on. In certain cities, the ratings were even higher—New Orleans 62 percent and Philadelphia 52 percent share of the audience.

ABC's ratings

Let's Make a Deal gave away more prizes and cash than any other game show in history, \$31,000,000! Some even feel that ABC's climb to the top over the other two networks began with its acquisition of the show in 1968. Its combining of "Las Vegas, New Year's Eve and Halloween" was unbeatable and prompted *Variety* to call the show "the one unqualified rating success in the field."

Deal is a documentary film by John Schott and E.J. Vaughn about this outlandish game show. As the 95 minutes of color and sound speed by, the alert and sensitive viewer gets a short history and analysis of how this particular television show operates.

The film opens and closes with cuts from the 1963 pilot that pioneered *Let's Make a Deal*. It moves easily into interviews with all major parties involved in the show's production—producer, writers, network officials, the M.C., announcer, contestants, even the studio pages who handle crowd control. The style is non-narrative, modified cinema verité. Vaughn and Schott structure the film by the questions they ask off-camera as well as the careful continuity of scenes and sequences. However, instead of hitting you over the head with their point of view, they allow the viewer to discover the meaning(s) on their own.

After a slow build-up, the climax of the film is the rehearsal and taping of one show of *Let's Make a Deal*. They then follow the winners and losers after the show to check out family and neighbor response. Maybe *non-winner* is a better word than *loser*, for the good-time-was-had-by-all spirit is hard to deny in the face of the visual evidence. All kinds of people make up the howling group of contestants that we see.

The film triggers a burst of personal reactions and questions: "Why do they do it?" "How sad." "What have we come to?" "They're so uninhibited? ... I sort of envy them!" "How crass and stupid." "Is it really harmless fun?" And so on. This is not a simple-minded indictment or an

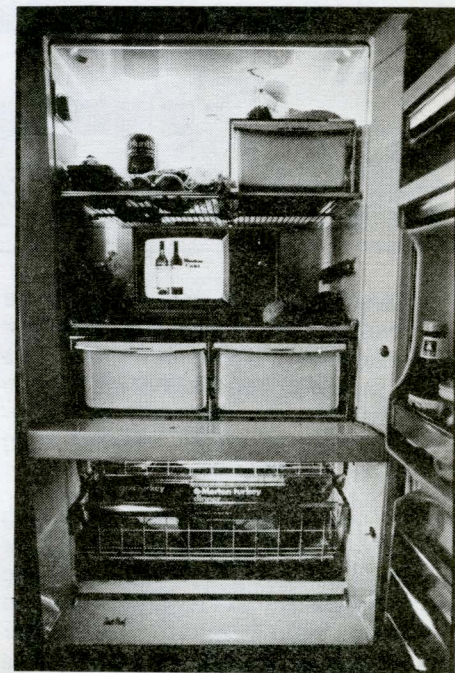


PHOTO BY DALE DEGABRIEL

easy put-down of TV. *Deal* provides a base of information for informed discussion about the medium.

The film begins with the familiar quotation from Les Brown's *Television*: "In day-to-day commerce, television is not so much interested in the business of communications as in the business of delivering people to advertisers. People are the merchandise, not the shows. The shows are merely the bait. The consumer, whom the custodians of the medium are pledged to serve, is in fact served up." The brief, even terse, 20 lines of narration that follow then assert the filmmaker's premise that, like it or not, *Let's Make a Deal* is an indirect portrait of America and its television.

Visual Anthropology

Vaughn and Schott, who screened the film March 10 at Temple University's National Conference on Visual Anthropology, describe their attempt as a "desire to simply to examine the recording of a single program, treating television as a *fact* rather than breast-beating about the medium as a 'broken promise' or a 'vast wasteland.'" The film does just this and more as it helps TV users learn something about the broadcast industry behind the box in their living room. What comes alive as the film unfolds is the interaction of talent, advertisers, ratings, personalities, technology, contestants and money behind the show. Money is the bottom line and rarely has a non-fiction film gotten so many compromised persons to look down the gun barrel of truth so candidly. Disgust, pity, condescension, respect, contempt, sorrow—all these emotions boil within the viewer as the carefully framed and set interviews unfold with the *Let's Make a Deal* personnel. It is one of the most striking moments of the film when Hatos, the rags to riches producer, says, "I've tried it poor and I've tried it rich, and I like rich better."

Deal is an unusual film and the filmmakers are equally unique. Both are well-trained Ph.D. candidates in

American Cultural-Art History from the University of Michigan. They have attempted, in their own words to "write history with a camera" and to a large extent they have succeeded magnificently. Here is their own comment on their work: "It is the viewer's confrontation with real events, as mediated by cinematic form which gives non-fiction film its gravity and impact. 'Reality film' works from the inside out through the use of a mobile, unobtrusive camera which allows a situation to unfold naturally, rather than requiring that reality be re-staged for the camera eye. The result is a heightened level of immediacy. It is a method which transports a viewer 'inside' an event so that he can experience it."

One experience the pair plans for us doesn't work, however. It is a sequence of an average Brooklyn family watching *Let's Make a Deal* intercut with the finale of the climactic taping. The family comes off quite self-conscious about the whole affair, the scenes looked staged and unnatural and the manner of the intercutting is awkward against the smooth flowing context of the rest of the film. One moment that almost saves the whole section occurs when the family leaves the living room during the scheduled commercial to get refreshments in the kitchen. We laugh as we recognize ourselves in the action, but the laughter is ironic, for on *Let's Make a Deal*, there is no real escape from the commercial messages—indeed, the show is one gigantic 30-minute commercial!

The other problem the film has is its length. The 1½ hour feature length is sustained well but it will cause exhibition problems in schools and colleges, unless segmented. If film programmers do book it they will want to provide adequate discussion time for the film after a short stretch break. It's a 3-hour evening program.

The film demands discussion. Simply try to keep a group quiet after it ends. I predict *Deal* will cause these and other exhibitor problems. I hope they can be overcome, for it is a film that definitely needs exposure and response.

Let's let Vaughn and Schott have the last word about their work: "*Deal* is evidence that a viewer can learn and be entertained, can be stimulated and challenged in a manner which is intelligent, but neither pedantic nor boring.

"This film project offered the special opportunity to document a production which has been pivotal in the history of television and is, at the same time, emblematic of not only game-shows, but the industry itself."

For information about film's rental sale or its press kit write to: Document/CB, 489 Broome St., New York, N.Y. 10013, 212/ 431-4248.

MORE CALENDAR

May 19, 20, 26, 27, June 2 & 3, 1978. Global Village Fourth Annual Documentary Video Festival. Contact: Karen Mooney, 454 Broome Street, New York, N.Y. 10013. (212) 925-7751.

June 6, 1978. Seminar by the International Industrial Television Association, New York, N.Y. Topics include: Video Program Packaging, Media Management, Electronic Field Production. For information: (212) 868-3339.

July 2-28, 1978. Dance/Television workshop, Duke University. For information: (919) 684-6402/Lili Shiffman P.O. Box 6097, College Station, Durham, N.C. 27708.



PHOTO BY DALE DEGABRIEL

SQUAT

By NICK DeMARTINO

I interviewed members of the Hungarian theatre group *Squat* at their home and theatre space on 23rd Street in Manhattan.

In *Pig Child Fire* the *Squat* company, uses video simply, but ingeniously to heighten, and extend the power of their tableau-spectacle. But one would never term these actor-creators of *Squat* "video people."

The company grew out of the intellectual community of Budapest in the late 60's. Their first play, presented in Jan. 1971, brought immediate prohibition by authorities. Until leaving the country for good in 1976, they created and performed their work in apartments and other non-public areas.

Since then the company has been largely on the road, struggling not only to perform but with immigration authorities over their legal status. Squatters. Aliens.

For three months in 1977, working under a city arts grant in Rotterdam, the group developed *Pig, Child, Fire!*

A five-part theatre piece which they first performed in the U.S. at Baltimore's New Theatre Festival last June, and for 60 performances ending in March, at their new home in New York. Three of the five segments are built around video.

Anna Koos and Peter Halasz, two of *Squat*'s leaders, talked about their use of video, a stark contrast with the kind of ideology of video, the technical imperative implied by those of us who may consider ourselves "video people."

"For us video was a practical matter," said Peter. "Nobody was thinking of it as an art subject or a formal item. It was not technique, but function. We wanted to show something that was not visible on the stage."

In one segment Anna is reading a letter to Andre Breton from Artaud with the video camera between her legs, her vagina displayed in close-up on a 23" monitor. An actor stands next to the monitor and performs yoga posture with his abdominal muscles that recreates the appearance of the magnified vagina.

They had tried the same piece using mirrors and overhead projectors. Video was best—"it is an electric mirror," says Peter.

"To learn video takes one hour for anybody," he adds. "It's not a big deal." And, even though the group has used multi-camera systems with switchers,

the performance in New York utilized only one Portapak camera and a stationary Sony deck.

What made the video so compelling was its integration into the rest of the theatrical experience. It is not just an add-on element to a stage show, since elements like the live close-up, separating camera view from the monitor, and simultaneous live projection are only possible with the video system. But *Pig, Child, Fire!* is far more imaginative than the work of many of the performance artists whose works are designed to illustrate some formal principle of the electronic system.

The second act, entitled *Nous Sommes les Mannequins (We are Showroom Dummies)* after the music by the Munich disco outfit Kraftwerk, is a satire on film noir, of worldwide gangster consciousness. The piece actually functions much like a film, because the rear of the stage is the storefront window that opens onto busy, nighttime 23rd Street, where much of the action occurs. The audience witnesses not only a movie-like gun battle in the window frame, but on a monitor in front of the stage area we see the image created by a camera aimed around the street.

It is a bit like watching the spectators on the old *Today* show, looking at passersby close-up on the monitor watching such events as the gunman chopping off the arm of a sleeping man, who then wakes up, puts the gun into his anus and pulls the trigger. But not much.

Little of the commercial TV context has seeped into the notions of function *Squat* displays. Instead, the use of close-up becomes another method to explore the tensions between distance and involvement, audience and participant, stylization and spontaneity.

By incorporating the street life, an element of unpredictability always exists in the performance. Most of the 60 performances in NY included some example of police harassment—once the entire street was blocked off to capture the "murderers."

Section III, called "Dinner," features a family performing the mundane tasks of dinner, with the TV set as the extra member of the family. Since the audience had been watching close-ups of street bystanders in the preceding act we did not realize that the faces on the set were in fact our own, until each person's close-up was displayed. This sight gag becomes a way of involving us, and a contrast with the normal, authoritarian reality embodied by TV's aggressive images.

Squat has settled permanently in New York—the world's only true international city, Anna says. (Two members were refused visas and remain in Europe.) *Squat* will premier a new piece in April which will also feature video and film as well as several rooms and the roof of the house. The piece is tentatively called *The Imperial Message*, or possibly *Interview with Corpses*.

The group is also planning a European tour later this year, and would consider American engagements in other cities.

Although *Squat* has seen no video by American groups since their NY arrival, they were strongly affected by the Tennessee environmental theatre company Little Marrow Bones, which mixes video, film, holograms, and other multimedia elements.

But as we talked, Anna and Peter's daughter, one of three children who performed in *Pig, Child, Fire*, turned on that other kind of video, American television.

My 1st Class License in 14 Days for \$395

By CAMILLE CONOLLY

For fifteen years, Bob Johnson has traveled a circuit from his home base in Los Angeles to Philadelphia, Boston, Atlanta, Detroit, and numerous other cities, to conduct his FCC License Preparation Seminar. On February 27, 1978, he came to Washington, D.C. for a 14 day seminar and I was one of his students.

The seminar went on for five hours a day, longer on the weekends, for 14 continuous days, in the "Presidential Room" of a Holiday Inn. At the beginning, the classes were straight lectures and Johnson made liberal use of a blackboard for illustrations. Near the end of the seminar he spent considerable time going over his sample FCC tests with the class.

The class was composed of approximately 22 people (6 women and 16 men) in the 20-35 age group. Most were news film people from local television stations that were changing to a video format. A few had an electronics background; the majority did not.

