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BURRELLE'S

# Study shows TV ministry doesn't empty the pews

6240

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The growth of TV evangelism has not caused many people to stop attending or donating money to their local churches, according to researchers who conducted a two-year study of religion and TV.

Television ministries have attracted millions of viewers, but those audiences are usually made up of people with long-standing allegiance to organized religion, according to researchers from the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J.

The study was commissioned by a group of more than 30 religious organizations, including the United Presbyterian Church, the U.S. Catholic Conference and television ministries such as PTL Network and Jerry Falwell's Old Time Gospel Hour.

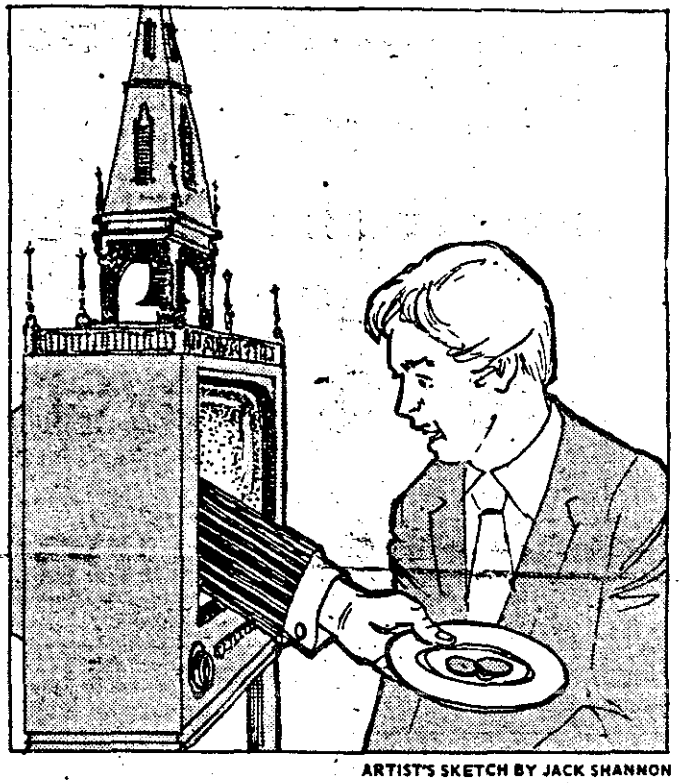
"Television ministries have been suspected of causing or at least contributing to the erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions and general participation," said George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School. "Our study found no support for that charge."

Gerbner, a member of the research team, said communication research over the years indicates that prime time television drama, and religious programming, has become the "new religion" in the United States.

"Watching television has become a ritual that meets certain needs that used to be satisfied by religion," he said in a statement this week.

The surveyers found that about 13.3 million people regularly watch religious programs, or about 6.2 percent of all people with television sets in their homes.

The programs "appeal to an older, traditional audience and watching these programs appears to be a confirmation of their religious beliefs, not a substitute for them," the researchers said.



ARTIST'S SKETCH BY JACK SHANNON

"Their interest in the electronic church is complementary to other forms of religious practice, like church worship."

Followers of TV evangelism typically are older, have less education and income, are more conservative politically and are more fundamentalist in their religious beliefs than the average person, the study found.

They also are more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest than people who don't watch religious programs, the researchers said.

People who watch religious programs frequently express greater confidence in their local church leaders than "light viewers" and "non-viewers," they said.

About one of every four religious programs mentions local churches, and one in 10 urges viewers to attend church, the study found.

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REGISTER
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BURRELLE'S

# TV preachers not vying with local churches, study says

Chicago Tribune 6270

The flickering blue light of the television screen ppears to be more a baby-sitter for born-again be-evers than an effective electronic tool for Christian vangelism, according to a two-year study of reli-ious broadcasting released this week.

The landmark survey, conducted by the University f Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communica-ons and the Gallup Organization, also found that the iewing audience for religion-oriented programs is maller than most experts expected — and signifi-antly less than claimed by TV evangelists.

But the researchers also contended that religious roadcasts do not compete with local church congre-ations for money or members, and may be "com-lementary and mutually reinforcing activities ather than substitutes for one another."

Those were among the major findings of the 175,000 study, underwritten by a coalition of U.S. hristian groups, including the National Council of hurches and the National Religious Broadcasters.

The "Religion and Television" survey represented ne of the first wide-ranging and objective examina-ons of the growing electronic church industry, hich spends more than $1 billion a year on pur-

ased air time alone.

Predictably, partisans of religious programming ok refuge in the study's assertion that electronic inistries do not, as frequently alleged, siphon funds om the institutional church. And critics of televi-n evangelism pointed to the relatively anemic udience for such fare, as well as the survey's asser-on that few converts are made through exposure to V preachers.

Regular viewers of syndicated religious shows, the urvey said, number about 13.3 million, or 6.2 per-ent of the total number of people in U.S. households ith television. The figure differs markedly from revious Gallup research, which estimated that 18 ercent of all Americans watched religious pro-amming at least once a week and that more than 30 ercent claimed to have seen a religion-oriented how over the course of one month.

Whatever the true number, the profile of the audi-nce for Christian programming has remained re-arkably consistent in all scientific studies. Those iewers are older, less educated, more likely to be living in rural areas in the South or Midwest, decid-edly more conservative in their political postures and more fundamentalist in their religious beliefs than the average American.

And the message they receive from the video vic-rs, the new study suggested, is plainly one that erves more to rally believers than to recruit or onvert others." The finding, while hardly surpris-ng, nevertheless undermines the oft-stated claim by V evangelists, particularly when soliciting con-ributions, that their broadcast ministry is bringing housands of once-lost souls into the Lord's ledger.

Even so, the audience for religious television ap-pears to be stable and loyal, "drawn by content they annot find elsewhere on television," the study said.

Fully half of the regular viewers of electronic min-istry say they are dissatisfied with the "prevailing oral climate" in the United States. Fifty percent identify "missionary work" to be the chief goal of the church, while only 20 percent said that "working for social justice" should be a church priority.

Ben Armstrong, the executive director of the Na-tional Religious Broadcasters organization in Mor-ristown, N.J., said the new study "vindicated" his long-held belief that televised religion "has a good effect on the local church, that it does not take bucks and bodies away from the church."

But Armstrong said the survey underscored some deep weaknesses within the religious broadcasting

minorities. It has long been known that women, blacks and Hispanics are "overrepresented" among those who watch religious television programs, said Armstrong, but vastly underrepresented in roles on such shows.

White males are routinely depicted as authority figures on religious programs, and women, if they appear at all, are far more likely than their male counterparts to discuss their personal problems and physical ailments.

In a related matter, the May issue of U.S. Catholic magazine includes an essay by critic James Breig who contends that Catholics should boycott TV preachers.

"Catholics are watching too much Christian televi-sion too openly, and with too little critical analysis of what is being broadcast," charged Breig. "Thus, a new hybrid has been born — the fundamentalist Catholic, who knows a lot about the Rapture but nothing about the Real Presence.

"Catholic viewers, in search of something less of-fensive than 'Three's Company,' should not assume they have found it simply because they landed on a TV preacher's program," Breig concludes. "Offen-siveness comes in many guises, and one of them may

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BURRELLE'S

# Study finds TV evangelism not hurting local churches

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The growth of TV evangelism has not caused many people to stop attending or donating money to their local churches, according to researchers who conducted a two-year study of religion and TV.

Television ministries have attracted millions of viewers, but those audiences are usually made up of people with long-standing allegiance to organized religion, according to researchers from the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J.

The study was commissioned by a group of more than 30 religious organizations, including the United Presbyterian Church, the U.S. Catholic Conference and television ministries such as PTL Network and Jerry Falwell's Old Time Gospel Hour.

"Television ministries have been suspected of causing or at least contributing to the erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions and general participation," said George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School. "Our study found no support for that charge."

Gerbner, a member of the research team, said communication research over the years indicates that prime-time television drama, and religious programming, has become the "new religion" in the United States.

"Watching television has become a ritual that meets certain needs that used to be satisfied by religion," he said.

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BURRELLE'S

# Study refutes criticism of 'electronic church'

Associated Press

America's booming "electronic church," operating via television and often criticized as siphoning off membership, participation and funds from regular churches, has no such effects, a national study concludes.

It found that audiences of the evangelical broadcasters also attend and contribute to their local churches and see "no conflict between syndicated religious television programs and more traditional forms of worship."

Rather, the two are regarded as "complementary and mutually reinforcing activities rather than as substitutes for one another," said the report, released this week.

The two-year study, *Religion and Television*, was carried out by the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization for a broad cross-section of about 40 Christian organizations.

They range from the U.S. Catholic Conference, the interdenominational National Council of Churches and several mainline Protestant denominations to the Billy Graham Evangelist Association, the Christian Broadcasting Newtwork, the National Religious Broadcasters, and Jerry Falwell's *Old Time Gospel Hour*.

"Television ministries have been suspected of causing or at least contributing to erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions and general participation," said George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg school and member of the research team.

"Our study found no support for that charge."

Instead, the study said the real competitor seems to be commercial television itself — what Gerbner calls present-day society's "new religion."

The report said:

"General commercial television viewing (seven hours a day in the average television household and rising) may support or supplant some religious satisfactions and thus lessen the importance of religion for its heavy viewers."

Heavy viewers were found less likely than light viewers to read the Bible, indicating an influential rivalry between commercial television and biblical faith.

The rise of the electronic church, until now getting scant scientific analysis, seems to be an echo of "fundamentalist upheavals that have shaken large parts of the world," the report said.

It said that the broadcast evangelism audience, totaling about 13.3 million, tends to be more conservative, more fundamentalist and rural than non-viewers and more dissatisfied with "the prevailing moral climate."

"In fact, their dissatisfaction with the prevailing moral climate may be one of the most distinctive bonds between religious programs and their viewers," the report said.

# Audience for TV Religion Is Conservative

Heavy viewers of religious programs are more likely than nonviewers to call themselves conservatives, according to a new study by The Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania. They oppose a nuclear freeze, favor tougher laws against pornography and are dissatisfied with the "prevailing moral climate."

The study also found that television does not appear to cause a decline in church attendance or in contributions to local churches. Heavy viewers of religious programs are just as likely as nonviewers to participate in local church activities.

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

APR 21 1984

BUSSELLES

# Television vies with religion for 'viewers'

By APRIL WITT
Staff writer

The TV tough guy who would just as soon shoot you as say hello and the lying, cheating millionaire businessman of the prime-time soaps are battling the parish priest, the rabbi and the minister for the hearts and minds of millions.

And the bad guys are winning.

Prime-time television is the "new religion" in America, says Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

"Television has, in many ways, replaced the function of religion in modern society," Gerbner says.

Gerbner, and other researchers from the Annenberg school and the Gallup organization, recently completed a major two-year study of television and religion.

The study, released this week, was commissioned by a coalition of 30 religious organizations. Its findings support Gerbner's claim that commercial television is encroaching on the turf of religion, he says.

"We found that the more often people watch prime-time television, the less likely they are to say that religion is important in their lives," Gerbner says.

The study also showed that the more people watch prime-time television, the less likely they are to say that they have had a religious experience. People who watch TV a lot also are less likely to read the Bible, the study found.

"Watching television has become a ritual that meets certain needs that used to be satisfied by religion," Gerbner says.

"The new high priests of our society are network executives, particularly the program directors for the three networks," he says. "They design our religious curriculum, so to speak."

Day after day, people flip on their television sets, sit down and begin soaking in, usually uncritically, the messages of commercial television, Gerbner said.

Research indicates that people usually turn on their television to fill certain hours of the day, not to watch a particular program — much in the way some go to church because it is Sunday morning, Gerbner says.

And, just as society once took most of its cues on how to behave from religion, people are increasingly learning societal norms from television drama, Gerbner said.

"Religion is supposed to explain the world to people — to tell them the nature of the universe, the meaning of life and what is right conduct," Gerbner says.

Today, however, television "presents a total world of meaning whose relationship to society is like that of the church at an earlier time," Gerbner says.

Obviously, these institutions still have influence, Gerbner says, but that influence has been diminished by the popularity of television — which is second only to sleep as an occupation of Americans.

The problem with this, Gerbner says, is that the world view presented by television is at odds with the teachings of most major religions.

"The whole prime-time world is one of power and power plays," he says.

"And the strongest guy is always right," he says. "That is one of the important messages of TV."

Another message of prime-time television is that being greedy and self-centered is acceptable, he says.

"The underlying philosophy is instant gratification — try it; you'll like it," Gerbner says. "And if you like it, you don't have to ask anything else — what it does to anyone else, what its consequences are. If you like it, you are right. The consumer is king."

Prime-time soaps, such as "Dallas" and "Dynasty," typify this creed of consumerism, Gerbner says, but most other shows express similar values.

Gerbner and his associates at the Annenberg school think television's unbalanced view of the world affects frequent viewers' attitudes.

In a recent study of the relationship between television and politics, Gerbner found that people who watch TV heavily are less likely than the general population to favor social justice, minority rights and equal opportunities for women.

It is difficult to determine whether people who watch television are predisposed to these [illegible] or how acquire them through viewing, Gerbner said.

Still, questions about the effects of television on religious, social and political life are well worth pursuing, Gerbner said. Unfortunately, he says, Americans seem relatively unconcerned about the issue.

"The most important thing is to recognize the power of television and begin addressing it in democratic and political ways," he said. "We are about the only country in the world today that is not doing that."

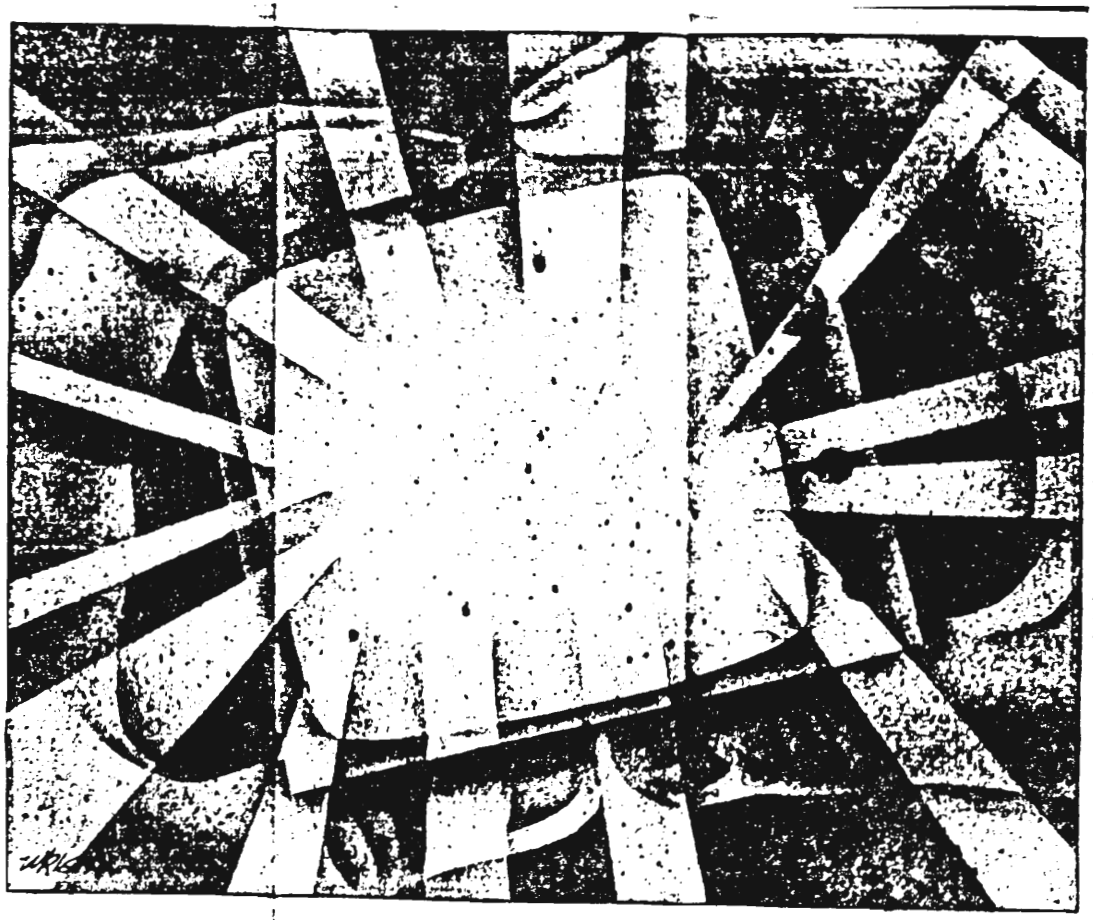
According to Gerbner, religious leaders in particular "have to find more creative ways to fulfill their mission, in light of television."

"Conservative or fundamental leaders already know what they have [illegible] with Gerbner, who also has studied television evangelists. "They are trying to get hold of large audiences by getting into prime time."