Before the seminar began we had been sent an "FCC License Preparation Seminar Kit", consisting of three 60-minute cassettes, 19 pages of basic theory and FCC rules and regulations, and a 65 question multiple-choice test to be thoroughly known before our first meeting.

For the first eight days of the class we were taught all the electronics we needed to know to pass Elements 3 and 4 of the FCC Radiotelephone Operator exam. Element 3 is a 100 question multiple-choice test that covers FCC rules and regulations with reference to the Public Safety Radio Service, basic electronics theory, audio and radio frequency amplifiers, transmitters and receivers, amplitude and frequency modulation, transistors, antennas, transmission lines, batteries, and motors and generators. One has to pass Element 3 to obtain a second Class FCC License and to be eligible to take Element 4.

Amplifiers, transmitters, receivers, transistors, antennas, frequency, power and gain . . .

Element 4 is a 50 question multiple-choice test that covers FCC rules and regulations that pertain to radio and television broadcasting, math involving power formulas, resonant frequencies, and dB gain, and more audio and radio frequency amplifiers, antennas, and transmission lines. One has to pass Element 4 to obtain a First Class FCC License.

It was a vast amount of information to become familiar with in 14 days, and for those who knew no electronics, it seemed impossible. The first class began with a simple electric circuit and ended with power supplies. The second day we were into radio transmitters and

receivers and vacuum tube amplifiers. And that was just the beginning. Still to come were broadcast antennas, transistors, schematics and troubleshooting circuits that had to be recognized and corrected, and more.

After eight days of becoming familiar with electronic components and principles and their relationships, we began going over sample tests. Bob Johnson has five sample tests for Element 3 and four for Element 4. The remaining days of the seminar were spent going over these tests again and again until literally the answers came to mind when you looked at the questions.

The passing grades are 75 percent for Element 3 and 74 percent for Element 4. The point was to go over the tests as many times as you had to until you were scoring in the upper 80th and 90th percentile.

The 15th day we all trooped down to the FCC office for the exam.

Not everyone passes. Johnson told me that five people in his previous seminar had failed Element 3. Others have difficulty with Element 4, which involves a lot of math. But with much hard work and dedicated effort, it is possible to get your First Class FCC License after 14 days of intense study. If you fail, you can take the seminar again at no further cost when Johnson's back in town.

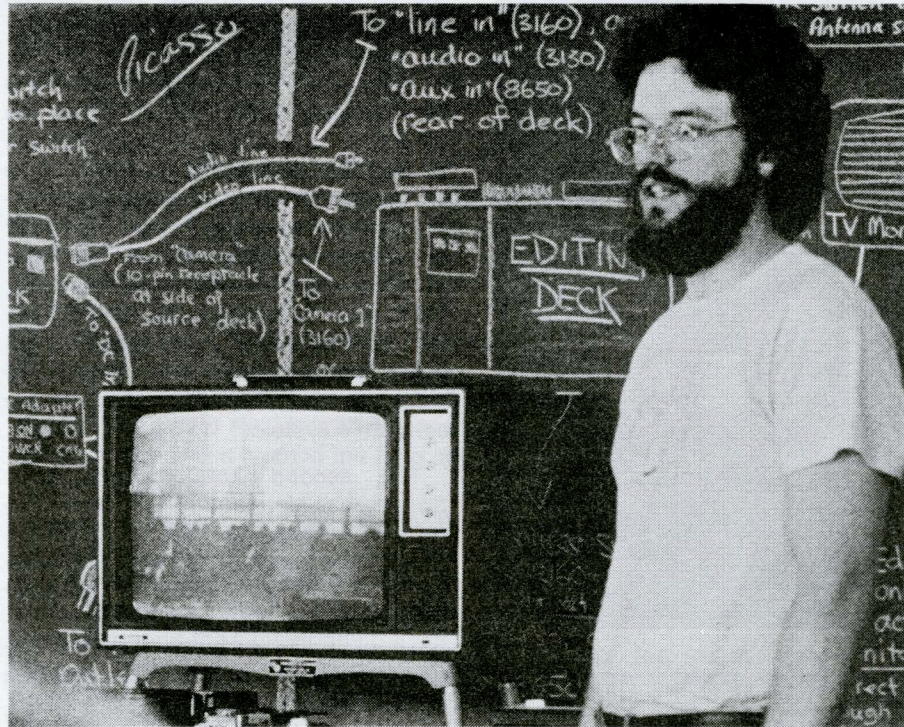
For information write to Bob Johnson Radio License Training, 1201 Ninth St., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266.

Summer Conferences

For people working on community media projects around the country often there is a feeling of isolation... that there are no other groups struggling with the same equipment, staff or access problems. And for the past few years there have been few opportunities for media people to get together in a national conference to share ideas and collectively think about the future of the access and community media movements.

This summer, however, all that will change as there are three major conferences and gatherings planned.

The first is being organized by The National Federation of Local Cable Pro-



The University Film Study Center in Cambridge, Mass. will sponsor the 8th Annual Summer Institute on the Media Arts from June 25 to July 15. Film, video, photography with the likes of Richard Leacock and Jean Rouch. Write Box 275, Cambridge, MA. 02138.

grammers, the year and a half old organization founded by interns from the Alternate Media Center, but which now encompasses access groups and organizations from across the country.

The conference is planned for July 6-9 in Madison, Wisconsin and is funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Issues to be addressed include; "the public's legal access rights"; "community access center organization and funding"; and "program production technique."

The conference organizers hope to give video programmers and artists the opportunity to develop contacts, share their works, explore news and developing distribution channels and become part of a national support system. A video festival and competition is also planned. For more information on NFLCP's First National Convention, contact Gary Knowles, convention coordinator, 3104 Churchill Dr., Madison, Wisc. 53713 (708-271-7121).

Next up in August will be The National Federation of Community Broadcasters fourth annual convention. NFCB is currently made up of 50 active community

radio stations and organizations, so besides the business meeting of the organization, workshops are being planned on the practical side of community radio including programming, staff and funding questions. Other workshops will include discussion of the role of National Public Radio's satellite interconnect system, the role of the community radio station in the neighborhood and the future of community radio and television. The person to contact at NFCB is Rob Spaulding, 1216 Mass. Ave., Washington, D.C. 20005. (202-232-0404)

On August 25, 26, & 27th, the San Diego Community Video Center is sponsoring a National Conference on Public Access. As San Diego is House Communications Sub-committee chairman Lionel Van Deerlin's home district and as San Diego has the largest cable system in the country the Video Access Center is hoping to draw national attention to the access movement through this meeting. The people to contact in San Diego are Tom Borrup or Jane Carey, 520 E St. Suite 901, San Diego, California. 92101. (714-239-3393).

—Maurice Jacobsen

The Film Fund serves as a peer-review system for socially oriented documentaries, as well as a fund-raising and service group. Some 420 applications were submitted for the first round of grants, which will be announced in early April. Fifty finalists had been selected at TELEVISIONS' deadline by two panels, one for the East, one for the West. The Eastern panel includes William Sloan, Donnell Library Center; Linda Blackaby, Neighborhood Film Project; Julia Reichart, New Day Films; Digna Sanchez, Voices of the Third World; Robert Van Lierop, filmmaker and WABC-TV producer; Mike Clark, Highlander Center.

The Western panel: Kris Samuelson, filmmaker; Tom Luddy, Pacific Film Archives; Jesus Trevino, filmmaker; Richard Kletter, screenwriter; Bill Bradbury, video producer; Belvie Rooks, Third World Fund; Maria Varela, community organizer in New Mexico.

This Film Fund will accept further proposals in the fall, as well as assisting some filmmakers to raise money beyond those that receive direct aid.

—Maurice Jacobsen

Fund Winners

December 16th was the deadline for submission of applications to the \$500,000 Independent Documentary Fund, and on that date 855 people had applied. The Fund administered by the T.V. Lab at WNET-TV, New York, with grants from the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts then took a short two months to announce the winners.

According to Kathy Kline, former NEA grant administrator and now the Fund's project coordinator the selection process went very smoothly. In the first phase of the process approximately 30 samples of work were sent to 28 prescreeners across the country. These included people like George Stoney and Red Burns of the New York University Alternate Media Center, Bill Foster of the Northwest Film Study Center in Portland, Oregon and Edith Kramer and Tom Luddy of the Pacific Film Archives.

The reviewers judged the films and tapes on the "originality of the project, the skill of the applicant as demonstrated by their sample of work, and the ability of the person applying to carry out the project as indicated in the production schedule and budget."

From the original batch of applications the pre-screeners chose about 4 projects each to reach the second level. Out of these 120 the staff of the Lab, including director, David Loxton narrowed the field to about 40. In a day-long session the Fund's advisory panel of Chloe Aaron, Vice President of Programming for the Public Broadcasting Service; Cliff Frazier, Third World Cinema; Claudia Weill and Frederick Wiseman, independent filmmakers; and Edith Zornow, Supervisor of Film for the Children's Television Workshop made the following final selections. In alphabetical order they are:

Jon Alpert and Keiko Twuno, *Third Avenue*, a video examination of people in an urban environment, using New York's Third Ave. as a cross-section (\$20,000).

Lynne Littman, *Yo Ain't the Man Yo Mama Wuz*, a film about two generations with growing pains... a group of students at Sarah Lawrence University and a group of single, middle-aged parents of college-age children on the West Coast (\$70,000).

William Miles, *I Remember Harlem*, a historical documentary on the past, present and future of New York's Harlem (\$70,550).

Caroline and Frank Mouris, *LA-LA: Making It in Los Angeles*, a musical documentary on the aspiration for stardom and status in music, movies and art (\$66,600).

Dena Schutzer, *Service Entrance*, a film on the experiences of an aimless teenage boy who enlists in the armed forces (\$8,280).

Jack Willis, *The Atomic Energy Commission Film*, a documentary study on the effects of low-level radiation and the contradictions between what the Federal Department of Energy believes its effects are and the high incidence of cancer among those exposed (\$20,000).

Plans currently call for these first programs to be aired in early 1979.

In addition, a second round of funding will be available this year for project completion monies. The deadline for this pool of funding will be in June of this year. For further information contact Kathy Kline at the TV Lab, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

—Maurice Jacobsen

Media Grantees

\$50,000 from the Skaggs Foundation to the San Francisco Opera Association for series of live opera broadcasts over stations in 7 West Coast Cities and in the Chicago area, taped for distribution by National Public Radio.

\$10,000 from the Skaggs Foundation to the Theatre Flamenco, San Francisco, for Yo Soy children's education program to make children aware of flamenco dancing and importance of dance in our heritage.

\$41,939 from the Hazen Foundation to Henry Street School, NYC for research project for alternative high school students using video for recording images of their world.

\$16,666 from the Meyer Foundation to Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington for a new regional arts organization.

\$65,000 from the Mott Foundation to the New Games Foundation, San Francisco to enable more people to experience the joy and potential of play as a means of individual and community development.

\$7,500 from the Abelard Foundation to Institute of Public Administration, PISA, for activities concerning use of satellites for public interest organizations.

\$5,000 from the Abelard Foundation to Media Access Project, D.C. for general program support.

\$22,902 from the Cary Charitable Trust to Yale University Library to catalog the Cary Playing Card Collection.

\$20,000 from the Clark Foundation to Action for Children's Television for legal efforts to ensure compliance by FCC with new regulations dealing with children's television.

\$500,000 from the Ford Foundation to Community Television of Southern California, Los Angeles for new scripts and new productions for third season of Visions dramatic series.

\$25,000 from the Ford Foundation to Document/CB, NYC for a documentary film on commercial television.

\$10,000 from the Ford Foundation to Public Broadcasting Service, D.C. for development of high-fidelity, multichannel audio system for television called DATE (Digital Auto for Television).

\$10,000 from the Grant Foundation to the National Institute on the Gifted and the Talented, Reston, VA., for pilot film for television series Our Gifted Children to draw public attention to special needs of the gifted child in school and society.

\$14,500 from the Grant Foundation to the University of Hartford, Institute of Social Research, West Hartford, CT. For development of television and community education films to assist in diversion of youth from juvenile justice and correctional systems.

\$125,000 from the Rubenstein Foundation to WNET Channel 13, NYC to underwrite weekend children's programming.