Less-conservative church leaders will have to decide how to distinguish themselves from both the fundamentalist with television ministries and from general, commercial television, he says.

"They will have to think seriously about what their message is," he says. "If they are going to compete, they are going to have to take on a counter-cultural role and differentiate themselves from commercial television and TV preachers."

"I think that is the process that every church today is undergoing — deciding how to position themselves [illegible] television world," Gerbner



Staff illustration by Ken Wright

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WASHINGTON, D. C.
D. 730,000 SUN. 952,540

APR 21 1984
BURRELLE'S

# TV Religion Doesn't Pull Worshipers From Regular Churches, Study Finds

By Marjorie Hyer
Washington Post Staff Writer

A new and detailed study of religious television and the people who watch it has demolished television ministries as a target of mainline churches' criticism for the decline in their attendance and contributions in recent years.

Not only do viewers of the TV ministries "find no conflict" between their loyalties to syndicated TV preachers and their local churches, but they see the two entities "as complementary and mutually reinforcing activities rather than as substitutes for one another."

This is one of the key findings in the report on "Religion and Television," released this week by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications and the Gallup Organization.

"We've been fighting for years about this question," said Ben Armstong, director of the National Association of Religious Broadcasters, who called the new study "the greatest thing since the tomato came to Italy."

He predicted that the study's conclusions on this point would trigger an outpouring of support for more religion on television. "Many of the churches that have been holding back because they see the electronic church as detrimental" will now revise their views and work to get religion "onto the prime-time viewing hours," he said at a New York news conference on the study.

Less encouraging to the TV evangelists who raise and spend millions of dollars annually to save souls, is the finding that they are, almost without exception, preaching to the converted.

"The profile of the audience for religious programs tends to be fairly coherent and well-defined," the research report said. "It is what religious audiences have always been: somewhat older, lower in education and income, more conservative, more 'fundamentalist,' and more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest than those who do not watch religious programs."

The researchers characterized those who do not watch religious TV as "the majority of the younger and more 'upscale' television viewers. . .more likely to be disinterested than hostile"—the movers and shakers, in other words, that most evangelists would love to win to the fold.

The fact that three out of four of these non-viewers report they get up and switch channels rather than watch a religious program raises a crucial question: For all the "reinforcement" that TV preachers offer the faithful, do they at the same time reinforce a rejection of the faith by a crucial segment of society?

## AFFILIATIONS OF VIEWERS & NON-VIEWERS OF RELIGIOUS TV

| DENOMINATION | FREQUENT VIEWERS | NON-VIEWERS |
|---|---|---|
| American Baptist | 2.0% | .9% |
| Southern Baptist | 19.0% | 9.2% |
| Other Baptist | 21.2% | 7.1% |
| Lutheran—ALC & LCA | .7% | 1.8% |
| Missouri Synod Lutheran | .7% | .4% |
| Other Lutheran | 2.5% | 2.8% |
| United Methodist | 8.3% | 6.7% |
| Other Methodist | 7.1% | 6.1% |
| Presbyterian—PCUS & UPUSA | 1.8% | 4.2% |
| Other Presbyterian | 3.3% | 4.2% |
| Episcopal | .7% | 3.9% |
| UCC, Disciples | 1.6% | 3.8% |
| Charismatic Christian | 10.5% | .7% |
| Independent, Nondenom. | 2.2% | 1.3% |
| Other Protestant | 5.6% | 3.0% |
| Catholic | 10.0% | 31.7% |
| Jewish | .2% | 3.2% |

## RELIGIOUS TV HIT PARADE

PERCENTAGE OF 546 VIEWERS POLLED WHO MENTIONED EACH OF THE FOLLOWING

| | |
|---|---|
| Jimmy Swaggart | 25% |
| Oral Roberts | 20% |
| 700 Club/Pat Robertson | 18% |
| PTL Club/Jim Bakker | 16% |
| Billy Graham Crusade/Billy Graham | 14% |
| Hour of Power/Robert Schuller | 13% |
| Old Time Gospel Hour/Jerry Falwell | 12% |
| Rex Humbard | 8% |
| Baptist programs | 8% |
| Gospel Singing Jubilee | 5% |
| Kenneth Copeland | 4% |
| Ernest Angely | 3% |
| James Robinson | 2% |
| Gamer Ted Armstrong | 2% |
| Roman Catholic programs | 2% |
| Herbert Armstrong | 2% |

The study was sponsored by one of the most inclusive coalitions of religious groups ever to come together on a single project.

The 39 sponsoring groups ranged from Catholics and mainline liberal Protestants to such fundamentalist and charismatic ministries as Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker's PTL Network. The study grew out of a consultation on the electronic church four years ago, sponsored by the National Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference and the National Religious Broadcasters.

"The discussion was heated, but none of us had the information needed to form informed opinions," recalled Dr. William F. Fore of the NCC, who had helped coordinate the 1980 gathering. Fore proposed to Armstrong that their respective organizations explore the possibility of solid research, and after more than a year of meetings, the Annenberg and Gallup organizations were engaged for the project.

On Monday, representatives of the sponsoring organizations, meeting in New York, were presented with the results.

Richard Hirsch, secretary for communication of the U.S. Catholic Conference, and a member of the research project's steering committee, appeared to speak for most of the participants when he said it was too early for the sponsoring groups to say how the research findings would be put to use.

Respondents questioned in the survey recalled watching 101 different religious TV programs, ranging from internationally syndicated productions to locally telecast church services.

That only 16 of the programs mentioned were offerings of mainline churches indicates the massive expansion of the electronic church. Two decades ago, religious broadcasting was dominated by mainline denominations.

The study found that TV ministries, defined as "programs and denominations whose primary existence were in and through TV," are the most likely to ask for money. The study said they ask for it more often—40 percent ask three or or more times during a program and that they asked for bigger contributions than other kinds of programs.

The reason most often given for soliciting funds was to buy more airtime and spread the Gospel.

Nearly a third of all viewers contribute financially to the programs they watched; 23 percent gave regularly to three programs. Average contributions for regular givers was $35.17; even regular givers with incomes of less than $15,000 averaged $32.77 per contribution.

Nearly a third of the regular contributors are Catholic, even though the programs are overwhelmingly Protestant.

Nearly half of the religious TV viewers said missionary work and evangelism should be the main tasks of the church. Only 22 percent of regular viewer said working for social justice should be a church's main goal, while 34 percent of non-viewers said that should be the main work of the church.

THE SUN
BALTIMORE, MD
(MORNING)
D. 183,168 SUN. 377,183

APR. 22, 1984

# Questions on TV religion

By Frank P. L. Somerville

As her male colleagues argued last week about whether television gives Christian evangelists enough bang for the buck, Peggy Shriver could hardly contain herself.

Dr. Shriver is in charge of research and planning for the National Council of Churches. She was part of a panel assembled at the City University of New York to discuss and assess the findings of a two-year, $175,000 study of the "electronic church."

The analyses of religious TV program content and the public opinion surveys were performed by the Gallup organization and the Annenberg School of Communications of the University of Pennsylvania.

All styles of current American Christianity were represented among the 39 organizational sponsors of the study: Catholics, liberal and conservative Protestants and gradations of believers in between. They included the big, successful religious broadcasters, their imitators in the old-line denominations and still other church leaders who have stoutly eschewed such imitation.

The sighs of relief from the last group were audible after the researchers described a consistent audience for the television preachers as far smaller than had been claimed by many of them.

Rather than 100 million to 130 million viewers, the regular followers of the TV pulpit stars — those who watch as much as an hour of their religious fare at a time — number only 7 million, or 3.14 percent of Americans with television sets, according to the study. Those who regularly watch 15 minutes at a time number 13.3 million.

The two years of research found "no support for that charge" that the tanned, well-heeled TV evangelists, with their wide smiles and high-decibel pitches for chastity and dollars, are an important reason for erosion of main-line church membership and contributions.

"The programs appeal to an older, traditional audience, and watching these programs appears to be a confirmation of their religious beliefs, not a substitute for them," the report says. "Their interest in the electronic church is complementary to other forms of religious practice, like church worship."

George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School, commented: "There must be other explanations if church attendance has declined and there is a lack of financial support." The established Christian denominations should look for their competition Sunday mornings not in the television ministry, he said, but in "general television."

A conclusion about the nature of the religious programs themselves, in contrast to the people who watch them, was what Dr. Shriver could not wait to throw into the discussion hopper.

"It is very sobering to me," she said when her turn came, that religious television is as much a "distortion of the real world" as commercial TV.

She referred to the study's finding that "people who inhabit religious television are similar to the characters who populate the fictional world of prime-time drama."

Among the study's conclusions about typical offerings of the syndicated religious broadcasters:

- Men outnumber women by a considerable margin on all programs, even though it is women who predominate in the audiences.
- Men are portrayed in roles of authority. The clergy are nearly always men.
- Women are generally younger than the men on the shows. Rarely do the women quote the Bible, even though half of the women in major roles and one-fifth of all women participants are professionals.
- The women who are depicted or who participate are more likely than men to suffer from physical ailments and personal problems. "Overall, women in religious programs have little authority and power, much like women in prime-time drama."
- Minorities, especially minority women and all Hispanics, are underrepresented in the programs relative to their numbers in the population as a whole.
- Social, moral and ethical issues are discussed, but purely theological questions "are not discussed with any frequency."

The programs' "emphasis on personal problems and ailments," with their "unequal burden on women," the study found, has focused the television cameras on "family tensions, financial and health problems, unemployment and physical handicaps."

What is the Christian prescription as manifested on Christian TV?

The "most prominent" of the religious broadcasters, the study said, "tend to dwell most on these personal problems and ailments and prescribe spiritual solutions or — in one out of four programs — financial contributions."

Religious television, like commerical television, "is ignoring elderly people, is acting as though you are not quite human unless you are young, is underplaying women significantly, underplaying minorities and blue-collar people and overplaying the clergy, so that the priesthood of all believers is not well understood," Dr. Shriver lamented.

Televised Christianity is "against the real world," she said.

Maybe the solution, in her view, if one must be found on television, lies in secular, prime-time programs like "St. Elsewhere" and "Hill Street Blues," which portray a slice of life that often is not pretty.

"At least they are forcing me to see people who are not part of my world," Dr. Shriver said. "That's my confession for today."

At a New York conference with much the same participation four years ago a "holy war" was mapped between conventional churches with dwindling resources and television preachers with fat bank accounts. Though not over, it has entered a new phase. Better intelligence, it seems, is beginning to bring the warring factions to their senses.

The religious broadcasters had been viewed with alarm for a decade as a proselytizing threat to the old, established Protestant denominations such as the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, United Methodists and United Church of Christ.

And these were being advised to modernize their weaponry, to throw money at the problem, sort of like the Pentagon.

"In order to survive, the mainlines will be forced to meet the competition head-on — buy air time, make more and better use of TV themselves, and in general get their act together," said Robert M. Liebert, a psychologist, at the 1980 meeting of church leaders drawn together by their shared anxiety over the televised competition.

The seemingly huge successes of the "electronic church" coupled with doubts among its managers that the rosy figures were entirely accurate goaded both sides into action. Together, they commissioned the study.

No theological accommodati has been reached between them. There has not even been a truce, really. The two flanks of Christianity are off on their separate tangents again, each encouraged by something in the report.

The Catholics and main-line Protestants were relieved by the suggestion that the Jimmy Swaggarts, Pat Robertsons, Jerry Falwells and James Robisons are paper tigers after all. And Ben Armstrong, executive director of the fundamentalist National Religious Broadcasters, was thankful to be done with the charge that his clients are, in effect, robbing the collection plates and closing down the churches. "Strange bedfellows," Dr. Armstrong said of the study's sponsorship, "but very stimulating."

The volumes of statistics produced by the research are now being pored over for further clues. The compilers are satisfied they did their job. "We had some good news and bad news for everyone," Dr. Gerbner allowed. "So it must be right."

Are questions about the audience for shows like Jimmy Swaggart's missing the point?

Mr. Somerville is The Sun's religion editor.

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BURRELLE'S

# New light placed on the electronic church

6270

I suppose it is good news that televised religious programs do not siphon off local church support. That's the outcome of an impartial survey, conducted by the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization. It was financed by an unusual combination of denominations, churches and TV preachers in the Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Television.

The results show that the "televangelists" mainly preach to the converted. They "rally believers" more than they "convert or recruit" new ones. However, the TV preachers apparently do not steal audiences or reduce contributions to local churches, as many of the latter had feared.

Apparently it is still up to the the local churches, to carry out the Great Commission while the mass "evangelists" of the tube protect the harvest already in the barn. Of course, the nurture, reinforcement and growth of people who already believe is a very important ministry.

If they do not evangelize that much, what do the religious programs on TV do? According to the survey they discuss political issues, for one thing — on over half of both syndicated religious programs. Maybe that shouldn't be surprising. Increasingly these shows are not in the plan-of-salvation "preaching service" format but in the form of talk shows and other programming dealing with everyday life — into which political concerns certainly enter.

But the figures show that politics is also discussed in over half the televised local church services. Maybe that shouldn't be such a surprise, either. Black churches have traditionally been centers of

Ed Corson

political activity, and white churches have had periods of high political involvement since the colonial days, especially where "moral issues" are concerned.

In contrast, political issues come up on only one-third of all commercial television shows.

Here's something strange revealed by the survey: On religious TV programs, "Religious and theological issues are not discussed with any great frequency."

Now, why would political controversy be OK on religious programs, but religious and theological questions tend to be bypassed? A desire not to rock the boat? Not to admit that there can be legitimate differences of emphasis and opinion among Christian believers? Or fear of starting people thinking aout their faith?

The facts established by the survey make me wonder if we should stop worrying about the "electronic church" just because it doesn't interfere with local churches.

Televised church-style services — to consider only one part of the electronic offerings — are solitary experiences. To be sure, for the infirm who can no longer get to church they are essential contacts with the preaching of the Word. (Half the audience for religous programs is 50 or over.) But the fellowship and acts of worship can only be remembered or imagined. And while those who can get to church use the programs as a supplement more than a substitute for churchgoing, according to the survey, that could change.

Solitary Christianity is almost a contradiction in terms. Churches will have to meet the challenge by improving their preaching and worship services. They will have to emphasize the mutual support that a real, live congregation can provide; too often, "fellowship" means socializing only.

Starting May 1 the Southern Baptist Convention is launching the American Christian Television System — with local churches responsible for getting it on local cables — with a wide spectrum of broadcasting besides religious teaching. This, like other services such as the Christian Broadcasting Network, is designed to offer something more satisfactory than the often tasteless, insipid and irresponsible fare of commercial television.

Will local churches make the same effort to touch the everyday lives of their people — while continuing to seek those outside the faith — or will they leave it to the tube?

*Ed Corson is editor of the* Macon Telegraph and News.

# Profiling religious TV programing

**Annenberg-Gallup study finds no conflict with local churches, analyzes audience composition**

More definitive answers are now offered to such questions as who watches religious TV, what its messages are, why people watch and how their church-going behavior relates to religious programing.

The additional insights are found in a just-completed study by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications and the Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J. The two-year research project was commissioned by a committee of more than 30 mainline and independent church groups (BROADCASTING, Oct. 11, 1982). The research analyzed the content of religious programs and included one national and two regional surveys of viewers of religious and other programs. An Annenberg research team wrote the final integrated report.

In its summation, that team points out that "this study was conceived against a background of ferment and change in traditional religious involvement coinciding with the rise of commercial television and later of the religious TV ministries."

The report initially focused on the religious audience, which it stressed is not essentially new, young, or varied. "Viewers of religious programs are by and large also the believers, the church-goers, the contributors," it said. "Their viewing of religious programs correlates with all important measures of religiosity."

The profile of the religious audience tends to be "fairly coherent and well defined," the study asserted.

"It is what religious audiences have always been: somewhat older, lower in education and income, more conservative, more 'fundamentalist' and more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest than those who do not watch religious programing."

The research team estimated that regular viewers of religious programs of all denominations number about 13.3 million, or 6.2% of the estimated total number of persons in TV households.

Viewers of religious programs are drawn by content they cannot find elsewhere on TV, according to the report, which said: "In fact, their dissatisfaction with the 'prevailing moral climate' (much of which comes to them through and from television) may be one of the most distinctive bonds between religious programs and their viewers." The sermons, the preaching, the music, the experience of having their spirits lifted and a feeling of being "close to God" were frequently expressed satisfactions of religious program viewers.

The survey team found that those who do not watch religious TV programs—the majority of the younger and more "upscale" TV viewers—are more likely to be disinterested than hostile to such broadcasts. Only one in four of those polled expressed objections (mostly to the emphasis on fund solicitation), but three in four choose to switch channels rather than watch religious programs.

In its next step, an examination of the relationship between religious programs on TV and the local churches, the study found "no support" for the charge that television ministries have caused or at least contributed to the erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions and general participation. That, it said, is the feeling of both viewers of religious programing and frequent church-goers. Survey respondents cited a need for "personal closeness to members" of one's local church as one reason for local church attendance as opposed to a lesser such feeling about TV ministries. The study's findings noted that not only was there no conflict between syndicated religious TV programs and more traditional forms of worship, but respondents "see them as complementary and mutually reinforcing activities rather than as substitutes for one another."

However, the report said, "the world presented and the world view expressed on the television ministries may compete more with commercial television than with mainline religion."

As for the "messages of religious television," the research team concluded that the contents of evangelical and mainline reli-



gious programs do not present as much contrast as has been supposed. "Discussion of political issues occurs in over half of both television ministry and mainline programs (but only one-third of general prime time TV programs)," it said. "The TV ministries are more likely than mainline church programs to ask for money, with the prominent television ministries making the more numerous requests and asking for greater amounts."

Social and moral issues were found to be discussed slightly more on the prominent TV ministries while religious and theological issues were not broached with "any great frequency."

With regard to participants in religious programs, the report said men outnumber women by a considerable margin, women are generally younger than men, and minorities—especially minority women and Hispanics—are underrepresented. It was also pointed out that women are "rarely, if ever, in the role of the clergy and rarely quote the Bible."

The report offered these audience profiles:

"Heavy viewers of religious programs are more likely than nonviewers to describe themselves as conservatives, oppose a nuclear freeze, favor tougher laws against pornography and report voting in the last general election. Heavy viewers of television tend to describe themselves as political moderates, are more likely to favor a nuclear freeze, are not as concerned with pornography (or with the 'moral clim[illegible] less likely to say that [illegible] election."

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THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF
COMMUNICATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Dr. Peggy Schriver
Assistant General Secretary for
Research, Evaluation & Planning
National Council of Churches
475 Riverside Drive, Rm 870
New York, NY 10115

June 10, 1984

Dear Peggy,

Enclosed you will find xerox copies of stories in the press on "Religion on Television." These stories were collected by the University of Pennsylvania news bureau, Burrell's clipping service and The Annenberg School and, hopefully, there are not many that were missed. The study seems to have been widely reported and has generated much interest judging from the number of telephone inquiries we have received. These are still coming in.

As we add to the file I will send copies along to you.

Sincerely,

Susanne Bradford
Publicity Coordinator

SB/me
encl:

cc: George Gerbner

No dupes
No cuts?

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BURRELLE'S

# Those who pray also watch TV

PHILADELPHIA (UPI) — Television evangelism attracts a loyal and stable audience of older viewers who are politically conservative and theologically fundamentalist, a study indicates.

The survey, conducted by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, was paid for by a group of religious organizations, including such TV ministries as the PTL Network and Old Time Gospel Hour.

Researchers for the Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J., also worked on the study.

George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School, said the study discredits the theory that watching religious programs keeps people from attending church.

"Television ministries have been suspected of causing the erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions and general participation," he said. "Our study found no support for that charge."

The survey estimated the number of people who regularly watch religious television at 13.3 million, about 6.2 percent of the estimated number of people in households with televisions.

"The programs appeal to an older, traditional audience, and watching these programs appears to be a confirmation of their religious beliefs, not a substitute for them," Gerbner said. "Their interest in the electronic church is complementary to other forms of religious practice, like church worship."

The study also showed the following about viewers:

☐ Half say they are dissatisfied with the "prevailing moral climate." Only one-third of those people who do not watch religious programs feel this way.

☐ Half of the viewers consider evangelism and missionary work the main goal of the church. Only one-third of non-viewers agree.

☐ Only one-fifth of the viewers said the church should be "working for social justice," but one-third of non-viewers consider this a church priority.

The survey was commissioned by a coalition called the Ad Hoc Committee on Electronic Church Research. In addition to several TV ministries, the committee includes the National Council of Churches, the United States Catholic Conference, the Southern Baptist Convention, the United Presbyterian Church and more than 30 other religious organizations.

# The "Electronic Church" Spreads the Word

**From Sunday preachers to soap operas with a spiritual message, TV-style religion is flooding the airways.**

A surge in religious broadcasting not seen since the early 1950s promises to lure millions more to the "electronic church."

Joining the high-energy "prime-time preachers" of recent years is a flurry of new religion-oriented talk shows, soap operas and magazine-format programs, all designed to entertain viewers as well as to preach.

The new spiritual programs have the potential to reach a widening audience as a result of the explosion of cable television, satellite transmission and the ability of big-money religious groups to purchase commercial time.

These trends are underlined in a major report, "Religion and Television," released April 16 by a coalition of groups ranging from fundamentalist Protestants to Roman Catholics. Among the findings of the Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Television:

- About 13.6 million Americans, or **6.2 percent of the television audience, regularly watch religious programs.**
- About half of the audience is age 50 and over, considerably older than the audience that does not watch religious programs. Some 63 percent of viewers are women, and 79 percent are white.
- Most of this audience uses television as a supplement, not a substitute, for going to church.
- Political issues are discussed in more than half of the programs, while complicated theological issues are rarely debated.

The report comes at a time when churches are trying as never before to reach people via the airwaves. Researchers at Cleveland State University estimate that the number of stations offering religious programs is growing at the rate of one a month.

**Growing movement.** According to National Religious Broadcasters, a trade organization, the number of organizations producing religious TV programs and films grew from 280 in 1952 to 365 last year. In the same period, TV religious programs increased from 996 to 1,081. Meanwhile, TV stations devoted exclusively to church-related programming grew from 65 to 79, and religious radio stations from 922 to 1,045.

Mother Angelica, an Alabama nun, has signed up 105 cable systems for her programs.

Cable channels are proliferating, too. In some communities, cable systems carry all three major religious networks—the Christian Broadcasting Network, the PTL (Praise the Lord) Network and Trinity Broadcasting.

The newest entry is the American Christian Television System, to be launched May 1 by the 14-million-member Southern Baptist Convention. The network will rely on local church committees to sign up local cable operators.

Instead of a diet of sermons, the network will feature such offerings as "Lifestyle" for women, "The Sunshine Factory" for children, "The Super Handyman" and "The Plant Groom."

ACTS is just one example of the new style of religious broadcasting that is intended to be an entire television package rather than religious instruction alone. The Catholic Telecommunications Network of America, begun in November, 1981, distributes programs to 46 cable systems reaching 1.2 million homes. It features dramas, magazine-format news and an eight-week marriage series among its offerings.

"Nowadays you have to compete with programs that cost a half-million dollars an hour to produce," comments Wasyl Lew, CTNA's president. "You can't just produce schlock."

The CTNA has been somewhat upstaged by a nun in Alabama, who has established the Eternal Word Television Network, which reaches about 1.6 million subscribers on 105 cable systems. Mother Angelica, who objected to the content of movies on a local station, set up shop in a garage in August, 1981, and has been broadcasting family shows such as "Robin Hood" and "Lassie" along with inspirational programs and talk shows.

One of the biggest forces of change today in religious broadcasting is the Christian Broadcasting Network, based in Virginia Beach, Va. The 24-hour network, reaching 23 million homes, provides a mix of religious programs and reruns of old family TV series, plus news and documentaries.

The CBN's flagship program, "The 700 Club," hosted by CBN founder Pat Robertson, has a talk-show format with discussion of issues such as world debt, prayer in schools and homosexuality. Frequently, famous guests come on the air to describe their religious conversions.

In addition, there are shows such as "Another Life," a Christian soap opera; "Superbook," with animated Bible stories, and "Don't Ask Me; Ask God," a prime-time special in which top stars dramatize questions people say they would most like to ask God.

Unlike some old-time programs, the CBN does not use the hard sell. "The basic point is that we see ourselves as broadcasters who just happen to be Christians," says CBN Vice President Michael Little.

**A "Tonight" format.** Using a somewhat similar approach is the PTL Club, hosted by Jim Bakker, a former protegé of Robertson's. Rather than a Bible-thumping sermon, Bakker provides a talk show in a style often compared with Johnny Carson's "Tonight" show.

While these new shows and their soft-sell messages are making inroads, most surveys show that the Sunday church-style programs still are the meat and potatoes of religious broadcasting. According to the latest Arbitron survey last November, the Rev. Robert Schuller's "Hour of Power" is the highest-rated religious program, followed by "Oral Roberts and You," Jimmy Swaggart, "Day of Discovery," and Rex Humbard. Next come "The

Pat Robertson, left, and Ben Kinchlow use talk-show format on Christian Broadcasting Network's "700 Club."

World Tomorrow," Jerry Falwell and Kenneth Copeland.

Whether in the new or the old format, religious broadcasting comes under heavy criticism from traditional churches. The "Religion and Television" report calmed many theologians' fears that religious television is taking people away from church. The report, prepared by the Gallup Organization and the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, found that 48 percent of the viewers attend church regularly.

Yet, William Fore of the National Council of Churches complains that most religious broadcasting offers "a very pallid diet. People will be malnourished in religious life if they accept only the electronic church."

David O'Brien, church historian at the College of the Holy Cross in Worchester, Mass., frets that people who depend on TV religion miss the fellowship of a local church. "Electronic religion is dangerous for the culture because it deepens people's estrangement from the wider community," he says.

On the other hand, powerful orators on TV "put pressure on local churches to do a better job," comments the Rev. James Draper, president of the Southern Baptist Convention. But he adds, "You can't very easily go to Oral Roberts or Pat Robertson in a family crisis."

Others complain that preachers who have the money to buy commercial time are responsible for the steady decline in public-service religious telecasts. The result: A much narrower range of religious views—much of it dominated by evangelical ministers—is being presented.

Jewish groups point to the reduction in "Directions," the nondenominational series on ABC, from once a week to seven times a year as an example.

Controversy also centers on the fund-raising tactics of some religious broadcasters, many of whom use toll-free numbers to garner pledges.

"The quality of fund-raising techniques needs to be carefully examined, and religious broadcasters need a code of ethics which involves fairly detailed 'thou shalt nots,'" contends sociologist Jeffrey Hadden, author of *Prime Time Preachers*. He questions such practices as sending out letters implying that the viewer's soul could be in jeopardy if no money is sent. However, broadcasters counter that such practices are the exception rather than the rule.

Methodist theologian Albert Outler complains that too many religious broadcasters threaten to close their shows unless they raise more money. Yet, he sees little evidence that viewers are being impoverished. "When compared to other things people waste their money on, who is to say that gullible people are being preyed upon?" he asks.

A recent survey by Barry Litman of Michigan State University found that religious viewers in the Grand Rapids and Lansing, Mich., areas gave an average of $339 a year to religious programs, but appeared to donate even more to their churches. Flo Conway and Jim Seigelman, authors of *Holy Terror*, estimate that religious broadcasters collect 500 million dollars a year, a figure disputed by many broadcasters.

Other criticisms come from groups that object to the stereotypes found on religious shows. "Characters on religious TV tend to be white, adult males of middle income," says the Cleveland State report. "Minority characters usually hold minor or guest roles."

**"God sent us Reagan."** As the fall elections approach, many experts see a trend toward more political discussions on religious programs. While most will not actively endorse a candidate for fear of losing their tax-exempt status, there are ways of getting around it, comments author Hadden. "There is no direct reference to Jesse Jackson, Gary Hart and Walter Mondale as sinners, but the inference is that God sent us Ronald Reagan and we'd better not let this slip away," he claims.

Theologian Outler says the religious broadcasters' influence is overrated, pointing to the failure of Congress to back constitutional amendments they favor, such as a ban against abortion and the return of prayer to public schools.

Even so, many experts predict still more growth for the electronic church. Its prime audience—older people—is becoming an increasing part of the total population, and an expanding array of technology is poised to bring the spiritual message to them. □

By MICHAEL DOAN

Jerry Falwell and other Sunday orators still have top ratings despite inroads by newcomers.

# Religion's ratings

EDITORIAL

## Survey finds relatively small congregation for electronic evangelism

E 6270

A just-announced survey of those who regularly watch religious broadcasting on television debunks some myths.

The survey, done by the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup polling organization for a coalition of Christian groups, shows that the audience for electronic evangelists is older, less educated, more likely to live in rural areas, more politically conservative and religiously fundamental than the average American.

That is no surprise. Other surveys of religious broadcasting said the same thing. But the Pennsylvania-Gallup survey goes farther:

■ The regular audience for religious broadcasts is relatively small — about 6.2 percent of the total of Americans who live in households with television.

That means an estimated 13.3 million people are regular watchers of religious broadcasting, a number far smaller than that estimated in earlier surveys which put religion's share of the audience at 18 to 30 percent.

■ Those who regularly watch religious broadcasting on television tend to be faithful members of local churches.

That, says Dr. Ben Armstrong, executive director of the National Religious Broadcasters organization, shows that religion on television "has a good effect on the local church, that it does not take bucks and bodies away from the church."

Most important, the survey figures — if accurate — show that the raw-number appeal of the religious broadcasters has been overestimated. That may have been done by those fearful of the TV preachers' alleged political clout.

Finally, the survey shows that electronic evangelism differs little from traditional religious effort in one important aspect — most preaching reaches those already converted.

4/24/1984 Green Bay Press-Gazette

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APR 24 1984
BURRELLE'S

## RELIGION

# Study of the TV church

By Joseph Berger 6-70
Newsday Religion Writer

Four years ago, a kind of summit meeting took place to address a growing and unsettling force in American Christianity —the television preachers.

Represented on the one side were the National Council of Churches, the main coordinating body for U.S. Protestant and Orthodox denominations, and the U.S. Catholic Conference. On the other side were several stars of the electronic church, including Pat Robertson and Robert Schuller, and leaders of the National Religious Broadcasters, a predominantly fundamentalist association of religious programers.

William Fore, the National Council of Churches' communications leader, argued that the television preachers were encouraging a dependence on the artificial images of the tube, thereby separating people from their community churches and the real-life spiritual experiences there. Moreover, the demands that television imposes to be commercial and popular — particularly when fund raising is involved — were diluting religious content, making for poor evangelism.

Ben Armstrong, the National Religious Broadcasters' executive director, took the opposite position. He said the electronic preachers were bringing new souls to Christianity, spurring people to become more religious and observant and encouraging them to participate and give to their local churches.

Both sides, however, had no reliable figures to back up their arguments, and so they launched a project uncommon for the cooperation evinced among adversaries. They spent $175,000 and enlisted the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications and the Gallup Organization to study the impact of television on religion.

The study was released last week, and, as might be expected, it changed no one's mind. Both sides found comfort in the two thick volumes of statistics and graphs.

The study's main conclusion is that religious television shows are not siphoning off members or money from mainline and other local churches. It also confirms that the people who watch such preachers as Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, Jimmy Swaggart, Pat Robertson, and Jim Bakker are "somewhat older, lower in education and income, more conservative and fundamentalist, and more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest than those who do not watch religious programs."

Fore wondered how accurate the surveys were when it came to attendance and contributions. "People do tend to give responses that please the interviewer," he said. And he noted that some of the evidence did indicate the shows were cutting into attendance. Fourteen per cent of the 954 viewers of religious shows sampled [1,049 non-viewers were also sampled] said they watch the shows as a substitute for going to church. Two out of 10 said they watch programs during church hours on Sunday morning. "There is some erosion," Fore said. "It's not quite accurate to say that [the electronic church] does not take people away. It's like [John F.] Kennedy winning the debate with [Richard] Nixon by five per cent. But that five per cent is a big percentage."

Fore also acknowledges that, despite what people say in a survey, there are limits to what they will shell out towards religion, and that if they are giving a certain amount to the fund-raising appeals on TV, they may be reducing their giving to the local church commensurately. Finer — and more expensive research — may be needed.

What Fore liked best in the data were the

Newsday Illustration / Bernie Cootner

*Jerry Falwell: spreading the message*

smaller than the boasts of video preachers like Falwell, who once said his own program drew 25 million viewers. The Arbitron figures show that there are only 13.3 million regular viewers of all religious programs combined, and that only 7 million of those watch one hour or more a week.

Armstrong, taking his own readings of the data, chose to latch on to a different figure for audience size. The poll Gallup designed asked respondents whether they had watched a religious program in the past 30 days, and 32 per cent said they had, which would translate into a national audience of more than 30 million.

Also, Armstrong felt the study may quiet the fears that mainline church groups have had about making a greater investment in television. The study, he said, clearly "validated the integrity of the local church . . . The study showed that it really is a help to the local church and the more a person watches the electric church the more he goes to his local church and supports it financially."

Critics, taking a different interpretation of the data, might respond that people who go to church a lot and donate money there tend to watch a lot of religious television, so the evidence on the preachers increasing church participation is not yet in.