\$98,750 from the Gund Foundation to Action for Children's Television to advocate innovative, stimulating arts programming on children's television and encourage quality and diversity through legal action, education and research.

\$10,000 from the Gund Foundation to Center for Documentary Media, Santa Monica to develop and plan production of documentary films on 1960's southern civil rights movement.

\$100,000 from the Gund Foundation to Education Broadcasting Corporation, WNET, to produce series titled THE MONEY SHOW, on variety of subjects related to the American Economic system which will reflect range of viewpoints and economic philosophies.

\$15,282 from the Falk Medical Fund to Western Center for Visual Study of Society, Santa Monica to complete film called, Doctoring: A Documentary on Rural Medical Practice.

TV in Congress Visual Anthropology Video in Philadelphia

The House of Representatives intends to run its own television system for recording Congressional activities. Such is the recommendation of the House Rules Committee in a 9-6 vote last February. Congress approved of the concept of House TV coverage last fall, after years of avoiding it.

The resolution was no surprise to those who supported an alternative plan for a network pool, made up of the three major networks and PBS, to share responsibility for the televising. The decision reflects the desire of Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill (D-Mass.) to keep the House floor clear of broadcasters. He was also granted authority to define who will control the recordings once they are made.

O'Neill and his backers on this issue consider the videotaping as a resource for the representatives—a reliable, untainted record of their proceedings. Its availability to, and use by, the public is merely a convenient by-product, and apparently an unappealing one.

Plans have been made for three fixed automatic cameras covering the House chamber, remote controlled by two or three technicians. It's a lot like a bank security system. To protect the Members from unflattering TV images, the cameramen shall only record the recognized speakers. Even then, camera use is subject to regulations.

Critics feel House coverage should be a public resource and something not done shabbily. They feel media professionals should be involved in the design and implementation of a worthwhile system. Broadcasts of the Canadian House of Commons, for example, are designed and staffed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The current plan's cheapness and restrictions also cause endless technical and legal problems. The lighting casts shadows and reflects off balding heads, but the representatives fear the increased heat of better illumination. The sound system is said to be terrible. O'Neill will be presiding over the question of access to the tapes. Finally,

attempts to solve the merely technical questions, by permitting test recordings by the networks have been continually confounded.

So, although Congress finally approved television coverage of its activities in October, 1977—in the wake of operational systems in 44 state legislatures—it has succeeded in postponing the inevitable until 1979, safely after the next elections.

Note: Ann Cooper, of the Congressional Quarterly has written two succinct and comprehensive articles on the televising of Congress in the CQ Weekly Report: Dec. 17, '77; Feb. 11, '78; and one on the Canadian House's broadcasts: Jan. 7, '78.

—Steve Spector

The National Institute of Education is spending approximately \$4.2 million for a children's program called "Freestyle." The target audience is children nine to 12 years-old.

"Freestyle" is designed "to reduce negative affects of sexual stereotyping on the development of children's interests and career aspirations," says Marylou Randour from NIE.

Endorsed by the National Education Association and the National Association of Elementary School Principals, "Freestyle" will be thirteen 30-minute shows produced in Los Angeles by PBS station KCET-TV. The air date is scheduled for October first 1978.

Plans are being made to add captions for the deaf.

Video is alive in Philadelphia, but in its infancy. The Walnut Street Theatre Film/Video Center is the magnet of video activities. Besides the Walnut, there are occasional video shows at Etage Gallery and the Institute of Contemporary Art. Nexus Gallery has received a grant to document their activities on video.

One of the major projects of Walnut Street Theatre is a series of mini-courses called, "Looking at Video," dedicated to the concept that educating an audience

to become video-literate is essential for the growth of video art.

The first mini-course included as guest lecturers: John Hanhardt, curator of Film and Video at the Whitney Museum of American Art, who spoke to the subject "What is Video?" and showed representative tapes; Joan Jonas whose tapes included "Organic Honey" and "Vertical Roll"; and Willoughby Sharp, with his self documentary conceptual art.

The second mini-course, scheduled for early May, will include guest lecturers Stan VanDer Beek, one of America's foremost experimentalists; Douglas Davis, art critic for *Newsweek* and a dedicated spokesman for video art; and Richard Foreman, outstanding playwright, director, and video artist.

Other video activities include a weekly Tuesday night Video Lounge where local independent video artists show their work. The Spring cycle has included work by Philadelphia video artists as well as presenting visiting artists such as Doris Chase. Future plans for the Video Lounge include an evening with Amy Greenfield, Anson Kenney, and the Best of the Best of Philadelphia Video.

The Video Lounge at the Walnut welcomes the submission of tapes for consideration for its Fall cycle. The tapes could be 1/2" or 3/4" format.

For information contact Linda Stryker, video co-ordinator, Walnut Street Theatre Film/Video Center (215) 574-3580.

The Conference of Visual Anthropology was held at Temple University on March 8-11, under the affable and admirable direction of Jay Ruby and his staff. This event attracted some 700 persons from colleges, universities, non-profit institutions, and film and video houses. Well organized, in excellent facilities, an avalanche of film and video material demanded one's attention. For this reason, the excellent final program is a gem of a resource. It is annotated with total credits, running times and even the equipment used to create the film or video piece. Video was very much in evidence, shown in an auditorium with six monitors and one Advent up front.

Julie Gustafson and John Reilly presented *The Irish Tapes*, *The Politics of Intimacy* and *Giving Birth*. The next day Juan Downey was there with some stunning material on the *Guahibos*, an Amazon tribe. His technique and personal appearance were a highlight. Also screened were Nam Jun Paik's *Guadalcanal Requiem*, which was interesting but a trifle forced and affected. Woody and Steina Vasulkas blew everyone away with their *Codes of Electronic Imaging*. Evening programs included *Running Fence* by the Maysles Brothers, *DEAL* by John Schott and E.J. Vaughn (see review) and two documentaries by Werner Herzog after which a fiery discussion period was led by Amos Vogel. The Wednesday night program was *Summer Lights* and *Union Maids*.

It was a splendid affair with lots of chance for questions and a fascinating rolling program on the effect of the visual anthropologist on the culture recorded and the process of recording. The anthropology docs ran from MOMA's historic archives, through Japanese and French ethnographic films, to work in progress, to satire and put-ons. It was great—write Jay Ruby at Temple to see if any of the annotated programs were left over. Offer to pay him—they're worth it.

—Ron Sutton

New Sony and Panasonic Editing

By PETER KIRBY

Until late last year Sony had the only way to go in inexpensive editing controllers. The RM-400 was the first, the cheapest and the easiest to use of the systems that were developed for cassette editing. Now Sony and Panasonic have both introduced new editor controllers to go with their new cassette editing machines. (JVC also has a controller, but I've never seen one in use.)

I've been violently prejudiced against Panasonic since about 2 weeks after I tried using their first 1/2 inch editing decks in 1970, and so I approached their latest attempt skeptically. But, I have been pleasantly surprised. The Panasonic NV-A950 Editing Controller (to be used with either two 9500 editing decks, or one 9500 and one 9200 deck) actually is a usable and reliable piece of gear. It does some nice things: twice normal and 1/5 normal in forward, very little slippage after previewing an edit, and then a preview can run up to five minutes, which is great for things like long audio inserts, and best of all, you can automatically come out of insert.

My beefs: no picture in reverse (the tape is held off the drum) which means you have to inch up on your edit-point (like on the old Sony RM-400). But, at least you don't have to wait for the machine to unthread and thread again. There are no counters on the controller. And, worst of all is having to dump the entire set up if you change your mind about where an edit should be—example: you have carefully established an out-point on the record machine with little margin for error; you then pick an in-point on the playback machine and then preview the edit only to find that you are off on the in-point. At this point it would be nice to be able to just move the edit-point on the playback machine and preview again (you can on the Sony), but no, you have to dump the entire set up and begin again. Very tedious. But not impossible, just slower than it should be.

The Sony RM-430 Editing Controller looks much like the old RM-400 with a few new buttons. You can see the picture in normal speed forward and reverse and 1/20th speed forward and reverse. There are timers for both machines that read in 1/10ths of a second, and they don't reset every time you go into record as the RM-400 did. Makes trimming edits easier. You can preview edits and after previewing, either edit-point can be moved and you can then preview the new edit set up. You can also mark a new out-point on the record machine while it is recording the previous edit, saving you time if you are on your toes.

Beefs: no extended preview, rolls only 8 seconds past the edit point, which is awkward for long inserts; no insert out control, which means you still have to do it manually; too much slip after several previews; decks cannot be frame locked. So close to being great, but not there yet.

Why doesn't somebody make something in this price range that combines the good features of both these machines? The way to make a choice between these two systems is either on the basis of price (PANASONIC IS CHEAPER) or by using both and seeing which faults are the least objectionable for the way you edit.

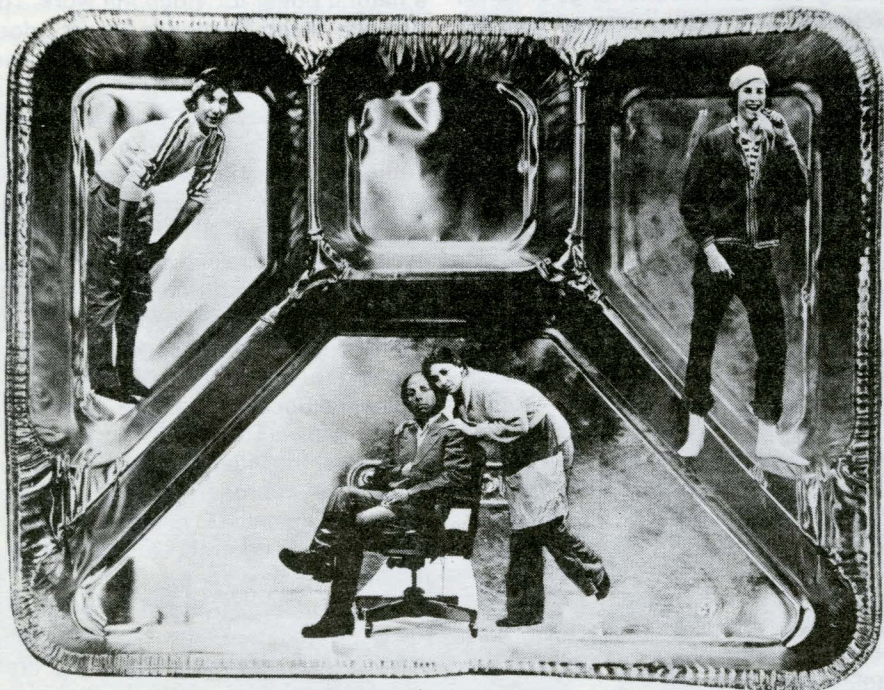


PHOTO BY STEVEN SCHOENBAUM

The TV Dinner was a video multi-image tape-showing and live performance at The American University in Washington, D.C. on April 8th and 9th. Produced by Elizabeth Daley and Larry Kirkman, the All-American fried chicken and jello mold dinner featured actors and live TV, portable crews, advents and monitors, b&w/color, two hours of edited tape, photography and polaroids, a dance-video and live, and a theme song: *You're OK For TV*.

DEPARTMENTS

Video Production,
Cable, Broadcast TV,
Citizen Action,
Performance and
Dance.

VIDEO

Satellite Video Exchange Vancouver Group Still Committed to Alternative TV *Five years of production, education*

By ERIC CARLSON

The signs outside announce "Video Inn" and "Rooms for Rent." The building, on the not-so-fashionable edges of Vancouver's restored Gastown district, serves as an inn to more than the elderly gents, a little down at the heel, who live upstairs.

The Video Inn is also a clearinghouse for video work and video people throughout Canada and beyond. Under the Video Inn roof is the headquarters for the Satellite Video Exchange Society, the force behind several local and national programs associated with small format video work.

To walk into the Video Inn is to enter the world of alternative media set in

motion by the cultural events of the last decade. And to understand how and why things happen at the Video Inn one has to be mindful of the assertive, if low key, alternative approach which has been taken.