Settling this one, in the absence of more finely tuned data, could be a chicken-and-egg argument. The report's summary itself says that "the audience for religious programs on television is not an essentially new, or young, or varied audience. Viewers of religious programs are by and large also the believers, the churchgoers, the contributors. Their viewing of religious programs correlates with all important measures of religiosity. It appears to be an expression, confirmation and cultivation of a set of religious beliefs and not a substitute for them." So the report also seems to be saying that the TV evangelists' claims that they are winning millions of new souls may be a little overstated.

What is perhaps most striking about the new report is that it found that mainline denominations and the fundamentalist groups are not each other's enemies so much as they share a single enemy — television itself. Television's typical fare, the report said, "tends to erode or overcome demographic, geographic and other differences that traditionally distinguish different groups of people."

Since the study found that people who watch a lot of television are less likely to go to church, give money, or read the Bible, the dominance of

# RESEARCH NOTES

## ■ TV evangelists vs. established churches

**Television evangelists** are not stealing the faithful away from the established churches, according to a study by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications.

Contrary to opinions widely held by social scientists and religious organizations, TV viewers who watch and support religious broadcasters also go to church, the researchers found.

The study also disproved the popular notion that TV evangelists have created a broad new following of religious converts. Rather, the researchers found, audiences who follow the electronic preachers tend to have a longstanding commitment to organized religion.

The study, by a team of researchers headed by George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School, was commissioned by a coalition of more than 30 religious organizations, including the National Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the Southern Baptist Convention, National Religious Broadcasters, and the Old Time Gospel Hour. The Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J., also participated in the study.

According to surveys conducted for the report, 13.3 million people—or 6.2 per cent of those in households with television sets—regularly watch religious programs on TV.

# 'Electronic Church' Faulted for Not Reflecting Real Life

6270

By FRANK P.L. SOMERVILLE
The Baltimore Sun

As her male colleagues argued last week about whether television gives Christian evangelists enough bang for the buck, Peggy Shriver could hardly contain herself.

Ms. Shriver is in charge of research and planning for the National Council of Churches. She was part of a panel assembled at the City University of New York to discuss and assess the findings of a two-year, $175,000 study of the "electronic church."

The analyses of religious TV program content and the public opinion surveys were performed by the Gallup organization and the Annenberg School of Communications of the University of Pennsylvania.

All styles of American Christianity were represented among the 39 organizational sponsors of the study: Catholics, liberal and conservative Protestants and gradations of believers in between. They included the big, successful religious broadcasters, their imitators in the old-line denominations and still other church leaders who have stoutly eschewed such imitation.

The sighs of relief from the last group were audible after the researchers described a consistent audience for the television preachers as far smaller than had been claimed by many of them.

Rather than 100 to 130 million viewers, the regular followers of the TV pulpit stars — those who watch as much as an hour of their religious fare at a time — number only 7 million, or 3.14 percent of Americans with television sets, according to the study. Those who regularly watch 15 minutes at a time number 13.3 million.

The two years of research found "no support for that charge" that the tanned, well-heeled TV evangelists, with their wide smiles and high-decibel pitches for chastity and dollars, are an important reason for erosion of main-line church membership and contributions.

"The programs appeal to an older, traditional audience, and watching these programs appears to be a confirmation of their religious beliefs, not a substitute for them," the report says.

A conclusion about the nature of the religious programs themselves, in contrast to the people who watch them, was what Ms. Shriver could not wait to throw into the discussion hopper.

"It is very sobering to me," she said when her turn came, that religious television is as much a "distortion of the real world" as commercial TV.

She referred to the study's finding that "people who inhabit religious television are similar to the characters who populate the fictional world of prime-time drama."

Among the study's conclusions about typical offerings of the syndicated religious broadcasters:

- Men outnumber women by a considerable margin on all programs, though it is women who predominate in the audiences.
- Men are portrayed in roles of authority. The clergy are nearly always men.
- The women who are depicted or who participate are more likely than men to suffer from physical ailments and personal problems.

"Overall, women in religious programs have little authority and power, much like women in prime-time drama."

- Minorities, especially minority women and all Hispanics, are under-represented in the programs relative to their numbers in the population as a whole.

The most prominent of the religious broadcasters, the study said, "tend to dwell most on these personal problems and ailments and prescribe spiritual solutions or — in one out of four programs — financial contributions."

Religious television, like commerical television, "is ignoring elderly people, is acting as though you are not quite human unless you are young, is underplaying women significantly, underplaying minorities and blue-collar peopl,e and overplaying the clergy, so that the priesthood of all believers is not well understood," Ms. Shriver said.

Maybe the solution, in her view, if one must be found on television, lies in secular, prime-time programs such as "St. Elsewhere" and "Hill Street Blues," which portray a slice of life that often is not pretty.

"At least they are forcing me to see people who are not part of my world," Ms. Shriver said. "That's my confession for today."

Huntsville Times (Huntsville, AL) 4/25/1984

Stamford Advocate
STAMFORD. CONN.
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BURRELLE'S

EVALUATING EVANGELIST BROADCASTS

# Studies show religious programs no longer attract big television audience

By John Dart
Los Angeles Times

6270

The first comprehensive study of religious television, released this week, indicates that the electronic church has a much smaller audience and impact than previously believed.

But the study may not slow broadcasting plans by church-related groups. And certain data in the report promise to cause religious communicators to ask again whether their money is being wisely spent.

The two-volume, 160-page study released this week to 39 Christian sponsors — ranging from Roman Catholic and ecumenical Protestant to evangelical and charismatic Protestant groups — demonstrated that the viewers of the so-called electronic church are surprisingly few in number, mostly have one or two favorite shows, and are already churchgoers.

For instance, the findings by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications and the Gallup Organization include:

• Regular viewers of any religious program of any denomination number about 13.3 million, or 6.2 percent of the estimated total of people in television households — in contrast to the estimate of 20.5 million in 1980 by sociologists Jeffrey Hadden and Charles Swann in their book, "Prime-Time Preachers." But the new figure of 13.3 million represents those who watch a minimum of a quarter-hour of religious television a week; the figure drops to about 7 million for those who watch at least one hour a week.

• More than half of those who watch religious television watch only one or two programs. Another 21 percent named three shows they watch, 14 percent named four, leaving only 8 percent who watch more, according to a detailed study of regional samples in the South and Northeast.

• Seventy percent nationally said they never contribute money to religious television programs. Of the 28 percent who do, only 5 percent do so regularly. Again, the contributors have their favorite shows: Only 2 percent give money to three or more television evangelists or shows.

Mainline Protestant efforts and a new officially sponsored Roman Catholic network have generally tried to raise money from special fund drives or budgeting within their denominations, rather than rely on the generosity — or, critics would say, the gullibility — of the audience.

The audiences are largely conservative evangelical or charismatic Protestants, not surprising considering that is the theological perspective of the leading television ministries.

The reasons for having religious television still need some pondering, said a Catholic nun, Elizabeth Thoman, CHM, of Los Angeles. Editor of Media & Values, a magazine recently purchased by a United Methodist agency and renamed Interfaith Media Journal, Thoman contends that the study makes it clear that mainline Protestant and Catholic church bodies, in particular, have to ask what their goals are.

"Is it visibility and name identification or changing people?" Thoman asked rhetorically. This and previous studies on television, she said, have shown that "people don't make significant decisions in their lives this way." Television is primarily an entertainment and information medium, she said.

# Electronic Media

Published weekly by Crain Communications

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APRIL 26, 1984

**INSIDE**

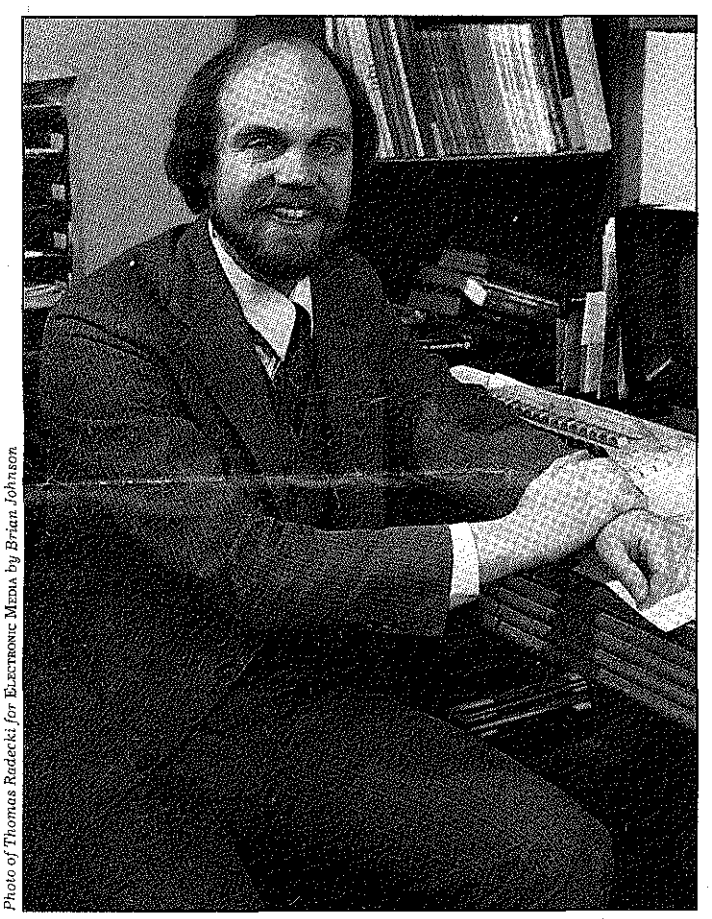
**Conventioneers descend on Las Vegas and France**

The National Assn. of Broadcasters annual convention in Las Vegas and *Marche International des Programmes de Television* in Cannes, France, are keeping industry executives busy (Page 3). For example, the Big 3 are trying to get their share of the overseas market with only a few properties. (Page 24)

**Instant gratification**

Taft Broadcasting's sale of its U.S. amusement parks quickly boosted its stock, but analysts are more attracted to the long-term picture. (Focus on Finance column, Page 41)

# Probing a pressure group



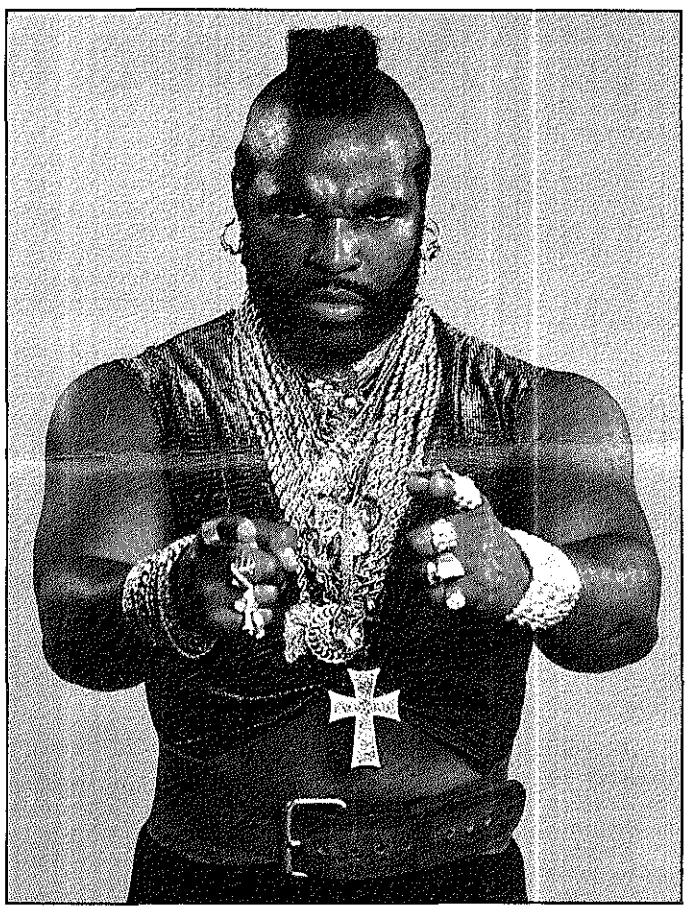


Photo of Thomas Radecki for Electronic Media by Brian Johnson

**Thomas Radecki** (l.) and the NCTV have rated Mr. T and "The A Team" as being most violent on tv.

## Some dispute NCTV's efforts

By CRAIG LEDDY

For the past several years, the National Coalition on Television Violence has gained much attention by warning about the ill effects of watching excessive violence on tv.

News coverage of the group has ranged from stories in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post* to appearances on "Today" and "Nightline."

As a result of such exposure, the coalition and its leader, Thomas Radecki, a 38-year-old Illinois psychiatrist, have become highly visible participants in one of tv's most controversial ongoing debates.

**Related editorial on Page 6.**

Backed by the findings of psychology researchers, the NCTV has preached loudly and relentlessly that many of the tv shows enjoyed by millions of Americans may be hazardous to their mental health. The group widely publi-

*(Continued on Page 28)*

# ESPN founder agrees to sell share

By RICHARD ZACKS

The Entertainment & Sports Programming Network's founder and minority owner, Bill Rasmussen, has agreed to sell 15% of ESPN to Turner Broadcasting System if TBS succeeds in buying the other 85% from Texaco.

Both Mr. Rasmussen and a TBS executive confirmed the existence of the deal.

Texaco previously announced plans to sell its share of the cable tv network, which it acquired as part of its recent purchase of Getty Oil Co. (EM, April 12).

Texaco is to draw up bid parameters this week, according to informed sources, with bids likely to arrive in early May.

Sources say Texaco's priorities are cash, speed of closing and a commitment by the buyer to honor all of the cable network's commitments.

At press time, ABC executives, including Herb Granath, president of ABC Video Enterprises, were preparing to go into a meeting that could add another major element to the ESPN sale. According to sources, the possible purchase of ESPN by ABC was at the top of the executives' agenda.

In a telephone interview from Tulsa, Okla., where he is doing consulting work for the Satellite Program Network, Mr. Rasmussen said TBS is the only company that has contacted him directly.

He said, however, that he has been told that Gulf & Western and

*(Continued on Page 42)*

NEWSPAPER

**USFL nixed ABC offer: Insider column—Page 4**

**AT PRESS TIME**

**ABC News cancels debate**

WASHINGTON—ABC News canceled its political debate between the three Democratic presidential contenders May 6 at Ohio State University because it was doubtful that Rev. Jesse Jackson's schedule would have allowed him to attend. Hal Bruno, political director of ABC News, said the network hasn't scheduled any other debates during the primary elections, but the Democratic hopefuls have been offered a spot on "Nightline" if they can arrange it.

**'Twilight Zone' trials okayed**

HOLLYWOOD—In a decision that shocked the film production community here, a Los Angeles municipal court judge said there was enough evidence to try director John Landis and two others on three charges of involuntary manslaughter for the deaths of the actor Vic Morrow and two child actors in the July, 1982, filming of the "Twilight Zone: The Movie." The judge said Mr. Landis, the special effects chief Paul Stewart

*(Continued on Page 42)*

## NEWS SUMMARY

**The National Coalition on Television Violence** has gained much attention by warning about the ill effects of watching excessive violence on tv. But little is known about the organization itself. ELECTRONIC MEDIA recently conducted an in-depth investigation of the interest group and uncovered numerous questions about its methods and its claims. (Page 1; Editorial on Page 6)

**The Entertainment & Sports Programming** Network's founder and minority owner, Bill Rasmussen, has agreed to sell 15% of the cable tv network to Turner Broadcasting System if TBS succeeds in buying the other 85% from Texaco. (Page 1)

**While the major U.S. producers** and syndicators rake in about 80% of the revenue from the overseas sale of domestic tv programs, ABC, CBS and NBC, the giants of American tv, fight for a mere 20%. Still, the Big 3 are slugging it out at the April 24 to 29 *Marche International des Programmes de Television* in Cannes, France. Back in the U.S., broadcasters will put aside programing in favor of politics and bringing out the vote at the the National Assn. of Broadcasters' 62nd annual convention in Las Vegas April 29 through May 2. (Pages 3 and 24)

**The three major tv networks,** hurt by their loss in the battle over the financial-interest rule, are retaliating by hitting Hollywood producers in their pocketbooks, Alan Hirschfield, chairman of 20th Century-Fox Film Corp., charged last week. (Page 3)

**The regulatory battle over tv program ownership** and syndication rights has been put on ice until next year. Mark Fowler, Federal Communications Commission chairman, last week halted his drive to ease the FCC's financial interest and syndication rules until "after 1984." (Page 2)

**Peter Lund is likely to become president** of CBS Sports before the end of the year, according to a well-placed source. Mr. Lund recently was named exec vp of the division. The appointment to the presidency is being delayed until Mr. Lund, formerly general manager of WCBS in New York, becomes better known in the sports community, the source said. (Page 3)

**Fred Flintstone and Mike Schmidt** may be money makers for Cincinnati-based Taft Broadcasting Co., but investors are more taken with the company's potential to expand and upgrade its broadcast properties. (Page 41)

**The Learning Channel moves to a 24-hour-a-day** schedule on Jan. 1. The Washington-based nonprofit cable tv network now offers 10 hours of programing a day. (Page 4)

**The Disney Channel,** which turned one year old last week, should have 2 million subscribers and be operating in the black a year from now, says James P. Jimirro, president of the pay tv service. However, Walt Disney Productions, parent of the Disney Channel, last week reported that the Disney Channel lost another $9 million during the second quarter, which ended March 31. (Page 10)

**Cable operators should interconnect** to deliver bigger markets to advertisers, said Jack Clifford of Colony Communications, at a Southern California Cable Assn. meeting last week. The chairman of the country's 30th-largest multiple system cable operation said that so many advertisers insist on "boxcar numbers" before moving into cable that "we as an industry are foolish not to interconnect for this purpose." (Page 18)

**The major networks seem be making headway** in their efforts to persuade advertisers to base their buys on broader demographics and to be more supportive of controversial programing. Advertising agencies and advertisers confirm that they are considering new ways of buying and judging tv time, and that should be reflected in their upfront, or advance, buying for the fall season. (Page 26)

**Getting off to a late start,** Tokyo-based Dentsu, the world's largest advertising agency, is moving aggressively into Japan's booming cable tv industry. Planning to become both operators and program suppliers, Dentsu and its archrival, Hakuhodo, Japan's No. 2 advertising agency, are getting into the cable tv industry to ensure their considerable media buying power is not eroded by the growth of electronic alternatives to broadcast tv. (Page 40)

**Guarded optimism prevailed at Videotex '84.** Attendees at the Chicago exhibition last week seemed to believe that getting new videotex services and software into the marketplace will take more time and money than expected. Many attendees also admitted that teletext seems to be taking a back seat to videotex. (Pages 12 and 14)

## REGULAR FEATURES



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*Busy schedule blamed*

# Fowler delaying rules battle till 'after 1984'

By CRAIG LEDDY

WASHINGTON—The regulatory battle over tv program ownership and syndication rights has been put on ice until next year.