The Inn is a comfortable place, furnished from the second-hand stores. On the sunny February afternoon when I visited, several people were patronizing the Video Inn Library. Citizens take advantage of this service, supported through Canada Council Grants, which provides access to a collection of over 700 tapes on a 7 day-a-week basis. People sat around in overstuffed chairs watching tapes of Australian football matches and natural childbirth—unavailable on commercial TV. Video

Inn people greeted patrons, changed tapes and repaired equipment. The atmosphere was organized but seemed casual and flexible.

The community tape library, the central project around which the Video Inn has been organized, tells only a portion of the story. The people behind the library and the *International Video Exchange Directory* have also been pursuing their own video work. Through such collective and individual efforts, the Video Inn has begun to define its cultural and aesthetic territory.

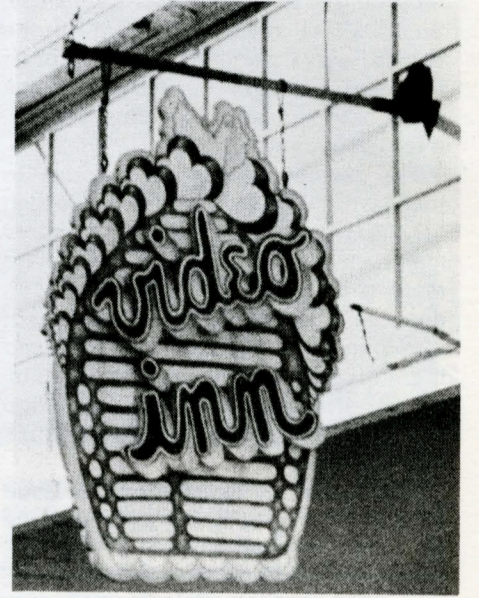
Video is not new to Vancouver. The 60's saw the growth of counter-cultural styles there. As in most other major North American cities it brought along new opportunities in communication like those offered in small format video. Additionally, Vancouver's position in Canadian culture insured that artists and activists would receive thorough exposure to video technology. Consequently, there has been an active video community at work in the city for some time.

A focal point for Vancouver video activity arose in 1973, when the MATRIX Conference was staged, drawing with it international participation. Out of this conference came a group of Vancouver people, committed to working in video. They provided the nucleus for the original Satellite Video Exchange Society, its first *Video Exchange Directory* and subsequent, related programs.

Underpinning the continuing programs of the Satellite Video Exchange society has been an abiding commitment to working within alternative approaches to media. When it was first organized, the video exchange program was seen as a way to increase distribution of video work outside of conventional, commercial channels. This program continues and with it some as yet unresolved issues in copyrighting video work. Today there are a variety of exchange arrangements possible, including: one-for-one exchange of tapes; exchange of a blank, unused tape for programmed ones; and loans of videotapes.

Policies relating to other activities of the Video Exchange Society have been worked out in a similarly careful, collective fashion. This faithful commitment to working may be the real story behind the Video Inn's success. One factor contributing to the surprising longevity of such a collective enterprise is the fact that financial management policies of the group have precluded any one member from obtaining his or her livelihood from Video Inn/Video Exchange Society program funding. Another is the conscious separation of the video work of individual members from the programs of the Society as a whole. Such thoughtful policies as these may have served to make the Video Inn more like a passionate and life-consuming hobby than a career for any single member.

How do the members of the Video Inn approach their own work? They represent diverse set of interests. Paul Wong works in performance and dance. Environmental advocates, like Andy Harvey, on anti-nuclear tapes. Com-



munity activists Shawn Preus and Ross Gentleman are working with women's groups and community coops respectively. If there is a style which has developed in the Video Inn members' work members themselves characterize it only generally, emphasizing remote portapak production oriented toward realism and employing straightforward editing.

One surprising aspect of the Video Inn group is that few members have felt the pull of larger recognition afforded by distribution outside the community and gallery network in which most of their work has moved. Admittedly, access to public airwaves is hard for the independent video producer to achieve in Canada. Unlike many of their counterparts to the south in the States, who have sought to widen their audiences through broadcast exposure, Video Inn people have been committed, if not always content, to working within an alternative media network.

Vancouver, incidentally, is well-served by a cable net. Many community-oriented ethnic programs originated within this system, preempting, perhaps, a natural outlet for Video Inn work. The Satellite Video Exchange Society does harbor the dream of going broadcast one day with its own UHF station. Realistically, however, it faces years of negotiation with Canadian broadcasting authorities to achieve this goal.

The Video Inn Exchange Society is an alternative video group which stuck by its basic premises and survived for nearly five years. In the process it has carved out a niche for itself in Canadian media culture. By its own estimation, things are on course, and the Video Exchange Society is settling in for a long run at its own box office.

Whether the Video Inn's conscientious alternative approach will continue to hold its appeal as creative horizons expand and contract for its people remains to be seen. This issue is problematic for a group of people trying to work together. In the meantime everyone seems committed to their craft and to pursuit of methods that were abandoned years ago in other, more idealistic times.

Eric Carlson is an architect in Seattle and a video consultant in environmental design.

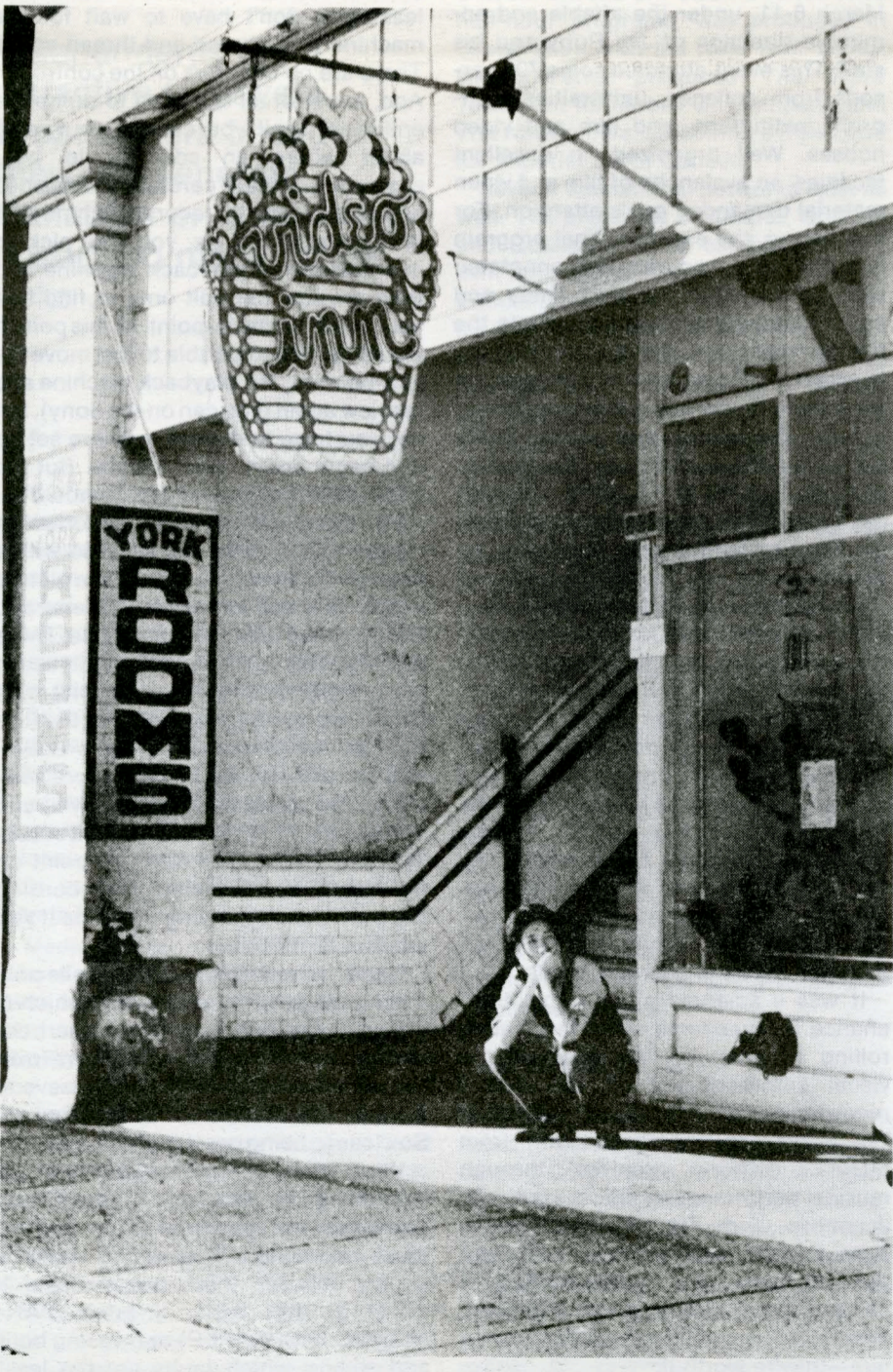


PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

BROADCAST

Canadian Broadcasting: Other Models

Fighting Americanization of the airwaves

By ALAN BALKEMA

Dedicated American viewers can find their stars alive and well in Canadian television. But there is also a Canadian television. Though it may have struggled in the past, its existence is firmly established. Its vitality is evidenced by the continual debate as to what direction it is to take in the future, and how it can best serve Canadians. In spite of the extreme closeness of the two countries, Canadian TV broadcasters are developing a daring course of their own design, fettered with fewer restrictions than their American colleagues.

Canadian broadcasting is still heavily influenced by the U.S. Six out of ten TV sets in Canada are within broadcasting range of an American TV station. When cable statistics are included the number climbs. Most of Canadian prime time television rebroadcasts American prime time or Hollywood movies. Daytime TV is spiced with American reruns, soap operas, and game shows.

U.S. programming dominance is not surprising when you consider the small market Canada's population (1/10 of the U.S.) offers advertisers. Advertising rates reflect this size. The most expensive thirty-second spot costs \$4940 (from *Canadian Advertising Rates and Data*, 1978 edition) on the national CTV network. Thirty seconds during Laverne and Shirley can be purchased for \$1700 from the Global Network, serving southern Ontario, and \$841 will buy thirty seconds of the primetime on the Toronto CBC station.

Considering this small market, the development of a Canadian system in defiant competition with the American system is a startling achievement. Much of the credit belongs to the Canadian Parliament. Since the early days of radio a Canadian broadcasting system has been supported by public funds and laws requiring that broadcasting ventures be owned and controlled by Canadians. Without this legislation economic reality would dictate the opening of Canada to the American networks.

Regulating Canadian broadcasting is the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC), charged with the responsibility of enforcing the Broadcasting Act of 1968. The CRTC consists of five full-time members, each serving a seven-year term, and ten part-time members with five-year terms. All are appointed by the Governor in Council, the Canadian executive. The primary task of the commission, like America's Federal Communications Commission, is to license broadcasting operations and to renew the licenses at least every five years, subject to broadcaster compliance to CRTC regulations.

Public hearings must be held in the local area served when the broadcaster's license is subject to renewal. Hearings can be called earlier if the conditions of the license aren't being met. They usually involve discussion of the Canadian content regulation. Citizens groups can petition the CRTC for a hearing to confront the broadcaster with questionable policies, and have prompted decisions to cancel series such as late night erotic movies.

Additionally, all transfers of ownership must be screened by the CRTC during public hearings to insure that a broadcaster is not acquiring the controlling interest of two television facilities serving the same market.

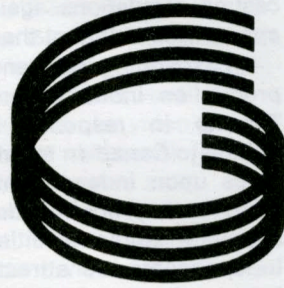
Rules and regulations

The 1968 Act declares that programming be "of high standard, using predominantly Canadian creative and other resources." Canadian content is a fiercely debated regulation. A complicated rating system has evolved, giving a 100 percent Canadian content rating to American shows which are of extreme interest to Canadians in all parts of the country. One of the programs which fits into this category is the World Series.

Most of the content ratings debate rages from the private broadcasters who depend upon American programming to draw advertising dollars. They toe a difficult line to maintain the legislative

mandate that 60 percent of all programming during the broadcast day, and 50 percent of prime time, be Canadian in origin.