Mark Fowler, Federal Communications Commission chairman, last week called off the FCC's plan to ease the financial interest and network syndication rules until "after 1984."

Mr. Fowler made his statements April 20 during an informal luncheon with reporters in the commission meeting room.

Last fall, Mr. Fowler led an ill-fated drive to relax the rules, which currently bar ABC, CBS and NBC from owning and syndicating the shows they air.

The proposed rules change sparked an intense lobbying war between the networks, which were delighted with the plan, and the Hollywood community, which claimed the proposal would ruin many program producers and independent tv stations.

Under pressure from the White House and Congress, both of which sided with Hollywood, Mr. Fowler had vowed to delay the rules change until at least May 10.

But in his statements to reporters, Mr. Fowler indicated that the commission doesn't want to touch the issue until next year.

Mr. Fowler blamed a busy FCC agenda for causing the delay and said the lobbying war took "an undue toll" on commission resources and the commissioners themselves.

"As chairman, I'm unwilling to put us back into that maelstrom of lobbying," he said. "Frankly, some commissioners don't want me to bring it up."

In late March, 20 senators signed a letter to the FCC urging it to postpone any change in the rules for at least two years—a moratorium that reflects President Reagan's wishes (EM, April 5).

When asked if the delay was a response to the letter, Mr. Fowler said, "No, it's not being done because of pressure from the Hill."

Some of the more cynical reporters laughed at that statement, leading Mr. Fowler to grin and say, "Give me a break, will you now?"#

# Arbitron to reissue ratings

By MORRIE GELMAN

Arbitron Ratings Co. last week decided to reissue its fall radio ratings books for the San Francisco-San Jose area.

"We're going against our policy and are reissuing a book, though there were no mistakes made," a spokeswoman for the audience measurement company said.

The move was recommended by the Electronic Media Rating Council, an independent organization established to mediate audience measurement problems. It was formerly known as the Broadcast Rating Council.

The EMRC became involved after San Francisco-San Jose stations complained about the fall survey (EM, Jan. 26).

Specifically, complaining stations KABL (am, fm) said a San Francisco station, KYA (am), changed formats, ownership and call letters during the last two days of the survey, yet all of its ratings results were reported under the new call letters, KOIT (am).

Adding to the confusion, Arbitron listed KYA-FM as simply KYA because, after all, there was no KYA (am) in the book.

Protesting stations said the report confused time buyers.

The mediation panel convened April 12 in the Arbitron offices in New York. It recommended that Arbitron reissue the book, substituting the KYA (am) call letters for KOIT (am). In other words, KOIT (am) will not appear at all.

Meanwhile, KYA-FM will be shown under that designation rather than merely as KYA.

Before the mediation, Arbitron had not planned to reissue the San Francisco Bay Area reports.

The research company maintained it followed its usual policy of using the call letters that were in use at the end of the survey period.

The reissue is expected in May.#

# Cincinnati deal on again

By DAVID KLEIN

CINCINNATI—A unique rate arbitration agreement between Warner Amex Cable Communications and the city of Cincinnati is back on track after being derailed for two weeks by recalcitrant suburban officials (EM, April 12).

The agreement, first announced March 30, is designed to end a long-running feud between the city and the cable company over a controversial cable rate increase that took effect April 1.

Under the plan, both the city and Warner Amex would have to abide by the decision of a three-member arbitration panel, marking the first time arbitration has been used to settle a city-cable company dispute.

The plan ran into a serious snag almost immediately. Warner Amex officials had insisted on getting approval from at least 30 of the 40 Hamilton County communities where they have franchise agreements. But many of those suburban systems balked at being included in a potentially expensive arbitration proceeding.

### Series of meetings

To solve the problem, the Cincinnati city solicitor, Richard Castellini, began a series of meetings with suburban officials. And at a session April 16, the executive board of the Intercommunity Regulatory Commission, representing 24 suburbs, reversed its earlier stand and approved the arbitration agreement.

According to Aaron Mackey, president of the executive committee, three main factors were responsible for the turnaround:

- Concern over the cost of auditing Warner Amex before arbitration was eased when the city agreed to share the cost with each suburb on a prorated basis at a fee of 30¢ per subscriber. "I thought that was pretty fair," said Mr. Mackey.
- The original timetable for selecting arbitrators and making a decision, which many suburban officials felt was too rushed, has been relaxed.

Under the original plan, the arbitrators would have been selected by mid-April; that has been moved back to mid-May, with additional weeks added for deliberation.

- The fact that city officials took the effort to work things out with the suburbs helped immensely, according to Mr. Mackey.

"I was impressed that they wanted to show solidarity with the county," he said. "I thought this might be the beginning of other joint efforts on cable issues like this."

The executive committee's vote is not binding on its 24 member communities, but Mr. Castellini told Cincinnati city council members that he has firm commitments from 13 of the communities. Another seven, he added, would "probably" join.

### 'Feel confident'

"I feel confident that we're going to come very close to the number [30] we agreed on," he said.

Even those city council members who previously had threatened to sue Warner Amex over the rate increase now seem satisfied to stick with the arbitration agreement. The city council was to meet on April 25 to give final approval to the plan.

Richard Berman, Warner Amex's general counsel, was optimistic, too. "Having gotten this close to the guts of an agreement, I'd be surprised if we didn't work something out," he said.

The rate increase at issue hiked the monthly fee for Warner Amex's 42-channel Expanded tier from to $11.95 from $6.95 a month. On the 60-channel Qube tier, the fee increased to $13.95 from $9.45.

Warner Amex has about 140,000 subscribers in the greater Cincinnati area. About 50,000 of them live in the city.#

*David Klein is the tv critic for the* Cincinnati Post.

# Some dispute NCT

(Continued from Page 28)

even in a political speech and even where a speaker doesn't know he's inciting imminent violence. That speech is not protected."

Dr. Radecki says the group isn't against all forms of violence on tv.

He says it approves of shows containing "educational violence," designed to teach rather than entertain.

Such shows, he explains, include Shakespeare's plays and "The Day After," ABC's program about a nuclear holocaust.

One of the initial strategies of the NCTV was to spur boycotts of products advertised on shows containing high levels of violence.

But the coalition largely has abandoned that approach because, Dr. Radecki admits, it hasn't been too successful.

The group's literature urges its readers to send letters to the networks and to Congress to bring about a reduction in tv violence.

Officials at the major commercial networks say they receive few complaints about violent fare, that most complaints about program content concern sex and blasphemy.

In an effort to heighten public concerns over tv, the NCTV has in the past year begun pushing for legislation that would require the commercial networks to provide one ad spot to tv violence opponents for every three ads containing violent promotional material for a network program.

The NCTV has a Washington staff member, David Hostetter, a 1983 graduate of Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa., who shares office space with the Telecommunications Research Action Center.

Mr. Hostetter says the legislation has picked up endorsements by many public interest groups, but Congress is wary of dealing with it, particularly in an election year.

Endorsements have always been part of NCTV's strategy. After its formation, the organization began collecting formal endorsements from top psychiatrists, psychologists, hospitals and other organizations.

But several of those listed as endorsers in the NCTV's recent newsletters told ELECTRONIC MEDIA that they aren't actually endorsers of the organization.

"Where did you pick this up?" said an astonished Fred Seligman, when told that the child and adolescent psychiatry department he heads at the University of Miami School of Medicine is listed as an NCTV endorser.

"We don't go around endorsing groups," Dr. Seligman insisted.

After ELECTRONIC MEDIA's inquiry, he dashed off a letter to the NCTV asking for an explanation.

Dr. Radecki insists the NCTV has signed statements from every individual and institution it lists as an endorser.

Some administrators of institutions may not be aware that a previous director endorsed the NCTV, and some people endorsing as individuals may accidentally have signed up the organization they work for, he explains.

When asked about this, Dr. Seligman said he has been at the department since the late 1960s and that neither he nor his predecessor, who is a close friend of his, would make such an endorsement.

## Shouldn't have been listed

Officials at the Children's Orthopedic Hospital and Medical Center in Seattle say their hospital shouldn't have been listed as an endorser, either.

"The hospital board doesn't do those sorts of things," said Sue Macek, the hospital's communications director.

However, the NCTV then produced an endorsement sheet dated in 1981 and signed by Truman Katz, the chief executive officer of the hospital then and now.

In response, Ms. Macek stood firm. "We are not affiliating ourselves with NCTV," she said.

"We felt it was presumptuous on their part to continue an affiliation based on an agreement signed back in 1981."

Mr. Katz couldn't be reached.

Dr. Radecki said the hospital's name would be removed from the endorsement list.

The director of the Children's Treatment Center in Ontario, which also is listed as an NCTV endorser, said that organization, too, is not affiliated with the coalition, though a previous director, who left the center in 1981, had signed an endorsement sheet.

Bob McAllister, the former host of "Wonderama," a children's show on WNEW-TV in New York, says he was aware that the NCTV used his name several years ago, but he doesn't recall signing any endorsement sheet.

Mr. McAllister believes the NCTV got his name from an ad he placed in the *New York Times* objecting to a violent promotional tv commercial aired during "Wonderama."

Mr. McAllister said his name was taken off the list after he appeared with Dr. Radecki in a panel discussion and "we didn't hit it off too well."

Mr. McAllister adds: "The basic idea I agree with—cutting back on violence on tv. But I think this Radecki is on his own ego trip."

## Know little about NCTV

The NCTV has been endorsed by many top doctors, but some of those say they know little about the group and that they endorsed it merely as a means of endorsing the cause against violence.

"I've heard some uncomfortable things about the group and have sometimes been on the verge of having my name removed as one of the endorsers," said a top tv violence researcher, who asked not to be identified.

"On the other hand, frankly, I feel the issue, no matter what the group is about, is a real one. Sometimes you have to stand up and scream about it in order to get something accomplished."

Milton Eisenhower, professor emeritus at Johns Hopkins University and former chairman of the President's Commission on the Prevention of Violence, says he is convinced that tv violence is harmful, particularly for young people.

"But I don't know offhand about that association," says Dr. Eisenhower, who is listed as an endorser. "What is its formal name again?"

After checking his files, Dr. Eisenhower found that he had, in fact, endorsed the group in December, 1980. When asked what he knew about the NCTV, he said, "Not a great deal. But I am against violence on television."

Some person, including those who have completed research on the effects of tv violence, are pleased to support a group that is standing up for their side.

"The purpose [of the NCTV] is to inform the public that the amount of violence on tv may not be healthy, particularly for children. So that's why I lent my name," says Lester Grinspoon, associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

One endorser, John Paul Brady, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, says he donated about $50 to the NCTV "because I feel it's a useful cause, because the evidence that violence adversely affects viewers is very good."

And another endorser, Edgar O'Neal, chairman of the department of psychology at Tulane University, calls the NCTV "a very good organization" and says the group's newsletters are useful.

In recent literature, the NCTV lists as its board members Grace Baisinger, past president of the National PTA; Townes Osborn, president of the Washington Assn. for Television and Children; Nelson Price, public media director of United Methodist Communications; Dr. Radecki, and Mr. Simon.

John Lion, a professor in the department of psychiatry at the University of Maryland, also is listed as a board member in recent releases, though he resigned last summer.

Another board member, who asked not to be named, explained that the group merely is trying to save money by using old stationery bearing Dr. Lion's name.

"It's bad practice, but that's what he [Dr. Radecki] does," the member said.

The same source said Dr. Lion resigned due to disagreements with Dr. Radecki.

Dr. Lion's response to the report couldn't be obtained; he didn't return repeated phone calls to his office.

## One-third of the budget

Dr. Radecki says he contributes about one-third of the NCTV's annual budget of $100,000, while the rest comes from the group's some "2,000 to 3,000 members."

He says members give an average of $20, while a few give $200 or more. Among the heavy contributors is Dr. Radecki's brother, Patrick, a physician in Oregon.

Last year, the American Medical Assn. granted $8,250 to the NCTV to help it run a conference on tv violence in Washington last October.

An AMA spokeswoman says the membership wanted to reassert its concern over the issue.

Dr. Radecki says that before his days with the NCTV, he urged Action for Children's Television, a public interest group, to get involved in the tv violence issue and that he sent ACT $1,000.

But Peggy Charren, president of ACT, disputes Dr. Radecki's report.

"I guarantee you," Ms. Charren says, "it was not $1,000. He may have sent some small amount, but not $1,000."

She says ACT hasn't affiliated itself with the NCTV because "they're talking about ad boycotts, rating programs, wiping violence off tv and censuring programs. These ways of doing business are more of a problem than the violence on tv."

In its effort to educate viewers about tv violence, the NCTV has had the most success gaining publicity with quarterly monitoring reports.

The reports list the number of violent acts contained in broadcast and cable programs.

For example, in the fourth quarter, 1983, results, "The A Team" and "The Fall Guy" clocked in as the heavyweights of violence, both with 46 acts per hour.

## About 9,000 newsletters

The NCTV sends out about 9,000 of its quarterly newsletters, including some 1,000 to the press and about 500 to tv stars.

The results have been published widely by the press and have been the basis for appearances by Dr. Radecki on numerous tv and radio programs in the U.S. and abroad.

But some leading researchers question the methods NCTV uses to generate its findings.

"Tom Radecki is going around spouting a lot of figures, but we don't really know how he arrives at it," says George Gerbner, dean and associate professor of communications at the Annenberg School of Communications.

Mr. Gerbner, who has conducted extensive tv research for the past 15 years, says one of his associates consulted with the NCTV when the group initially established its methodology. But the NCTV, he says, has since "somewhat departed from it, from what I understand."

According to a statement of its monitoring procedures, the NCTV defines a violent act as "interpersonal violence: The deliberate and hostile use of overt force (or the immediate and direct threat) by one individual, an agent, coercively against another individual, a victim."

Based on their severity, the acts are

(Continued on Page 34)

## NCTV VIOLENCE RATINGS

### HIGH VIOLENCE

| Program* | Network | Acts per hour |
|---|---|---|
| The A Team | NBC | 46 |
| The Fall Guy | ABC | 46 |
| T.J. Hooker | ABC | 29 |
| Magnum, P.I. | CBS | 22 |
| Simon & Simon | CBS | 20 |
| Hart to Hart | ABC | 18 |
| Remington Steele | NBC | 15 |
| Dukes of Hazzard | CBS | 14 |
| The Yellow Rose | NBC | 11 |
| Ripley's Believe It or Not | ABC | 10 |

### LOW VIOLENCE

| Program* | Network | Acts per hour |
|---|---|---|
| Diff'rent Strokes | NBC | 2 |
| Hotel | ABC | 2 |
| Real People | NBC | 2 |
| Three's Company | ABC | 2 |
| Fantasy Island | ABC | 1 |
| 60 Minutes | CBS | 1 |
| Love Boat | ABC | 1 |
| Facts of Life | NBC | 0 |
| The Jeffersons | CBS | 0 |
| One Day at a Time | CBS | 0 |

*A sampling of the fourth quarter 1983 NCTV monitoring results

# NCTV: Highly visible, little known

(Continued from Page 1)
cizes its counts of violent acts contained in broadcast and cable tv fare.

The findings fuel criticism of Mr. T's brutishness, Bugs Bunny's antics and Michael Jackson's pop videos, to name a few.

But despite its high visibility and loud voice, the NCTV remains largely unknown to much of the public. Few seem to know or understand much about its purpose, its background and its methodology.

To learn more about the organization, ELECTRONIC MEDIA recently conducted a lengthy investigation that included interviews with many people familiar with the group.

Among the findings:

- Some of the endorsers listed on the NCTV's official stationery say they are nothing of the sort.
- The group's violence-measuring methodology is disputed by some leading authorities on tv violence, including George Gerbner, a scholar long identified as being decidedly independent of the broadcasting industry.
- The organization's largest single source of funding appears to be Dr. Radecki himself.
- The NCTV's violence monitoring is done by four parttime employes and a recently hired fulltime director. They have received two weeks of training, all of it in-house.

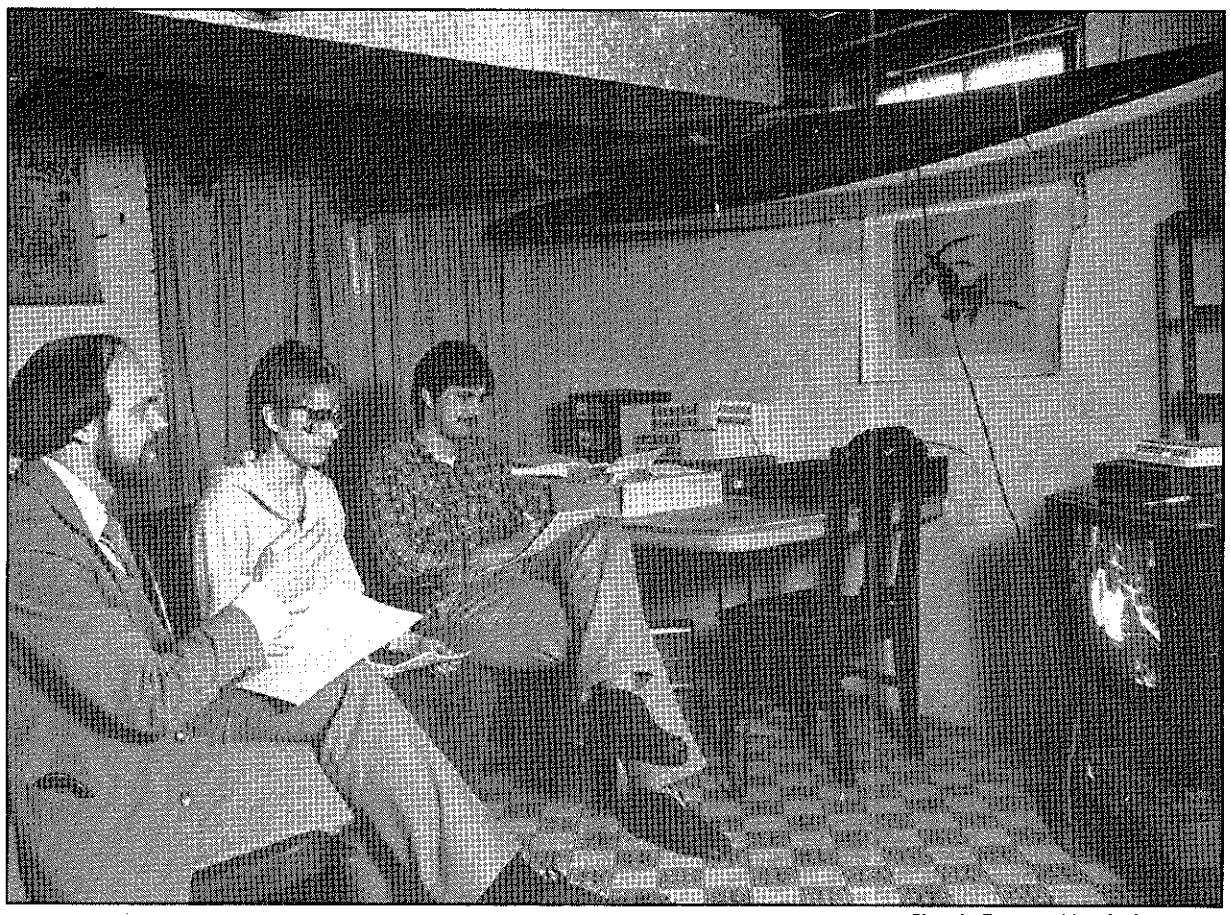

*Photo for ELECTRONIC MEDIA by Curt Beamer*

**Thomas Radecki**, chairperson of the National Coalition on Television Violence, monitors a tv program for violence with two of the coalition's raters, Ruth Crayton and Jim Beeson.

Indeed, the NCTV seems to stir nearly as much controversy as the issue of tv violence that is its focal point.

On one side of the issue stand the organization's supporters, who praise the work of Dr. Radecki's coalition in raising America's conscience about tv violence.

On the other side are Dr. Radecki's critics, who condemn the group's action as the work of "a zealot."

Meanwhile, much of the television industry incorrectly equates the coalition with conservative advocacy groups such as the Rev. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority or the Rev. Don Wildmon's National Federation for Decency.

The NCTV is affiliated with neither.

In fact, the NCTV was spun off in 1979 from the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting (since renamed the Telecommunications Research Action Center), a public interest organization.

At that time, the NCCB was chaired by the widely known consumer activist Ralph Nader. Mr. Nader, however, says he had virtually no involvement in creating the NCTV.

The coalition, based in Champaign, Ill., with office space in Washington, claims to have grown to more than 2,000 members.

It is led by a five-member board of directors and supported by an annual budget of approximately $100,000, according to Dr. Radecki.

Dr. Radecki provides about one-third of the budget himself, and insiders say the direction of the group is almost totally in his hands.

The coalition's primary stated purpose is to educate viewers about the dangers of tv violence and spur public pressure against broadcast and cable tv networks. The goal is to reduce violent program content by 75%.

That educational effort includes an ongoing drive to legislatively force the commercial networks to provide air time to opponents of tv violence.

The NCTV points to stacks of research showing a causal relationship between tv violence and aggression and some even suggesting that watching violence has resulted in more crime.

On the other side, various researchers point to studies suggesting different conclusions, and the tv networks note research indicating that tv violence has no harmful effects.

The group started out to deal "only with tv violence," as an introductory pamplet states.

Over the years, its newsletters have broadened to attack many areas of the media, some related to tv and others a bit more distant. It has scrutinized, for example, movies, pornographic magazines, hostile humor, board games, comic books, children's toys, alcohol abuse, sports and the names of punk rock bands.

More recently, the NCTV has reached across the border to establish an International Coalition Against Violent Entertainment. Together, the NCTV and similar groups in other countries are fighting violence in media worldwide.

Dr. Radecki admits that, with what is essentially a low-budget operation, his group's workings aren't always perfect.

But he strongly defends his cause and his methodology, charging that criticism of the NCTV's practices is designed to obscure a highly important social issue.

**'We hope that we can some day, here in the United States, get so we can start locking up the producers and distributors of obscene violence. Once we can start putting these people in prison, I think the situation will change. It's only a matter of time.'**

**—Thomas Radecki, NCTV chairperson**

Dr. Radecki and his supporters say they're upset about a world in which shows containing high violence turn big network profits; where a young man shoots the President of the U.S. to prove his love for an actress, and where 29 individuals shoot themselves to death, allegedly imitating the Russian roulette scene in "The Deer Hunter."

By all indications, Dr. Radecki is extremely concerned about violence in entertainment.

In between practicing psychiatry in Champaign and Decatur, Ill., and teaching parttime at Southern Illinois University, he volunteers much of his energy, time and money to the NCTV cause.

The son of a Toledo, O., anesthesiologist, Dr. Radecki was attending Ohio State University's medical school when he became particularly concerned about violence in entertainment.

### The final straw

He says the final straw was "A Clockwork Orange," the futuristic, crime-laden movie directed by Stanley Kubrick.

Dr. Radecki calls it "a big excuse to put a lot of violence on the screen.

"There was a scene in the movie where a bunch of punks walk under a footbridge and there's a drunk lying on the side, and they kick and beat him up and then go on whistling Beethoven and having fun," he recalls.

The film affected him profoundly, he says.

"There's a tunnel which connects the medical school to the hospital at Ohio State," he says, "and I was, the next day, going through that tunnel and there was this nurse about 30 yards in front of me, and I had a flash of her being on the ground and me kicking and beating her.

"I related right away where that thought and feeling came from. Obviously it came from the movie, and I had put myself in the position of the very people I was objecting to.

"It's a very common occurrence, I find. I always assume that I'm pretty normal. . .I think it's normal for us to put ourselves in these different roles and different experiences.

"I was quite upset that here I was having very violent feelings because of some stupid movie."

So Dr. Radecki took matters into his own hands.

During the mid to late 1970s, he sent several thousand dollars to the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting, along with letters urging the group to combat tv violence.

He ran a conference on entertainment violence for the now-defunct Committee for Children's Television, a group formerly based in San Francisco.

As the clinical director for a community mental health center in Hazard, Ky., a little town in the hilly southeastern part of the state, he formed a small group called Kentuckians Against Violence in the Media.

He wrote a column on mental health issues, including violence in the media, that ran in several local Kentucky newspapers.

At about the same time, the NCCB, which was concerned about tv violence, was finding that it had little time and money to carry the torch for the issue.

The NCCB was then directed by Nicholas Johnson, a former Federal Communications Commission commissioner. It was under the public interest umbrella of Mr. Nader's organizations.

From 1975 to 1977, the group had paid a Washington company to monitor programs for violent content.

The NCCB's interest in the issue was sparked largely by a 1972 U.S. Surgeon General's report linking the viewing of tv violence to increased aggression, according to Sam Simon, an NCTV board member.

Mr. Simon is now executive director of the revamped NCCB, now the Telecommunications Research Action Center.

By 1978, the NCCB was too financially plagued to continue the tv monitoring. Leaders felt a separate group was needed to address the violence issue, Mr. Simon says.

It was Dr. Radecki who picked up the torch.

In November, 1979, the NCTV held its first meeting. The following March, it incorporated as a nonprofit organization.

In an interview, Mr. Johnson, the former FCC commissioner and NCCB leader, who now teaches at the University of Iowa, recalled that he was impressed by Dr. Radecki's eagerness to jump into the fray, to "get a plow and do it."

Although Mr. Nader was chairman of the NCCB when the NCTV was formed, he says he never involved himself in the creation of the violence-opposing group.

"He was philosophically supportive, but he's never actually officially endorsed us," Dr. Radecki says.

### Monitoring facilities

Once the NCTV was established, Dr. Radecki, who moved to Illinois to begin private psychiatric practice, set up monitoring facilities.

A rather prolific writer, he also began publishing pamphlets, newsletters and press releases.

The NCTV decided against having the Washington company conduct the monitoring. Dr. Radecki says the service was unreliable, too expensive and could be done better in-house.

He says his organization's newsletters and other releases are designed to educate viewers about the potential dangers of violent entertainment.

Dr. Radecki insists the NCTV doesn't favor censorship. But during a tape-recorded interview with ELECTRONIC MEDIA, he said:

"We hope that we can some day, here in the United States, get so we can start locking up the producers and distributors of obscene violence.

"Once we can start putting these people in prison, I think the situation will change. It's only a matter of time."

Asked whether that would violate the First Amendment, Dr. Radecki replied, "These programs are inciting imminent violence, and the First Amendment does not protect the incitement of imminent violence,

(Continued on Page 30)

# NCTV cries out, others cry foul

*(Continued from Page 30)*
weighted on a scale of 1 (low violence) to 5 (high violence).

Therefore, according to the NCTV's statement of monitoring procedures, a stabbing would be rated as a 5, hitting with a fist as a 3 and a mild push as a 1.

Then the rater watching the program is allowed to add or subtract "discretionary points."

For a really severe violent act, such as "shooting someone in the face at close range with a shotgun," the procedures allow for a score of 6 rather than 5.

On the other hand, "swatting a young child with a newspaper and making him cry," would be given a 2 rather than a 3.

Slapstick and violence in documentaries is scored the same as if it were in a dramatic context "because research clearly demonstrates negative effects resulting from violent portrayals in any form," the procedures state.

Even situation comedies such "Cheers" and "Happy Days" have "some violence," according to the NCTV.

In results for the fourth quarter of 1983, "Cheers" registered four violent acts per hour while "Happy Days" had three, according to the NCTV.

Sports violence isn't counted unless the incident occurs outside the parameters of the game, such as a fight in a hockey game.

## Special schedule

Cable tv has a special discretionary point schedule. Films shown on Home Box Office and other cable networks can receive a 7 "for those acts of extreme violence which, in the monitor's judgment, would likely be edited out if the film were shown on commercial television."

According to the NCTV's scores, cable movie networks such as HBO and Showtime/The Movie Channel have far outpaced the commercial networks in airing violence.

Recently, the group monitored music videos and listed many, including those by the popular singer Michael Jackson, with a large "V" for containing violent scenes.

For the so-called prime time soap operas such as "Dallas" and "Dynasty," the NCTV has instituted a new designation.

Such shows, though low in physical violence, are marked with an asterisk, which stands for "high emotional violence."

The monitors' weighted scores are standardized by a mathematical formula that figures out the number of "standard" violent acts —the middle score of 3—per hour for each show.

According to Dr. Radecki, the NCTV currently is using this mathematical formula: The total weighted scores multiplied by 20 and divided by the length of the program.

Asked why the number 20 is used in the equation, Dr. Radecki, after seeming to grope for a way to explain it, said the figure comes from dividing the number of minutes in an hour—60—by the NCTV's middle score of 3 violent acts per hour.

"It makes it easier for the monitors," he continued. "By multiplying it first by 20, then dividing by 60, they're able to calculate in acts per hour."

For example, using the formula, an hourlong show containing five acts of severe violence, all scored 5, comes out with 8.33 acts per hour, which the group would round off to 8.

An hourlong show with low violence—say, five 1s—comes out 1.66, which NCTV would round off to 2.

Because the formula is used, the NCTV's final violence count isn't necessarily the actual number of violent incidents contained in the program. It is, instead, a projection of sorts. This is not explained in the NCTV newsletters.

Dr. Radecki says the monitors don't always see every episode of the shows and some episodes are preempted by other programs during the quarter.

But that isn't indicated in the quarter-year results, which are released as though 11 to 13 weeks worth of episodes were actually viewed.

Therefore, "Laverne and Shirley" once tallied nine incidents of violence per hour in a quarter, though, according to Dr. Radecki, only three episodes were observed, one of which contained repeated fighting between the two girls.

## Crying foul

Such methodology has the networks and some independent researchers loudly crying foul.

They say the method of weighting the incidents, adding discretionary points and counting comedic violence creates highly subjective results.

Dr. Radecki counters such criticism by saying, "It's all pretty much in a cookbook way so nobody can make a mistake."

Mr. Gerbner suggests that listing violence by programs is meaningless because there rarely are enough episodes to form a representative sample for scientific analysis.

"The problem is you can find a show that has a whole sequence of violent scenes and count them, then next week you can have a different number," he says.

"You need a large number to find a representative sample, and by the time you get that the show is off the air," Mr. Gerbner adds.

Mr. Gerbner and his associates publish aggregate data by network and total network programing.

The NCTV publishes total network, but it is based on the data from individual shows.

Vivian-Sue Penn, a New Jersey researcher who has conducted violence-monitoring projects for the National PTA, says it "doesn't make sense" to count slapstick as violence.

## 'Gratuitous tv violence'

Dr. Penn and the NPTA are highly concerned about the effects of "gratuitous tv violence" on children.

One of the NPTA's complaints has been that tv presents a false picture of the actual consequences of such incidents.

At one time, the NPTA monitored programs, and it still offers to help schools with monitoring projects.

But, the organization said it largely has abandoned its own tv monitoring in place of more subjective analysis of what constitutes wholesome family viewing.

One of the problems with its monitoring was that it found that "people see different things," Dr. Penn says.

Additionally, Richard Milavsky, vp-news and social research for NBC, complains that violence counts don't provide the important element of the context in which the act occurred, be it "The A-Team," "Bugs Bunny" or "Hamlet."

Mr. Gerbner and Mr. Milavsky, who holds a doctorate in sociology from Columbia University, say the main problem with the NCTV's results is that the group doesn't publish its methodology, so few people know how the figures are derived.

Dr. Radecki notes that every newsletter states that, for $1, the NCTV will send a complete set of the monitoring procedure sheets and results. Few people have asked for them, he adds.