Canadian television broadcasters, like their American counterparts, are required to keep daily program logs giving the title, sponsor, and brief description. Speakers appearing on talk shows are to be identified along with their affiliation, if they are representing one, and political speakers or messages are to be identified as such. The time of



broadcast and duration of all advertising is also required.

Unlike Americans, however, the Canadians must provide the Canadian content rating of each program broadcast. The program logs are presented to the CRTC weekly. In addition, stations must retain tapes or transcripts of programs for one month after broadcast.

Advertising on private networks is limited to 12 minutes per broadcast hour. Political advertisements are to be broadcast on an equal basis among parties and are banned the day before and day of an election, while liquor advertisements are banned year-round. The first ten minutes of a newscast are also to be free of advertising, and newscasters are prohibited from reading commercial messages.

The provinces are now assuming control over the content of advertising as part of their responsibility to protect consumers. In a ruling recently upheld by the Quebec Supreme Court, a breakfast cereal manufacturer was denied the use of animated cartoon characters in advertising during children's TV programs, a practice specifically banned by Quebec law. Also forbidden are ads that undermine parental authority, show the performance of unsafe acts, or urge children to buy a product or have someone buy it for them.

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) is basically a lobbying group for the private broadcasting industry. It does have its own set of regu-

lations, but since the major force in Canadian broadcasting, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), is excluded it wields little clout. The absence of an industry policeman *a la* the NAB is one of the reasons for the diversity of Canadian television.

The only proven method for delivering a large audience is American programs—and their numbers are regulated. Canadian broadcasters in the past have tried to copy them with disastrous results. They now are aware that, to be a



success, they must develop their own styles and formats, leaving the formulas and canned laughter to the masters who exploit them.

Canadian private broadcasters exist in one of the most competitive markets in the world. This fact has not deterred many brave entrepreneurs from starting out. Their chances for survival are slim, however. CTV, the only private national network, has been in existence since 1961, and rates its existence meager. CTV consists of eighteen member stations from coast-to-coast covering all the major markets. A loose organization of several profitable stations which underwrite the failing ones, CTV takes its role as the CBC's chief antagonist seriously.

Canadian broadcasters typically concentrate most of the programming budget on news, public affairs, and documentary departments. They don't attempt to compete with American drama and sitcoms, which can be purchased for much less than equally lucrative programs can be produced.

CTV is no exception to this rule. Its news is given high ratings, and documentaries such as *Fertility Rites of the 21st Century: Overpopulation* have received numerous awards. A highly dramatized program entitled *Separation* has been produced by CFTO, the Toronto CTV station, with the hope that its topical nature will result in international sales. CTV, in cooperation with Nielson-Ferns and Torstar Productions,



is also bringing out the series *The New Avengers*, which it hopes will be as successful as *The Avengers*.

Amid charges of further fragmentation from CTV and a few independents, the Global Television Network began broadcasting in southern Ontario in January of 1974. Its licensing astounded observers unconvinced by Global's argument that another Canadian outlet would repatriate many citizens then tuned to American stations. The key to its successful presentation before the CRTC was Global's promise to actively support Toronto's independent production companies with a pledge to present more than the requisite 60 percent Canadian programming.

This dream was shattered three months later when its bank refused further credit because of a \$15 million deficit. Global was rescued by an industrial consortium, one-half of which still runs the company. The network consists of six stations broadcasting across the populated, extremely competitive southern Ontario market.

Economic reality has replaced heady optimism: American programs fill the maximum allowed amount of Global's schedule. If it has not lived up to its pledge to provide an outlet for Canadian drama, it has nevertheless distinguished itself in public affairs programming. Its news department is highly-acclaimed. Its public forum programs thrive on discussions of controversial subjects such as prostitution, homosexuality and changing social attitudes.

Independents are attractive to private broadcasters because they can generate Canadian programming, absorbing many of the risks ...

In *Private Life*, an interview series, featured the first interview with Rene Levesque after the Parti Quebecois won control of the Quebec Parliament. Global also produces *Second City*, a weekly satire series which is expected to spawn imitations on the other networks and perhaps in the United States.

Through an arrangement with CHIN radio station, Global provides time for ethnic programming in Greek, Portuguese, Italian, and Yugoslavian for the large immigrant population of Toronto. Global TV experienced its first profitable season in 1976-77. More innovation in the future seems assured.

Media-blitzed metropolitan Toronto, whose cable TV subscribers can boast of over twenty channels to choose from, also supports two independent TV stations. CHCH Hamilton, the older of the two, is well established. It has discovered a lucrative balance of American light entertainment and Canadian sports, and is in no haste to experiment. A hook-up with the Ontario educational TV network provides much of its morning programming and Canadian content.

Broadcasting since 1972, CITY-TV has yet to bask in financial success. Resourceful in a way only necessity can dictate, it has tried everything to

generate revenue: from its present 36 weekly hours of ethnic programming to a previous late night series featuring erotic movies. Ever evolving Canadian TV regulations allowed CITY and a few other independents to broadcast blue movies, an audience-guaranteed series if there ever was one, until public reaction necessitated their removal. In a country whose public morality seems firmly in the grip of Christian decency, broadcasting such movies was controversial. But the interpretation of broadcasting regulations against indecency appear less stringent than in the U.S.

An expanding independent television production industry has grown up in Toronto in response to conditions unique to Canadian television. The CBC relies upon independents to produce many of its programs, due to a lack of adequate studio facilities in Toronto. Independents are attractive to private broadcasters because they can generate vitally needed Canadian programming, absorbing many of the risks that would otherwise fall onto the private broadcasters.

VTR, the largest independent producer in Canada, has been in operation for 19 years. It produced three major series, in addition to over three hundred programs last year. *King of Kensington*, one of VTR's productions for the CBC network, has been purchased by Metro-media for syndication in the U.S.

One of the fastest growing, most successful independent producers is Nielson-Ferns. Now in its sixth year, a list of productions for Canadian TV includes *Stationary Arch*, *Man of the North*, and *Cities*. *Portraits of Power*, a series of 13 half-hour programs, was produced in cooperation with the *New York Times*. Nielson-Ferns produced *The Third Testament* for Mobile Oil Company, and *The Newcomers: Inhabiting a New Land* for Imperial Oil of Canada.

Several educational networks exist as well. The provinces of Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec have all established their own educational networks. The Ontario Educational Communications Authority (OECA) is the oldest and most established of these. From OECA's Toronto headquarters, it broadcasts a 15-hour day. Eighty percent of the programming is done by OECA, either in its studios or in cooperation with independent producers. It also has coproduction arrangements with the Agency for Instructional Television, for *Bread and Butterflies*, among others, and has coproduced *The Age of Uncertainty* with the BBC.

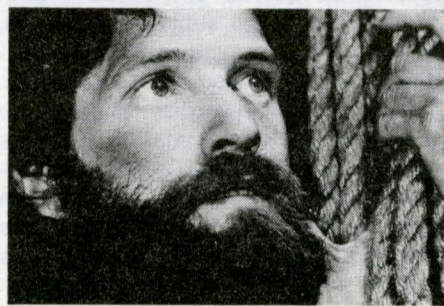
OECA's daytime scheduling is geared towards children, although it produces several French language instruction programs which attract adult viewers. The prime time schedule includes documentaries, general information and scientific investigation programs, and occasional OECA-produced dramas or Hollywood movies. The dramas and movies are followed by discussions or celebrity interviews to conform to requirements that their programming be strictly educational.

The flagship: CBC

The Broadcasting Act states that the national service, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), is a Crown corporation dependent upon Parliament for public funds but autonomous in operation. The CBC is to provide service in English and French to all parts of Canada. In the sparsely settled northern territories the CBC has adopted the policy of providing service to all communities with a population of 500,



CBC PHOTO BY JEAN-PIERRE KARSENTY



Nielson-Ferns produced *The Newcomers: Inhabiting a New Land* for Imperial Oil of Canada. *The Newcomers* is a series of seven hour-long shows depicting scenes from Canadian history. The series is based upon immigrant diaries and journals.

offering ever expanding programming in the native Inuktitut language.

The CBC is mandated to operate in the public interest. "Where any conflict arises between the objectives of the national broadcasting service and the interests of the private element ... it shall be resolved in the public interest."

A continuing problem is the difficulty in balancing the interests of public and private broadcasters. At one point the Board of Broadcast Governors, the previous licensing agency, was scrapped. Private industry contends that the public would best be served by an atmosphere in which private broadcasters were allowed to flourish. Chief among their dreams is the removal of advertising from the CBC. Naturally the CBC is opposed. Advertising revenue represents approximately one-fourth of the total CBC budget, an amount it can ill afford to lose.

The present Chairman of the CRTC, formerly with the CAB, says he plans to challenge the CBC once again when it appears in public license renewal hearings this summer. Whether this represents a new definition of the public interest remains to be seen.

Amid a sea of criticism the CBC plods along. Denounced as inefficient, ineffective, mismanaged, and directionless its only defense is often that it's doing the best it can. Private broadcasters claim it is wasteful, and rate its television programs unentertaining, uncommercial and miniscule in comparison to its budget. In Parliament the CBC has been criticized for not binding the land together into a nation.

The corporation itself is far from harmonious. Young writers and

directors hired to develop new ideas and areas of programming disparage an autocratic head office which makes capricious decisions about their product. Among the corporate heads there has been dissent as to what course the CBC is to follow in the future. Meanwhile, the CBC continues to air entertaining and daring productions.

The head offices of the CBC are in Ottawa. It has a president, appointed by the executive for a seven-year term, and fourteen directors similarly appointed to five-year terms. There are two branches of the CBC, the English and French language divisions.

The French services broadcast to a captive audience culturally separate from the United States and unwilling to accept mass importation of American programs. The growth of a tradition of quality programming is in response to the need to satisfy this audience. The headquarters of French programming is in Montreal, serving and being responsive to the people in Quebec, in addition to broadcasting nationwide in French. Montreal is recognized as an entertainment industry production center, due in part to the CBC's presence. As it continues to expand, CBC French viewers can expect more creative programming.

A side benefit of Canada's unity debate has been the promised reunification of the two divisions through exchanges of ideas and cooperative productions. A healing of this rift between creative forces in the CBC can only improve the collective output.

The English Services Division is headquartered in Toronto. At one time most English programming was produced there. Western provinces' pressure resulted in establishment of regional production centers. Now approximately a third of English production is done outside of Toronto.

English programming in the past has suffered from a lack of direction. Using audience preference reports as its primary guide the CBC produced programs that were quickly recognized by the public as being imitations of readily available American sitcoms and variety shows.

Global Television Network



CPB Appropriations Bill Promises Extensive Changes for Public TV

Communications Subcommittee is not enthusiastic

By SARAH ORDOVER

The House Subcommittee on Communications is currently deliberating H.R. 9620, The Corporation for Public Broadcasting Appropriations bill. The bill was sent to Congress by Carter last year and is a blueprint proposing new directions for funding, programming and employment.

H.R. 9620:

- authorizes \$1 billion in federal funds for public broadcasting over a five year period beginning in 1980;
- establishes a National Programming Fund;
- provides money for the planning, construction and demonstration of telecommunications facilities;
- opens funding up to a whole range of new communications technologies;
- encourages the use of non-broadcast facilities;
- alters the composition of the CPB Board of Directors;
- and mandates station public accountability.

Public broadcasting has reached a crucial turning point. In 1967 the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television published "Public Television: A Program for Action." This study became the foundation for the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. The report called for the creation of a Corporation for Public Television in order to "extend and improve" public television services. The Commission envisioned public television as "capable of becoming the clearest expression of American diversity, and of excellence within diversity." This diversity was to be founded in a "bedrock of localism" and funded by an excise tax from the sale of television sets.

In the ten years since the original Carnegie Commission report, the system has grown considerably. And so have the complaints. A second Carnegie Commission has convened to try to come up with some new answers by 1979.

The new Commission has decided to "go back to ground zero" in an effort to determine public broadcastings malaise. If precedent is to be followed, the new report will go from the Commission to Congress to be translated into legislation.

All public broadcasting legislation amends the Communications Act of 1934. That Act, which predates television, has remained virtually untouched since its original passage. The House Subcommittee on Communications has undertaken to rewrite the Act and a total overhaul of communications policy is expected. The rewrite will encompass changes in everything from local telephone service to satellite communications.

The rewrite comes despite attempts by commercial broadcasters to quench the legislation. The broadcasters feel change is "not in their best interests," and have actively lobbied against congressional actions.

The Communications Subcommittee hopes to pass structural changes in the public broadcasting system, with the rewrite including a spectrum-use fee on commercial broadcasters to support public broadcasting.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting Appropriations bill is the first in this upcoming series of legislative reforms to the public broadcasting system. While the bill does not fundamentally change public broadcasting, it does set the tone for future reform measures. House actions on the bill will be an important barometer of Congressional feeling about public broadcasting services.

The bill is filled with laissez faire hopes that competition will create diversity ...

The Carter bill takes a cautious line. By providing money for construction and planning, non-broadcast facilities and independent production, the White House hopes to stimulate competition. The bill is filled with laissez-faire hopes that competition will create diversity.

This deference to the free market system dominates the thinking of Members of Congress as well. The Subcommittee's main concern is how to diversify program content without overstepping constitutional boundaries. During rewrite discussions held by the Subcommittee last month, the Members strongly seemed to agree that direct government interference should be a last resort.

H.R. 9620 has many inconsistencies. On the one hand, the Declaration of Purpose dedicates public broadcasting to increased services for minorities and emphasizes the need for extended services to all facets of the American public. But the bill does not address many of the important problems facing public broadcasting. Questions of access, local and minority programming are wholly overlooked. Meanwhile, national programming gets an extra boost from the National Programming Fund.

Extended service, as promised by the Carter bill, is to be accomplished through federal assistance in the planning and construction of public telecommunications facilities. "Telecommunications facilities" includes video storage, microwave relay equipment, mobile equipment, satellite, cable and optical fiber relay equipment, translators and a host of other new technologies. The facilities grants allow recipients to choose between constructing a system, or leasing-private services.

An options paper by Communications' Subcommittee staff notes that it is

Citytv

CHANNEL 79 CABLE 7



A new series of seven hour-long shows produced by Nielson-Ferns depicting scenes from Canadian history is an attempt to break away from the traditional fare. Imperial Oil is sponsoring the series to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 1980. Entitled *The Newcomers: Inhabiting a New Land*, the series is based upon diaries, journals, and recollections of immigrants. Historical accuracy is its goal.

The first in the series, *The Prologue*, deals with the life as it was in a Tsimshian Indian village before the arrival of white men. Filmed in the Canadian Rockies near Hazelton, B.C., the program features members of the local Gitskan Indian tribe. Indian symbolism is skillfully woven into the plot and provides much of the dramatic continuity.

The second of the series is based upon

the life of Mary Thompson Norris, an Irish immigrant to southern Ontario in 1847. The programs are thoughtfully paced and don't rely on false dramatic contrivances.

The Newcomers, and other Canadian programs indicate the direction Canadian TV is taking. Most agree innovative programming must be undertaken by the publicly-funded Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The CBC acknowledges this responsibility, and is beginning to challenge outdated programming assumptions. It may turn the tables and begin the wholesale invasion of American airwaves with its own distinctive productions.

Alan Balkema is a freelance writer living in Toronto.

50% Cable Saturation

At present there are over 300 cable television companies licensed by the CRTC in Canada. Cable television has gained wide popular acceptance, with approximately 53 percent of Canadian households wired to a cable system. A contributing factor to cable systems' success is their ability to provide clear reception of American channels to households previously excluded from receiving them.

The CRTC issues two types of cable licenses. Class A licenses are for systems with over 3,000 subscribers. Class B serves less than 3,000. Canadian stations have first priority on the cable channels, with American stations the lowest. This CRTC regulation is designed to keep cable companies from filling their cables with American channels.

Cable companies are required to

maintain at least one community access channel, but there is no minimum or maximum number of channels. Programming on these channels is mostly community groups or individuals expressing opinions. But in a more competitive cable market in metropolitan areas, innovative programming is produced.

Scarboro Cable TV, serving a suburb of Toronto, maintains a separate community channel devoted to children's programming. On air from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday, it features simulcasting of programs from OECA and the CBC, and rounds out the schedule with productions of its own. They present a half-hour news program produced, directed and scripted by children. They also have produced a series of 26 half-hour programs giving instruction in English literature.

becoming more expensive to provide local broadcast outlets in areas not adequately served. Satellites and cable are the two technologies they consider most important. Through satellite, a public broadband system could be instituted to provide multiple outlets geared to specialized programming. The options paper cites a Japanese system which includes a facsimile newspaper, information retrieval and a two-way interactive system for public meetings.

The bill allows the CPB to finance up to 75 percent of the costs for planning and construction of new telecommunications facilities. Minority and other community groups who could not afford to pay the high initial development costs will now have an alternative source of funding.

A section of the appropriations bill also requires CPB to consult with public broadcast licensees, their membership organization, national educational organization and minority groups before establishing criteria for making construction grants. While these consultants are not official as was the defunct ACNO—Advisory Council of National Organizations—Congress hopes this consultation process will bring greater public participation into the decision-making process.

Minority access

The Carter bill's Declaration of Purpose dedicates itself to increased services for minorities but does not guide money to specialized programming. Instead a National Programming Fund is established. The National Programming Fund "shall make grants to national, regional and other systems of public broadcast stations, other public broadcasting entities and independent production entities for the production and acquisition" of programming intended for national distribution. Not less than 25 percent of each year's appropriation will be earmarked for national production.

The inclusion of independent production entities has disgruntled PBS management. Vice-Chairman Hartford Gunn said the new bill "invites any non-profit organization with an educational mission to apply for public telecom-

munications grants." Some station managers feel that public broadcasting dollars are spread too thin already. By allowing independent producers access to the fund, the situation will only be worsened.

Independent producers have been virtually precluded from producing for broadcast. Most stations are reluctant to spend their precious dollars hiring outside entities and the stations fear a loss of prestige from independent competition. Those non-profit organizations Mr. Gunn referred to are the ones most likely to produce programs of a specialized nature. The White House probably had this in mind when it opened the fund up to outside sources.

Forty percent of the National Programming Fund will be distributed directly to the individual stations. This is a drop from the current fifty percent funded through the Community Service Grants. The stations will continue to have virtually free rein in deciding how to use the federal money.

This direct allocation, however, gives no incentives to encourage local programming. Local programming brings neither prestige nor profit. Local programs are considered too small to attract commercial underwriters.

Without more stringent guidelines on how this money should be used, it will inevitably be absorbed into other areas besides specialized programming. The increase in funds is not significant enough to alleviate the other financial burdens of a station and programming will be sacrificed as the money is engaged elsewhere.

In the past few years, public stations and PBS have actively sought commercial funds. Used for development and underwriting costs in return for on-the-air acknowledgements these funds dictate programming policy.

In 1976, 24 percent of PBS national programming money came from commercial underwriters. Bill Moyers was succinct when he said, "anybody who says you can get money...with no strings attached must have been reading a 1950 high school civics book."

The first Carnegie Commission recognized that "commercial television is

obliged...to search for the uniformities within the general public and to apply its skills to the uniformities it has found." The same now applies to public broadcasting and nothing in the Carter bill recognizes this dilemma.

Open board meetings

In order to be eligible for funding the bill requires stations to open their board meetings to the public and maintain public copies of annual financial reports. Though this provision improves public access to information, a large group of media activists are fighting to make these reforms stronger. Larry Hall, who successfully fought for public accountability at KQED in San Francisco, stated this concern, contending "all records should be opened within the guidelines of the Federal Freedom of Information Act."

PBS and the Station Program Cooperative are currently excluded from this provision. Since only 11 percent of programs aired are locally originated, these two systems take on primary importance for citizens concerned with public input on productions.

Communications subcommittee staff recommends requiring "all board meetings...of the national organizations as well as of the stations—be open to the public." CPB has already opened its meetings.

H.R. 9620 reiterates the 1967 Public Broadcasting Act in calling for CPB "Directors, who are eminent in such fields as education, cultural and civic affairs, or the arts, including radio and television; they are to be selected so as to provide as nearly as practicable a broad representation..." The new bill provides for the appointment of two representatives from PBS and two from NPR chosen by those respective organizations. CPB's Board of Directors has been consistently populated by corporate officials and persons with little television or public interest experience.

The bill also limits CPB's programming role to serving as a conduit for federal funds. This provision was included to resolve the problem of overlapping programming responsibilities at PBS and CPB. Under H.R. 9620 PBS and CPB both retain programming staffs,

public information offices, etc. CPB is to make all adjustments necessary in redefining its role.

H.R. 9620 only begins to reform public broadcasting. But this start may be the finish. The Carter bill leaves many questions unanswered, anticipating the Communications Act rewrite. If the rewrite is not accomplished soon, however, the provisions of the CPB Appropriations bill could prevail for a long time.

March 8 the hearing room of the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee was packed. It was the second day of discussions on the rewrite of the Communications Act by the House Subcommittee on Communications. Local distribution of communications service and public broadcasting were the topics. The discussion was supposed to focus on the place of publically-funded systems in local distribution. Instead, it quickly disintegrated into a debate on procedures surrounding hearings on the CPB appropriation bill.

The controversy was spurred when Subcommittee Chairman Van Deerlin (D-Ca) suggested a day or two of hearings would be set in mid-April to discuss the appropriation and that more comprehensive hearings would be held after the Carnegie Commission issued its report. Some subcommittee members indicated they expected public broadcasting to get a more thorough airing. One Congressman remarked that there was a "serious problem of communication" within the subcommittee, since the consensus seemed to favor in-depth deliberations on public broadcasting. Members take the Carter bill seriously and feel it needs thorough study.

Carter may well be jumping the gun by tacking on public broadcasting provisions to the appropriations bill when both the Carnegie Commission and the Subcommittee are in the process of examining public TV. It is hard to determine what the Subcommittee will do with the bill. It can either cut everything but the funds, or rewrite it to their satisfaction.

Sarah Ordovery is director of the Public Media News Service, a Washington based communications research service.

How to fund public TV

THE CPB appropriation bill would provide \$1 billion dollars over the period 1980-1985. It is a five year authorization that permits Congress to appropriate up to \$180 million the first year and \$200 million for each of the next four years. The Carter bill extends the authorization from the previous three year period to five. This funding mechanism, referred to as authorization/appropriations, has come under fire by Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin (D-Ca) who feels that yearly appropriations do not insulate public broadcasting from political influence. The Congressman hopes to implement a trust fund to be included in the Communications Act rewrite. But, the fund could not go into effect until 1985 when the Appropriations bill would expire. Van Deerlin feels that the current bill should contain only a 3

year authorization so that the new system of funding could be instituted with expediency. But the Carter administration stands firm behind the five year authorization and a serious battle is predicted.

Methods of funding public television are a continual source of debate. The House Subcommittee on Communications *Staff Options Paper* outlines several possibilities:

1. Authorization/Appropriations—

This is the traditional method for utilizing general revenues. Congress authorizes a chunk of money for a prescribed period of time and then makes yearly appropriations from the authorized amount. Congress has the option to appropriate less than is allocated. This system insures Congressional scrutiny of public broadcasting but increases the likelihood of political interference. The Carter bill uses this

method but calls for a multiple-year authorization.

2. Long-range Funding—

This concept is much like authorization/appropriations except that the funds would be both authorized and appropriated on a multi-year basis. The House subcommittee endorsed this approach in 1975 but ran into objections from the House Appropriations Committee. The Appropriations Committee felt that annual review is one of "the most important responsibilities of Congress." Because of the Appropriations Committee's position this mechanism does not seem viable.

3. Trust Fund—

The Congressional rewrite of the Communications Act will probably include such a fund. A trust fund assumes the availability of money on an automatic basis. Congress would not lose all control from

establishment of a trust because it could mandate certain conditions for use of the fund.

The major question lies in how funds are to be generated. Options include

a. an excise tax on television sets imposed on the manufacturer as recommended by the first Carnegie Commission.

b. a fee imposed on commercial broadcasters for their use of the spectrum.

c. a portion of funds from long-term leases or outright auctioning. The license fee is the one under consideration by the House Subcommittee and is expected to be included in the Communications Act rewrite. The options paper mentions several other mechanisms including pay service, and tax check-off. The controversy really boils down to continued authorizations or a trust fund.