When asked why the monitoring releases don't include the procedures, Dr. Radecki said most research results aren't released in that manner and no newspapers would bother running that information anyway.

Mr. Milavsky, who initially was hired by NBC to conduct research on tv violence, charges that the NCTV is "not a scientific outfit. They're amateurs. . .they're doing this to make a point, a political point."

Dr. Radecki responds that the raters are "certainly professionally trained. I'm a professional psychiatrist."

The NCTV monitoring is done by four people, all of whom are college graduates. Each is paid about $230 a month for 22 hours of work, which covers the amount of prime time programing in a week.

## Monitoring director

The NCTV recently hired as its monitoring director Michael Withrow, a 1982 graduate of Eastern Illinois University who majored in speech and communications.

Mr. Withrow says he hadn't worked on any monitoring project prior to joining the NCTV. He says he heard about the job through a classified ad in the local paper.

According to Mr. Withrow, the other raters include two mothers with small children, a parttime graduate school student and another person with a parttime job.

Dr. Radecki says the raters receive about two weeks of in-house training.

Using videocassette recorders to aid their viewing, the raters score acts of violence and write down what type of incident occurred and what characters were involved.

Reliability checks are performed on one out of every seven hours of programing, according to Dr. Radecki. In other words, for one of out every seven hours of viewing, a rater's score is checked against the view of Dr. Radecki, Mr. Withrow or another rater.

The group also checks for "drift," in which it attempts to ensure that the raters are applying the same definition at the current time as it was before.

Disagreements occasionally occur over the weighting of incidents, but Mr. Withrow says the raters agree about 72% of the time.

"That might not sound like a lot," says Dr. Radecki, "but when you're doing 520 hours a year, that's a lot of reliability."

Despite the reliability checks, Mr. Gerbner remains skeptical.

"By our method, which is very expensive and very cumbersome, you have to have about 12 coders, at least four of whom watch every program," Mr. Gerbner says. "We demand a high degree of agreement of four coders before we report any observation."

Backed by its numbers, the NCTV claims that violence on tv is rising dramatically.

Mr. Gerbner, however, says the violence count has remained "remarkably stable, that it hasn't changed more than 5% or 10% up or down in the past 15 years, despite all the discussion and agitation."

The issue of tv violence has swept across a wide path of the entertainment, medical, psychology and education fields.

The NCTV and those of a similar view contend that tv violence begets violence in real life. A susceptible person watching violent acts on tv is more likely to commit similar violence or acts of crime in the real world, they say.

In its newsletters, the NCTV notes research, including studies by the American Medical Assn. and the National Institute of Mental Health, that link tv viewing of violence to increased aggression.

In an effort to dispel such notions, the major tv networks have publicized studies suggesting an opposite conclusion.

The tv violence researchers and the network researchers stand on either side, claiming that the other's conclusions were subjective or that the procedure was flawed.

It has only been in about the last 15 years that a concrete body of research has developed to examine violence and aggression.

One of the main criticisms—and even Mr. Gerbner is among those voicing it—is that most of the research has been confined to laboratory settings, rather than the real world.

More recently, there have been several extensive field studies and "longitudinal" projects that examine changes in tv viewers over time. But even these have reached conflicting conclusions.

## 'Mean world syndrome'

Through extensive surveys of viewers, Mr. Gerbner and his associates have concluded that exposure to extensive tv violence creates what they call the "mean world syndrome," a feeling of being victimized by a world full of dangers.

"It generates a sense of insecurity, a mild paranoia, a demand for protection, a mistrust of other people and a sort of hierarchy of fear, a sense of 'what is your place and how vulnerable are you?' " Mr. Gerbner says.

The National Institute of Mental Health soon will publish the next phase of a 14-year longitudinal study suggesting that watching violent programing at a young age is a predictor of behavior many years later.

According to David Pearl, a NIMH spokesman, those who viewed extensive tv violence at an early age had more public records of convictions, spouse and child abuse and alcoholism.

NBC, on the other hand, last year culminated a 14-year study finding "no evidence of a causal connection between television violence and the development of aggressive behavior patterns among children and adolescents."

Based on its findings, NBC questions the results of the NIMH study.#

## CALENDAR

### April

April 28, **30th annual Program of the Legal Aspects of the Entertainment Industry**, co-sponsored by the Beverly Hills Bar Assn. and the University of Southern California Law Center, Bovard Auditorium, USC campus, Los Angeles. Information: Bruce M. Ramer/Steven Fayne, 213-743-2582.

April 29-May 2, **National Assn. of Broadcasters** annual convention, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. Information: NAB, 202-293-3500.

April 30-May 4, **"Communications Issues: Challenges for 1984 and Beyond,"** a series of themed events, California State University, Fullerton, Cal. Information: Kristi Heim, 714-773-2507.

### May

May 3, **"The Shape of TV to Come: Programming Trends of the 80's,"** sponsored by Women in Cable, Chicago Chapter, Como Inn, Chicago. Information: Joan Etten, 312-674-4600.

May 5, **Caucus Cable Symposium**, sponsored by the Caucus for Producers, Writers & Directors and University of California at Los Angeles, UCLA campus, Los Angeles. Information: David Levy, 213-652-0222.

May 6-9, **Concert Music Broadcasters Assn.** convention, Warwick Hotel, New York. Information: Warren Bodow, 212-556-1181.

May 7-9, **1984 Denver Sat Expo and Satellite-Direct Conference** sponsored by Channel Guide, Sheraton/Denver Tech Center, Denver. Information: Leslie Howard, 303-761-1135.

May 7-9, **ABC-TV affiliates meeting**, Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Jeff Duclos, 213-557-6605.

May 11, **Academy of Television Arts & Sciences** forum luncheon, Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Hank Rieger, 213-681-6030.

May 13-16, **CBS-TV affiliates meeting**, Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Hal Biard, 213-852-2019.

May 15, **Southern Califoria Cable Assn.** luncheon meeting, Los Angeles Airport Hilton, Los Angeles. Information: Sandy Schultz, 213-684-7024.

May 20-22, **NBC-TV affiliates meeting**, Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles. Information: Gene Shepherd, 213-840-3637.

May 20-23, **The Broadcast Financial Management Assn.** 24th annual conference, the Grand Hyatt Hotel, New York. Information: Carlene Krantz, 312-332-1295.

May 20-26, **Fifth annual Banff Television Festival**, Banff Springs Hotel, Banff, Alta., Canada. Information: Carrie Hunter, 403-762-6400.

May 25, **Microwave Communication Assn.** seminar on "Multichannel Mds," Mayflower Hotel, Washington. Information: Rhonda Vega, 301-437-7000.

May 29-June 2, **Chicago '84, The Challenge of Creativity** 33rd annual convention, American Women in Radio and Television, Palmer House, Chicago. Information: AWRT, 202-296-0009.

May 31, **"The New Technologies: Changes and Challenges in Public Relations,"** hosted by the Media Institute, Hyatt Regency, Dallas. Information: Sarah Midgley, 202-298-7512.

## VIEWPOINT

# Monitoring the NCTV

On the front page of this issue, reporter Craig Leddy of our Washington bureau presents a story that should be of interest to everyone in the broadcasting industry.

It is an in-depth, carefully crafted, cooly objective examination of the National Coalition on Television Violence, one of many interest groups attempting to influence tv programing.

We urge you to take the time to read Mr. Leddy's story. We think you will find it fair and quite interesting.

It is interesting because it sheds some long-overdue light on an increasingly visible and potentially important organization, the NCTV. Perhaps more importantly, it tells the broader story of how easy it is for television's critics to attract a great deal of attention while escaping a great deal of scrutiny.

For a while now, some of the news media's most influential organizations, including some in broadcasting, have given the NCTV and its leader, Thomas Radecki, a powerful platform from which to launch antiviolence broadsides.

Yet few, if any, appear to have examined the source and the methodology behind some of those charges. Had they done so, as Mr. Leddy has done, they would have found serious questions that go to the heart of the organization's credibility.

There is, for example, the fact that some of the country's leading experts on the subject of tv violence—including some who are steadfastly independent of the broadcasting industry—sharply disagree with the NCTV's method of counting and evaluating violence.

Still on the all-important subject of credibility, some of the endorsers the NCTV lists on its official documents say they are nothing of the sort. Others confess to knowing little about the NCTV. Still others say they support the group simply because they oppose tv violence.

There are even signs that the organization the national media have seen fit to bring to national prominence is largely a one-man show. Indeed, Dr. Radecki apparently contributes at least one third of the NCTV's modest funding.

What is called into account here is not the sincerity, dedication or good intentions of Dr. Radecki and his group; there is no reason to doubt the NCTV on any of those points. But there is ample reason to question whether, at this stage in its existence, the NCTV has the credibility, influence and expertise to make it a widely quoted source on the subject of tv violence.

Furthermore, we wonder why more of those people and organizations that have seen fit to amplify the NCTV's voice—even to lend their names to it at times—haven't also seen fit to investigate it. Perhaps, in a strange twist of reasoning, they don't think tv is important enough to take *that* seriously.

Those who read ELECTRONIC MEDIA regularly know we take considerable pride in functioning independently of the areas we cover. In other words, we are not a mouthpiece for the broadcasting industry, nor any other segment of society.

We also happen to think that the issue of tv violence is important and worthy of continued exploration.

With that said, it nevertheless troubles us that it is so easy for so few to fire so many shots at television without ever being asked to step from behind the trees to fully identify and explain themselves.

Perhaps too many are simply too willing to believe what television's critics say.#

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Conservatives failing to credit independent thinkers

Regarding your article about Accuracy in Media's intimation that ABC may have "played into communist sympathies" in its broadcast of "The Day After" (EM, April 12), I am tired of being told, by President Reagan on down the conservative line, that I am a dupe of Soviet communists because I support a nuclear weapons freeze.

Since the freeze resolution has missed passage in the House by fewer than a handful of votes, I assume that, according to these people's criteria, much of our government is made up of naive, albeit well-meaning, simpletons.

And what are these people saying about the millions of constituents who influenced those votes? National media polls have shown that almost three-fourths of those surveyed support a weapons freeze.

Living as I do in a small, "middle America" town, it might surprise AIM's representatives to know what kind of people in my area support the freeze and other disarmament measures, including: Clergymen, retired educators, ex-Atomic Energy Commission project chemists, former county Civil Defense directors, college physics instructors, factory workmen, physicians, business leaders, local Republican Party leaders, city mayors and mothers.

Please give us a *little* credit for independent thinking. While the nuclear dilemma seems hopelessly complex—and the freeze hopelessly simplistic to some—you have to start somewhere. Those who support the freeze are just trying to become part of the solution instead of part of the problem.

**Elaine Cale,**
**West Burlington, Ia.**

# Daytime points explained

Regarding the article "Daytimers seek more time," in the April 12 issue, apparently the North Carolina daytimer is unaware of the provisions of the Federal Communications Commission rules, Sect. 73.1250. The rules state that am stations may use full daytime facilities at night in emergency situations, including tornadoes.

Also, it would seem that engineer Charles Jackson is not familiar with "sunset skip," which is known to produce very strong skywave signals during the periods immediately before and after sunrise and sunset. This could definitely create an interference problem if many more stations were operating during these time periods.

As you see by the letterhead, I am employed at an fm station, so I'm not promoting a vested interest by the above comments. I just want the facts to be made more clear.

**Glen Kippel,**
**chief engineer, KAMB (fm),**
**Merced, Cal.**

# Waterbury, not Westbury

We appreciated your article about Odyssey Partners' purchase of WPOQ-TV in Charlotte (EM, April 5). However, there was one factual error relating to the other stations that the group owns.

Odyssey Partners purchased WTXX-TV in Waterbury, Conn., in April, 1982. Your article referred to "Westbury," Conn. WTXX-TV was the first station purchased by Odyssey.

Please note this correction: The nearest Westbury is on Long Island in New York state!

**Michael Watt,**
**promotion manager, WTXX-TV,**
**Waterbury, Conn.**

## EM welcomes letters

ELECTRONIC MEDIA welcomes letters to the editor. If you want to speak out, write to Viewpoint, ELECTRONIC MEDIA, 740 Rush St., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

All letters are subject to publication provided they are signed and neither defame nor libel individuals or organizations. Letters may be shortened and grammatical errors corrected.

As a matter of policy, writers' names are published.

However, exceptions may be granted upon request of the writer if, in the opinion of editors, the reason is sufficiently compelling.


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# 'Electronic church' not proselytizing

## Study says tv not draining participation

By CRAIG LEDDY

The age of the "electronic church," via religious broadcasting, hasn't had much influence in raising or lowering religious participation, according to a recently released study.

The two-year study was conducted by the Annenberg School of Communications, Philadelphia, and the Gallup Organization, Princeton, N.J.

It was sponsored by 30 churches and other organizations, including the National Religious Broadcasters, PTL Network and Old Time Gospel Hour.

### Not responsible

The researchers said religious television broadcasting hasn't been responsible for a decline in church attendance.

But religious broadcasting's fundamentalist revival and the day of tv evangelism isn't spurring large numbers of religious converts, either, the researchers say.

Rather, the study suggests that religious broadcasting's audience is a stable one with a long-standing allegiance to organized religion.

"Television ministries have been suspected of causing or at least contributing to the erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions and general participation," says George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School and one of the researchers.

"Our study found no support for that charge," Mr. Gerbner said.

A network tv researcher, who asked not to be named, questioned this conclusion by saying that, at initial examination, it appeared to be molded to fit the needs of the sponsors of the study.

### Regular viewers

According to the group's survey, religious broadcasting has about 13.2 million regular viewers, which comprise about 6.2% of all television households.

That size audience is smaller than other studies have suggested, the study's researchers said.

"The programs appeal to an older, traditional audience, and watching these programs appears to be a confirmation of their religious beliefs, not a substitute for them.

"Their interest in the electronic church is complementary to other forms of religious practice, like church worship," the study said.#

Electronic Media 4/26/84

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# Study says religious TV doesn't replace church

NEW YORK (NC) – The "electronic church" does not take people away from local churches, and viewers continue to participate in and support financially their local congregations, said the authors of a study on religious television at a news conference April 16.

The researchers said the "electronic church" wins few new converts and its national audience of 13.3 million people is smaller than often estimated.

By "electronic church," the researchers meant any religious program sponsored by a religious group.

The study was conducted by the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization. It was commissioned by the Ad Hoc Committee on Electronic Church Research, a broad coalition of church and independent religious agencies including the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Council of Churches and National Religious Broadcasters.

The researchers said viewers of religious television do not reduce support for their churches. Their conclusion is based on a national survey conducted in the spring of 1983 in which 954 viewers of religious broadcasting and 1,049 non-viewers were interviewed.

"Religious program audiences find no conflict between syndicated religious television programs and more traditional forms of worship," says the report summary. "They see them as complementary and mutually reinforcing activities rather than as substitutes for one another."

The audience for religious programming is "what religious audiences have always been: somewhat older, lower in education and income, more conservative, more 'fundamentalist' and more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest than those who do not watch religious programs," the surveyors found.

The researchers also analyzed the content of 101 national and local religious programs broadcast in Philadelphia and Atlanta over a three-week period in 1982. It compared two basic groups, those sponsored by independent "television ministries" and those sponsored by main-line churches.

Gerbner said the two groups of programs had many similarities, touching upon politics with about the same frequency, focusing alike on behavioral problems and mentioning theology only rarely.

A main difference, he said, was that the independently sponsored programs, generally nationally syndicated, had higher technical sophistication and appealed more often for gifts.

Richard Hirsch, secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference Department of Communication and chairman of the electronic church research committee, said Catholic participants would not be able to draw conclusions from the study until they had more time for reflection.

He noted that the Catholic Church has created a satellite network, but he said it does not consider itself in competition with commercial television.

Paulist Father John Geaney, president of Unda-USA, a national Catholic broadcasters' organization, said the study confirmed that the type of evangelical programs sponsored by Protestant independent broadcasters did not reach those outside the church or those alienated from it. They basically "will save the saved," he said.

Ministries such as broadcasting Mass for shut-ins are valid, he said, but to reach the unchurched a "pre-evangelism" form of broadcast, focusing on general questions of human concern, is needed.

# Recent Study Has Little Good News For TV Preachers

BY JIM CASTELLI
Gannett News Service

Billy Graham's viewers are more likely to be elderly and female and less likely to be evangelical than those who watch other television preachers. Jimmy Swaggart attracts the traditional, conservative, Bible Belt Protestant. Oral Roberts attracts the largest audience of the dispossessed, poor, and rural dwellers, and almost half of his audience is single, divorced, or widowed. Pat Robertson's "700 Club" is more successful at capturing an audience from "Middle America."

Those are some of the findings that emerge from a major study of the "Electronic Church" conducted by the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization.