ART

WNET's TV Lab: Who Gets Funded, How, and Why

An interview with David Loxton
and Carol Brandenburg

By MITCHELL SKLAR

David Loxton: The criteria is actually very different for each of the various Artist-in-Residence programs that we support. Hopefully it is as much a reflection on the range of what we would like to see happen at the lab, in the kind of people and work we can support here, as well as meeting the specific conditions that come with each of the grants that we get. The New York State Council Artist-in-Residence program obviously is a very general grant.

Last year, it was eighty thousand dollars to support between six and twelve artists, undertaking projects of their own design at the lab. Now obviously, they're not very large projects. The maximum you could give an individual artist was fifteen thousand dollars. There was no requirement to make the work a documentary, a video art piece, or a performance work of one form or another. It can be any or all of those. What we try and do each year is try and get a variety of different types of work. For us, quite frankly, it's also a marvelous opportunity to get to know a video person or a video artist with his initial project and to see how they adjust to working at the lab. Hopefully we get on well together and we can raise more funds from other sources so we can continue working with the artist here. The artist-in-residence program at the lab is limited to New York state residents because it comes from New York state funds. We try to get as much of a cross section of people as we can dividing the grants between people who come from New York City, and people who come from upstate. We try not to have repeaters in the sense of one person being supported year after year. I feel the program has been very successful. It's really allowed us to get to know other video people and to support a wide range of different projects and types of tapes.

One year for instance we supported Peter Campus. We supported Bill Wegman. We supported Hermine Freed to do a work entitled "Art Herstory". This year, Joan Jonas has worked with us. Bill and Estee Malpette did a video documentary. Stefan Moore is working with us this year. Most of the people from Lanesville TV at one time or another have worked with us. A couple of the documentary projects produced here did quite well. The *Police Tapes* for instance, was in fact initiated under a grant from a New York State council of

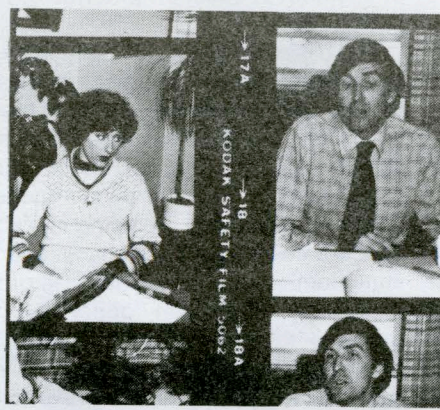
the arts residency. We were then able to obtain additional funds to complete it and prepare it for broadcast. Without the initial seed money, the project with Alan and Susan Raymond wouldn't have been started.

Funding the *Police Tapes*

All the Artists-in-Residence are selected through having an open program proposal process, where we try to advertise it as broadly as we can. Wherever possible we like to be able to meet with the people beforehand and talk to them about their project to get a sense of the idea, as well as helping them to budget a project for the Lab. We talk down the idea with them and say whether or not we feel it would be possible to do that type of project with the funds available at the Lab, or whether, with the kind of funds available it can't be done. We have a small advisory panel which meets with us each week to evaluate and review all the proposals which we receive. We received about 120 different proposals altogether last year. This panel helps us to make the final selection of the projects which we will be able to support.

I had worked with Alan and Susan many years ago while I was working with NET on several other projects. I had been anxious to work with them again and to see if maybe we could support them with a grant. I met with them and asked if they would be interested in doing a documentary project using video, rather than film. We talked about several projects, several possible documentaries that they might do. I said that I had several grants for the artist-in-residency program and I told them if their project proposal worked out well, hopefully their's might be one of the projects that we might be able to select. It turned out that it was. So that's how that started.

Right now, if it wasn't for the station with its own discretionary funding support of the Lab, we might not exist this year at all. Up until this time we've been supported by the Rockefeller Foundation under a grant called *the core support fund*. The grant supports this office, my salary, Carol's salary, the office staff salary, secretaries, supplies, as well as the running of Studio 46—Well that money ran out last year. It takes between 150 and 200 thousand dollars to keep this whole operation just running and the station is showing its support of the TV Lab by picking up that entire cost this year. That's a big commitment to the TV Lab.



I cannot fault or complain about anybody at the station in their support of the lab, particularly in the programming area. George Haydon is the person I directly report to on projects and programs. And he's very supportive. He was primarily responsible for getting the additional funds released from the station for the completion of the "Police Tapes". He's also instrumental in obtaining money for the completion of a project if it runs over budget. He can obtain money from the station's discretionary funds. John Alpert's Viet Nam show, for instance, was going to cost \$80,000 dollars and we only had \$20,000 towards it. He and I both had to swallow hard. The offer to go to Viet Nam wasn't going to stand for ever. We couldn't say we don't have the money now, we'll have to call you back in a couple of months when we raise it. Well, George had the station finance it from a new pack of money, figuring that we'd be able to raise the money later on. Public Television's so crazy that you never know when you'll be getting more money anyways. It was a gamble that I took and he supported me in it.

Carol Brandenburg: The money was raised through the PBS special events fund. The special events fund is money that's already been set aside for special events. It was just a question of the stations deciding whether or not they wanted to allocate the money to this particular project. They voted two to one for it, so we got an additional 72,000 dollars for this project, which was quite fortunate.

We're applying for money to continue the artist-in-residence program but this year I hope we will have fewer artists and more money per artists. Maybe we'll have five artists instead of ten, but the projects may be able to give twice as much money, which is nice. The Council's been extremely supportive of the Lab of course, but when the grants are at the level of 8 to 10 thousand dollars, it's hard to get a whole work finished with that much money. So we'll apply for more money for the artist-in-residence program.

Also we'll apply for money to bring back the VTR series in some format, this time presenting independently produced films as well as video tapes, our own Artist-in-Residence works, and some original productions that we may do. We may do some kinds of theme shows similar to the ones we did before on the other VTR series. We also have

applied, on behalf of several individual artists, to work here as one aspect of their media production program.

Current projects

Carol Brandenburg: We have six new people who just finished projects at the end of the summer for the state arts council program. Estee and Bill Marpette, for example, who we've never worked with before, applied last year to be artists-in-residence, showed us samples of their work, which was very nice, they had a good proposal, so we gave them money from the arts council program. They also had some money of their own from the NEA which they applied toward it. They went to Pamplona and taped the festival there. We then were able to apply some of our Rockefeller Foundation money, some of the same money that went to pay for Viet Nam, toward it. Those two programs, Viet Nam and "Running With The Bulls," are going to be played in a series called Visa, which is being supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. It's an eight week series that has six programs being handled by the International Television Workshop, at Russell Connors' Cable Arts Foundation. These are all programs produced by artists about other countries and they're actually visual essays about another culture. Besides Viet Nam and Pamplona, there's Don Forestas' Paris, Russell himself did a program about Sienna, Italy, which Bill Viola shot. There's a super 8 film on India by Ingrid and Bob Wiegand. There's a show about China and one about Moscow, both of which are Nam June's productions.

CABLE

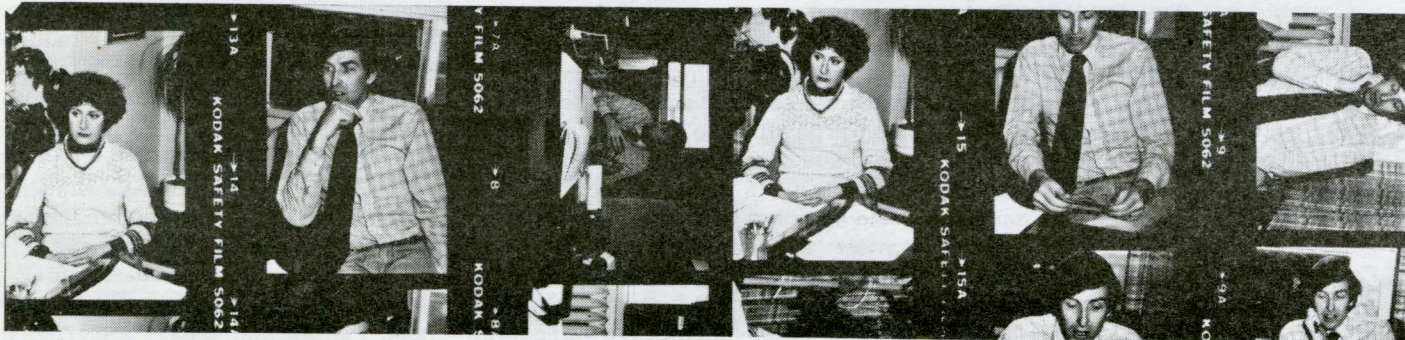
Public Access: Ed Kuhlman at Citizens

CCC began in the late 60's and it was in large part a response to the need for having someone to represent citizens in the FCC proceedings. There wasn't anyone there, and if citizens wandered in they usually represented themselves. If they didn't, they had lawyers who lived in Chicago or Los Angeles who knew nothing about how the government worked or how to make their views known to the Commission. They were often very feeble in the ways they were heard at the Commission.

I think Citizens if anything when it began in 1969, developed a voice for citizens at the Commission. At the beginning it was sort of a wobbly voice because the people who founded Citizens were not experienced communications people either. But from that grew a citizens movement. I don't think the CCC can take all the credit but it certainly could take credit for articulating the views of Citizens before the Commission. I think that's important.

Is the Citizens Communication Center Involved in any cable public access cases?

Citizens has been involved in a case which was decided in the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis, involving the question of whether or not the Commission could require a cable system to provide access channels. The Court held that the FCC did not have the authority to require cable systems to provide access. Citizens is an intervener in that case and now intends to represent a



cable/coalition group from Pennsylvania in that case. We intend to ask the Supreme Court to review that decision. We'll take the position that access is something that should be federally required.

Let me go back and explain how the Midwest Video Case ended up in the 8th Circuit and what it means. Back in the mid-sixties the Commission's only real interest in cable appeared to be the protection of over-the-air television—to insure that cable didn't destroy it by moving television signals around. The FCC had just finished a round of licensing that established over-the-air television in this country. It became evident, after one hearing with the San Diego market, that cable was not in fact going to hurt over-the-air television. The Commission then decided there ought to be some means of extracting from the multiple channels that cable had, some greater number of outlets where people could speak.

What were the dynamics of that decision?

It was a combination of a lot of different things. I think you can safely say that it didn't come from the people who were regulating cable. They really felt that they were there to establish what was a fledgling industry and they believed that any encroachment on it, any overlay which would cost money in any sense was something that shouldn't be done and that cable should be allowed to grow helter-skelter. The general counsel, who at that time was Henry Geller [currently assistant secretary of commerce for communications], felt differently. Additionally, the Justice Department was very concerned that cable might not be able to compete adequately with television. Access channels offer an opportunity for greater competition in this country: having more people provide similar kinds of services will give the public a better product.

It was because Henry Geller was an extraordinarily strong general counsel and because the Commission was sort of taken up with the idea of technological development—improving on something they felt they didn't know how to improve on in any other way—that access channels came to pass. There was great opposition then, and there is still opposition. I don't know if the Cable Bureau opposes this but quite recently the issue came up in regard to determining again whether or not television is injured by the development of cable. The Broadcast Bureau immediately raised its voice against doing anything to permit additional competition and moving of television signals around.

There were some cable operators who grew up in this scheme of laissez-faire regulation and one of those was Midwest Video. They really personified a certain kind of cable operator who felt that any kind of government intervention in a cable system was illegal. They fought the Commission over which television signals they could carry, and then they fought over origination. They are now interested in fighting over the whole issue of whether any kinds of special channels at all need to be provided. If they could, they would go right back to the beginning and argue that the Commission shouldn't be allowed to regulate cable at all.

To the Court, through their briefs, they've articulated a notion that cable should not be regulated. I'll never forget when I went to the argument of Midwest Video, back in 1971. They argued to the Court that it wasn't the American way to [require them] to originate or provide access channels. They see this as a

philosophical question in terms of their operation.

The basis for access articulated by the Supreme Court and by the Commission is this: cable systems use over-the-air spectrum when they use television signals, or microwave. Many, many cable systems have microwave licenses, and now even more are using satellites. This is a use of spectrum space for interstate communications. Their use of that essentially offers an opportunity to increase their number of outlets. The Commission believes it could say to cable systems "You're disruptive to our allocation scheme for television and if you're going to disrupt it it's going to cost you."

That cost should be paid for through the provision of access channels because there is no more spectrum space to hand out. We cannot put anymore television signals into New York City under the way things are currently allocated. There are big fights going on in New Jersey over whether NJ ought to have its own over-the-air television. The FCC views cable as filling the vacuum. That's just exactly how simple the legal theory is.

Now it has a technical name—the FCC regulates cable because it is "ancillary" to television. There is a question about how far you can stretch that theory before it breaks down, but the theory has been stretched far enough to require cable operators to originate live programming to develop programming, buy programming, and buy programming equipment. Requiring access channels is a lesser kind of requirement. It doesn't even mandate the development of television studios like origination does.

Will the Supreme Court base its decision on First Amendment questions?

I would like to think so. It is time to articulate a First Amendment question. If you went back to the mid-twenties you would discover that radio was regulated by the Secretary of Commerce. At that stage they were looking about for schemes to determine who would get to speak over the radio airwaves. In the early days, and some places today, radio frequencies are shared. Somebody would operate it during the day, and somebody would operate it during the night.

The First Amendment says that the government shall pass no law which shall abridge the right of people to speak. But the Communications Act does just that. By allocating frequencies, only some people get to speak, not everyone can speak. The government acts because we've allowed the government to encroach on a power that was reserved for the people: the right to speak, express viewpoints. Every time the government encroaches on that right, as it does through the allocation scheme, it chooses who will speak and who won't speak. Cable offers government the opportunity to opt for diversity, to opt for maximizing the number of outlets. The government must step in and insure that more than just the system owner gets to speak. That's a First Amendment value and ordinarily we might say that the government shouldn't have to step in. After all, we don't ask the government to insure that a city has five newspapers. But the government does decide who is going to operate radio and television stations in town. Therefore it already is encroaching.

Transcribed from a tape in progress by Maurice Jacobsen/Independent Video Group.

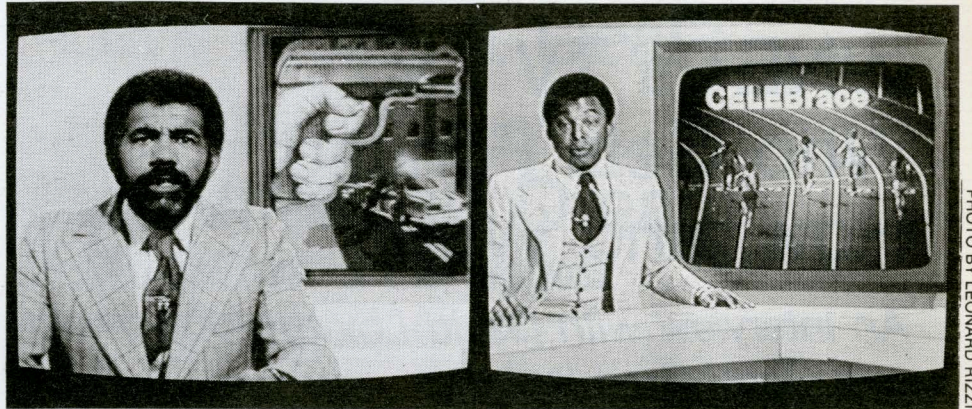


PHOTO BY LEONARD RIZZI

Acting Techniques in the Nightly News

Creating an ethos

By JAMES HINDMAN and ELIZABETH DALEY

Because they deal with "facts" news and information programs appear to be free of style and genre considerations. However, such programs have a very deliberate style that is at the heart of how they work. News and information programming—from the Talk-Show to the panel interview to the evening newscast—is completely styled and controlled in all phases of production. Performers in this kind of programming are actors giving a performance. Genre and style factors are crucial to the effectiveness of the performance they give.

News and information shows share one common style—they are presentational, they acknowledge that the viewing audience is actually there. The presence of the audience focuses the performance and gives it a definable quality; intimacy that includes the viewer in an immediate, serious conversation discussion. All available video resources are used to shape the news/info style: full-front blocking, close-in camera work, teleprompters, specialized set design and lighting. The actor is the focus of all these elements, the actor and the person that all that news is shared with, the viewer.

Performance on news/info programming can be understood like any other specialized acting style. The performer's primary objective is to create a definable character on camera. This performance objective does not have to do with the news or any scripted material. Instead, the objective has to do with the performer himself.

Cronkite sells Cronkite

The traditional term for the kind of "moral character" peddled by the newscaster or announcer is *ethos*. The effectiveness of this sales job is extremely important. The performer must convince us that his or her *ethos* is one of honor, virtue, probity, that he or she cares about our well-being.

For the viewer, Walter Cronkite is the occasion, not the trivial happenings in the news. Considering how nearly Olympian Cronkite's *ethos* is, his performance objective is simply to remind us that his very speaking to us is important. What he actually says, the clips and reports he shows to the viewers, become important by association. Cronkite sells Cronkite.

An actor is a performer who creates a variety of characters, all somewhat different from the self. Personality performers like those on the news, give the impression that they are the same on

and off camera, that they are not creating characters but are presenting the true self. While the difference between a "character" and "personality" is quite clear at the extreme ends of the spectrum—Johnny Carson compared to Maude—it is far less clear with Lucille Ball or Roger Mudd, for example. All well-know "personalities" have established a particular relationship to the audience. Walter Cronkite seems like a parental advisor, Johnny Carson the mischievous friend, Lucy, the scatter-brain next door. Their appeal comes from the fact that we can trust these performers to behave according to pattern.

We may feel we know TV news personalities completely. However, we know only the parts of them they have chosen to reveal. We all reveal different aspects of ourselves at different times. We each have our public self, our office self, our parental self, etc. The skilled performer can control which self is revealed, when, and how much. He or she can create a consistent recognizable image which, however limited, has the desired effect. The skills they use in this process are not difficult to acquire.

Personality performers carefully mesh the physical characteristics they reveal and the gestures they use with the role they fulfill. Cronkite's physical stance toward the audience is direct and frontal, hands solidly on the desk, weight firmly rooted in the chair. He leads with his eyes. His body seems as solid as his information. His movements are controlled and deliberate.

In contrast, younger local anchor people adopt a more informal stance, angling toward the camera with a calm relaxation that encourages humor and the off-beat. They often lean into the frame with head and shoulders, suggesting a conversational intimacy with the viewer. Their personality image is brotherly or sisterly rather than parental; their *ethos* is less earnest and judicious than Cronkite, more confidentially involved with the viewer.

Certain performance techniques are shared by most news performers. Most techniques are based in the requirements of the genre itself which favors a medium shot, one-half of a body, held for the length of 2 or 3 sentences. This is a much longer basic time unit than other TV program genres.

The rhythm of news programming tends to be regular and predictable. It seems to be slow, even though an anchor talks as fast as a variety show host. Pauses and breaks are used to



Making Video Dance: Ballanchine, Cunningham and Twyla Tharp

Reviewing dance on public television

By ELLEN GRAY DENKER

What is good television dance? What are the goals behind recording dance for television? As more and more dance programs are shown on television, it becomes obvious that there are as many different answers to these questions as there are choreographers.

Compromises have to be made in the collaboration of two mediums like dance and video. But frequently these compromises are made without a clear image of the result. Producers of dance for television must decide whether they are making a document of a theater piece—in which the event is recorded as faithfully as possible—or a videodance, in which the result is a fusion of video techniques and choreographic ideas bearing no resemblance to a live

Producers must decide whether they are making a document of a theatre piece or a videodance . . . Too often, dance for television disappointingly falls in the grey area between these two ideals . . .

performance. Too often, dance for television disappointingly falls in the grey area between these two ideals.

Early television dance programs were often frustrating viewing experiences. Bad camera work cut off arms and legs of dancers. Directors experimented with odd angles. Other technical tricks disconcerted the confirmed theater-goer. People in the dance world became very concerned about the image presented by dance on television, and began to demand that artistic control be given to producers with a background in dance performance as well as video production. Television has created a vast new audience for dance in America, and slowly the people involved in dance programming have become aware that their programs must be of high caliber in order to develop that audience.

Recently, the *Dance in America* series on PBS has produced a number of well-financed, carefully constructed dance documentaries. The choreographers have had enough time to produce their programs and it is obvious that serious consideration has been given to the work. It's amazing how different the programs can be.

Two shows in this series are good examples of these differences. *Choreography By Balanchine, Part 1* is an excellent example of a dance documentary. It is obvious that rules were laid down early in the taping—that the goal was to show these dances in as true a replica of a theater event as possible.

Appropriately, the pieces chosen from the repertory to tape has small casts,

making it possible to shoot the dances in close up. Whenever a larger number of dancers was onstage, the director used a high angle shot, increasing the proportion of the stage floor in the frame. This served to spread the dancers vertically in the frame rather than concentrating them at the bottom. The camera movements were smooth and obviously well rehearsed with the dance. At no time was there a dancer on-stage who was not in the frame. Particularly in *The Four Temperaments*, one could see the abstract lines of the piece clearly and with no sense that anything was lost through electronic transmission.

The viewer is able to see the dancers more closely than he ever could in a theater. The solo sections were shot close, as though from an orchestra seat, where they are best seen in a theater. The group sections, with large spacial structure, were shot from a high angle as though from the balcony, where they are best seen.

Every choreographer knows that different sections of his dances are best seen from certain locations in a theater. In documentary television dance, the best location can be chosen for each shot, and the viewer is able to see each section from the best possible seat. Balanchine presented his pieces as they had been choreographed, changed as little as possible by the taping process.

In *Event for Television*, Merce Cunningham created a new piece for television made up of segments of past theater pieces including *Scramble*, *Rain Forest*, *Sounddance*, *Solo*, *Antic Meet*, and *Septet*. Rather than documenting these pieces separately, Cunningham picked sections of each dance and cleverly created transitions so the sections flowed from one to the other.

Watching *Event*, one immediately loses the sense that one is participating in a theater event. The director decided to chose shots subjectively, as though guessing what one person might find interesting to watch on a busy stage at

that moment. Unfortunately, this results in a frustrating experience, such as knowing that a dancer is dancing onstage, but only catching occasional glimpses of him. Even if one assumes that at every dance performance each member of the audience will see something different, the director must allow the television viewer to make this choice, as Cunningham did not.

Another dance program, Twyla Tharp's *Making Television Dance*, was not made in the *Dance in America* series, but by the TV Lab at WNET in New York. In this tape, Tharp choreographed some videodances. In other words, in collaboration with her video director, she made a tape of movement that could not be performed onstage.

One section of the tape showed movement being performed at the same time as it was being played backwards on the other side of the frame. In another study, Tharp chose several moments in one dance that seemed to be the high points of each phrase and stopped the action. The frozen moment slowly faded away as the dancer continued moving, but the impression of the brilliant moment was branded into the viewer's eye. This is the kind of video intensification of a choreographic idea that very few choreographers have fully recognized. Twyla Tharp used video technology to create "impossible" dances: dances that couldn't be done onstage.

There are many areas that have yet to be explored in videodance. Video artists and dancers must realize that video is a medium in which every frame must be designed. They must explore the design possibilities of negative and positive space. Every movement of a dancer in close-up is magnified by the camera. Even the changing space between an arm and the body can be choreographed. And each movement of the camera *must be* choreographed to intensify the rhythm or line of the dance. Responsibility for the change in dynamics usually demanded of the dancer can be shared with the camera and the edit.

Videodance is an art form very different from documenting dance, and demands a very different choreographic process. What the medium needs is choreographers and video artists who are willing to shed their old conventions and discover new ways of seeing movement.

Ellen Gray Denker is a choreographer and dancer in Washington D.C.

James Hindman and Betsy Daley teach TV acting, and have co-authored, with Larry Kirkman, a forthcoming book, *TV Acting*.

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Making Television Dance, a videotape by choreographer Twyla Tharp.