The study was funded by an unusual coalition of mainline church organizations—including the National Council of Churches and the U.S. Catholic Conference—and religious broadcasters, including the most prominent TV personalities.

**THE STUDY** appeared to answer one question of particular concern to the mainline churches—do the TV preachers keep viewers away from their local church? The answer is no, providing relief to the churches and to the broadcasters, who have defused a major criticism.

But it would be hard to say the study offered much good news for the TV preachers. First, it found that the total audience for their programs is even smaller than critics have estimated, 13.3 million people, or 6.2% of the viewing audience. It also found that cable TV doesn't add significantly to the audience for religious programs, despite broadcasters' claims that it does. Forty-four percent of those who watch religious TV do so before 10 a.m. on Sunday, when there's almost nothing else on. And two-thirds of religious TV viewers don't even list religious programs among their three favorite types of shows.

Second, the study found that TV preachers continue to preach to the converted: "The effort to 'reach out' to new and different audiences has met with little success, except perhaps in the case of the syndicated weekend programs. Both national and regional sur-

(See TV, Page C-8)

THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER
CINCINNATI, OHIO
D. 191,571 SUN. 298,752

APR 28 1984
BURRELLE'S

## TV

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C-6

veys show the profiles of viewers of religious programs to be similar to those found in previous studies."

**THAT PROFILE** shows an audience that is disproportionately rural, elderly, black, female, uneducated, conservative, evangelical if not fundamentalist in outlook, and that generally watches a lot of television. Moreover, religious TV viewers are more socially isolated than non-viewers, with one of three spending less than two hours a day outside the house. Religious TV viewers are also in worse physical and emotional health than non-viewers.

The study supports the belief of many that religious TV offers needed companionship and religious inspiration to shut-ins and the elderly.

But the study also shows that TV preachers take advantage of that audience—one out of four of the prominent TV preachers offer a financial contribution to their program as the solution to personal problems like family tensions and health problems.

*The writer, formerly religion editor of* The Washington Star, *is Washington bureau chief for* Our Sunday Visitor, *the nation's largest Catholic weekly.*

# Leisure

## Annenberg Study:

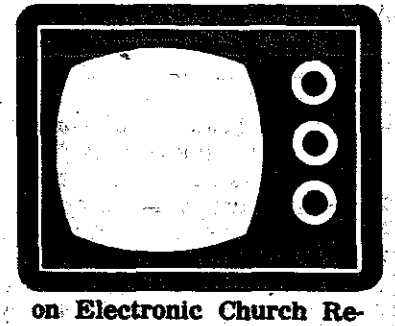
# *T.V. Doesn't Replace Churches*

By TRACY EARLY

NEW YORK (NC) — The "electronic church" does not take people away from local churches, and viewers continue to participate in and support financially their local congregations, said the authors of a study on religious television at a news conference April 16.

The researchers said the "electronic church" wins few new converts and its national audience of 13.3 million people in smaller than often estimated.

By "electronic church," the researchers meant any religious program sponsored by a religious group.



**The study was conducted by the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization. It was commissioned by the Ad Hoc Committee on Electronic Church Research, a board coalition of church and independent religious agencies including the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Council of Churches and National Religious Broadcasters.**

According to George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School, the study is not intended to tell churches what decisions to make regarding religious broadcasting. Rather, he said, it describes the situation in which churches must determine what positions they will take.

The researchers said viewers of religious television do not reduce support for their churches. Their conclusion is based on a national survey conducted in the spring of 1983 in which 954 viewers of religious broadcasting and 1,049 non-viewers were interviewed.

"Religious program audiences find no conflict between syndicated religious television programs and more traditional forms of worship," says the report summary. "They see them as complementary and mutually reinforcing activities rather than as substitutes for one another."

The audience for religious programming is "what religious audiences have always been: somewhat older, lower in education and income, more conservative, more 'fundamentalist' and more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest than those who do not watch religious programs," the surveyors found.

Viewers of religious programming are dissatisfied with the "prevailing moral climate," which comes through on general television, and look for content they do not find elsewhere in television, the research summary says.

Gerbner said the real competition of the churches was not the "electronic church" but general television. Those who are heavy viewers find in it a substitute for what others in the same demographic categories tend to find in church, he suggested.

The researchers also analyzed the content of 101 national and local religious programs broadcast in Phi delphia and Atlanta over three-week period in 1982. compared two basic grou those sponsored by indepe dent "television ministrie and those sponsored by ma line churches.

Gerbner said the two grou of programs had many simi rities, touching up polit with about the same freque cy, focusing alike on beh ioral problems a mentioning theology only r ely.

A main difference, he sa was that the independen sponsored programs, gener ly nationally syndicated, h higher technical sophistic ion and appealed more oft for gifts.

Richard Hirsch, secreta of the U.S. Catholic Conf ence Department of Comm nication and chairman of t electronic church resear committee, said Catholic pa ticipants would not be able draw conclusions from the st dy until they had more tir for reflection.

FLINT, MI
JOURNAL
D. & S. 108,720

APR 28 1984
BURRELLE'S

# Religious TV draws fewer than believed, report says

By JOHN DART
Los Angeles Times

The first comprehensive study of religious television indicates that the electronic church has a much smaller audience and impact than previously believed.

But the new study may not slow broadcasting plans by church-related groups. And certain data in the report promise to cause religious communicators to ask again whether their money is being spent wisely.

The two-volume, 160-page study released this week to 39 Christian sponsors — ranging from Roman Catholic and ecumenical Protestant to evangelical and charismatic Protestant groups — demonstrated that the viewers of the electronic church are surprisingly few, mostly have one or two favorite shows, and are already churchgoers.

**THE FINDINGS** by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications and the Gallup Organization include:

- Regular viewers of any religious program of any denomination number about 13.3 million, or 6.2 percent of the estimated total of people in television households, in contrast to the estimate of 20.5 million in 1980 by sociologists Jeffrey Hadden and Charles Swann in their book, "Prime-Time Preachers."

The 13.3 million represents those who watch at least a quarter-hour of religious television a week; the figure drops to about 7 million for those who watch at least one hour a week.

- More than half of religious-television viewers watch only one or two programs. Twenty-one percent named three shows they watch, 14 percent named four, leaving only 8 percent who watch more, according to a detailed study of regional samples in the South and Northeast.
- Seventy percent nationally said they never contribute money to religious television programs. Of the 28 percent who do, only 5 percent do so regularly. Again, the contributors have their favorite shows: Only 2 percent give money to three or more television evangelists or shows.

**THE STUDY** concluded that the religious-television audience is stable, already considers religion important and is not being expanded by large numbers of converts.

The report said that "the television ministries were considerably more likely (55 percent) than mainline church programs (20 percent) to make such requests (for money)."

In addition, the report said, "The most prominent television ministries generally requested more money than the other types of programs; their average minimum request was $31 and their average maximum request was about $600.

"No mainline church program asked for a specific amount. ..."

One of the major findings of the report was that people who contribute to religious programs also make donations in church (more than $180 a year).

Regular contributors to religious television score high on measurements of "fundamentalist" and charismatic beliefs and tend to go to church more than once a week.

Their participation in the electronic church only "complements" their churchgoing, the researchers said.

DECATUR, IL
HERALD & REVIEW
D. 55,435 SUN.

APR 28 1984
BURRELLE'S

# Christian TV needs rethinking

6270

NEW YORK — For years, Catholics and mainline Protestant leaders have been concerned about the emergence of "the electronic church" — such TV preachers as Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, Robert Schuller and Jerry Falwell, and "TV magazine" programs such as "The 700 Club" with Pat Robertson.

"Our concern about the growth and power of the electronic church was whether this phenomenon is taking people out of pews and dollars out of collection baskets," said one Catholic leader.

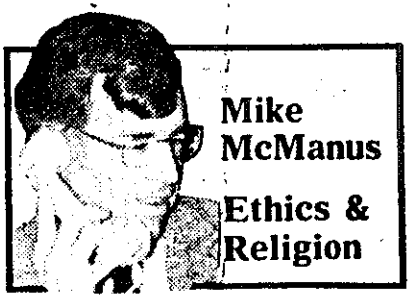
Conversely, such organizations as the Christian Broadcasting Network wondered whether their programming was prompting "unchurched Americans" to make a religious commitment.

Therefore, the National Council of Churches, National Conference of Catholic Bishops and most TV ministries cooperated in sponsoring "Religion and Television," a study by The Gallup Poll and Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

"There is some good news and bad news for everyone," said George Gerbner, dean of the Annenburg School.

"Precious few are watching," said Dave Clark, vice president of CBN. Only 7 million people watch an hour or more a week — 3 percent of the population.

Furthermore, they are the "already converted." The study said, "Viewers of religious programs are by and large the believers, the churchgoers, the contributors." And they are "somewhat older, lower in education and income, more conservative, more 'fundamentalist,' and more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest."



**Mike McManus**

**Ethics & Religion**

Richard Hirsch, spokesman for the Catholic bishops, said, "The electronic church is not posing any kind of a threat for mainline churches. It is not a phenomenon sweeping the country."

But religious broadcasters could take comfort, too. "Religious television enhances people's overall church life," said George Gallup Jr. on "The 700 Club."

"That is what we have been saying for a long, long time," responded Robertson.

In fact, even though CBN's budget of more than $80 million is more than triple the budget of the Catholic bishops, CBN studies show that for every dollar contributed to CBN, viewers give $4 for other religious work, mainly local churches.

"Viewers of religious programs are drawn by content they cannot find elsewhere on television," said the report. First, they like the preaching, the music, the experience of "having your spirits lifted" and "feeling close to God." Second, they like the conservative moral, social and political ideas presented.

The results should prompt rethinking by those interested in providing a religious perspective to the broader public.

It is possible for serious treatment of religious themes to penetrate television and films. "Chariots of Fire" won an Oscar, as did Robert Duvall for his acting in the film "Tender Mercies." NBC's "Jesus of Nazareth" attracted tens of millions of viewers during Holy Week, even though it was a re-run. So did CBS' dramatization of Pope John Paul II's life.

It is clear, however, that these are rare exceptions to the rule. Why?

Gallup says 58 percent of Americans consider their religious beliefs "very important." Clearly, though, religious TV is failing to attract these viewers, with only 3 percent watching an hour a week — in a nation with sets on 7 hours a day.

First, few people want to watch TV preachers or religious talk shows.

What's more important is there is little competent dramatic script-writing with religious themes. The Catholic bishops have begun some interesting pioneering, however. They have hired Hollywood producers to write dramatizations of the lives of Dorothy Day, a Catholic social activist, and Bishop Oscar Romero, an El Salvador martyr.

But the major TV ministries generally raise money to buy more TV time to ask for more money — to broadcast the same sermon to the same people. Why?

Regular viewers should urge their favorite TV ministries to use some of their income to produce programs that the average person will watch.

Jackson Daily News
For Mississippians
SAT. & SUN. 116,775

APR 28 1984

BURRELLE'S

# Who watches TV preachers? Not many, study shows

6270

By JIM CASTELLI
Gannett News Service

Billy Graham's viewers are more likely to be old and female and less likely to be evangelical than those who watch other television preachers.

Jimmy Swaggart attracts the traditional, conservative, Bible Belt Protestant.

Oral Roberts attracts the largest audience of dispossessed, poor and rural dwellers, and almost half of his audience is single, divorced or widowed.

Pat Robertson's *700 Club* is more successful at capturing an audience from "Middle America."

Those are some of the findings that emerge from a major study of the electronic church, conducted by the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization.

The study was paid for by a coalition of mainline church organizations — including the National Council of Churches and the U.S. Catholic Conference — and religious broadcasters, including the most prominent TV personalities.

It appears to answer one question of particular concern to mainline churches — do TV preachers keep viewers away from their local churches? The answer is no, providing relief to the churches and to the broadcasters.

But it would be hard to say the study offers much good news for TV preachers. First, it found that the total audience for their programs is even smaller than critics have estimated — 13.3 million people, or 6.2 percent of the viewing audience. It also found that cable TV doesn't significantly add to the audience for religious programs, despite broadcasters' claims that it does.

Forty-four percent of those who watch religious TV do so before 10 a.m. on Sunday, when almost nothing else is on. And two-thirds of religious TV viewers don't even list religious programs among their three favorite types of shows.

Secondly, the study found that TV preachers continue to preach to the converted: "The effort to 'reach out' to new and different audiences has met with little success, except perhaps in the case of the syndicated weekend programs. Both national and regional surveys show the profiles of viewers of religious programs to be similar to those found in previous studies."

That profile shows an audience that is disproportionately rural, old, black, female, uneducated, conservative, evangelical if not fundamentalist in outlook, and that generally watches a lot of television. Moreover, religious TV viewers are more socially isolated than non-viewers, with one in three spending less than two hours a day outside the house. Religious TV viewers also are in worse physical and emotional health than non-viewers.

The study supports the belief of many that religious TV offers needed companionship and religious inspiration to shut-ins and the elderly.

But it also shows that TV preachers take advantage of that audience — one in four of the prominent TV preachers offers a financial contribution to his program as the solution to personal problems.

All in all, the study found that despite all its talk about evangelization, religious TV attracts only those people who are looking to buy what it sells and repels just about everyone else; 75 percent of non-viewers change the channel when religious programs come on.

■

*The writer, formerly religion editor of The Washington Star, is Washington bureau chief for Our Sunday Visitor.*

LANSING, MICH.
STATE JOURNAL
D. 73,549 S. 79,855

APR 28 1984

BURRELLE'S

# Pews filled despite TV churches

PHILADELPHIA — The growth of TV evangelism has not caused many people to stop attending or donating money to their local churches, according to researchers who conducted a two-year study of religion and TV.

Television ministries have attracted millions of viewers, but those audiences are usually made up of people with long-standing allegiance to organized religion, according to researchers from the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J.

The study was commissioned by a group of more than 30 religious organizations, including the United Presbyterian Church, the U.S. Catholic Conference and television ministries such as PTL Network and Jerry Falwell's Old Time Gospel Hour.

MICHIGAN STATE University researcher Felipe Korzenny, and doctoral student Milton Shatzer, conducted a random telephone survey of people in the Greater Lansing area and found similar results.

According to Korzenny, "frequent" viewers, who tune in 4.5 times a month, were more likely to consider themselves religious persons. They also were more likely to be in favor of school prayer and against abortion and sex on television.

But when it came to church attendance, there was little difference between those who said they were "occasional" viewers — 1.7 times per month — and "frequent" viewers.

"BOTH THE occasional viewer and the frequent viewer of these shows, on the average, attend church about three times per month," Korzenny said. "So, there is no substitution effect. People are not staying home from church to watch these shows."

George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School, and a member of the national research team, said: "Television ministries have been suspected of causing or at least contributing to the erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions and general participation. Our study found no support for that charge."

Gerbner said communication research over the years indicates that prime time television drama, and religious programming, has become the "new religion" in the United States.

"WATCHING TELEVISION has become a ritual that meets certain needs that used to be satisfied by religion," he said.

The surveyors found that about 13.3 million people regularly watch religious programs, or about 6.2 percent of all people with television sets in their homes.

The programs "appeal to an older, traditional audience and watching these programs appears to be a confirmation of their religious beliefs, not a substitute for them," the researchers said.

"THEIR INTEREST in the electronic church is complementary to other forms of religious practice, like church worship."

Followers of TV evangelism typically are older, have less education and income, are more conservative politically and are more fundamentalist in their religious beliefs than the average person, the study found.

They also are more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest than people who don't watch religious programs, the researchers said.

**Karen Douglas contributed to this Associated Press report.**

San Francisco Examiner
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.
D. 152,400 SAT. 118,356

APR 28 1984
BURRELLE'S

# Study measures impact of TV on church rolls

6770

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The growth of TV evangelism has not caused many people to stop attending church or donating money to their local churches, according to researchers who conducted a two-year study of religion and TV.

Television ministries have attracted millions of viewers, but those audiences are usually made up of people with long-standing allegiance to organized religion, according to researchers from the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and the Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J.

The study was commissioned by a group of more than 30 religious organizations, including the United Presbyterian Church, the U.S. Catholic Conference and television ministries such as PTL Network and Jerry Falwell's Old Time Gospel Hour.

"Television ministries have been suspected of causing or at least contributing to the erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions and general participation," said George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School. "Our study found no support for that charge."

Gerbner, a member of the research team, said communication research over the years indicates that prime-time television drama, and religious programming, has become the "new religion" in the United States.

"Watching television has become a ritual that meets certain needs that used to be satisfied by religion," he said in a statement issued Sunday.

The researchers found that about 13.3 million people regularly watch religious programs, or about 6.2 percent of all people with television sets in their homes.

The programs "appeal to an older, traditional audience and watching these programs appears to be a confirmation of their religious beliefs, not a substitute for them," the researchers said.

"Their interest in the electronic church is complementary to other forms of religious practice, like church worship."

Followers of TV evangelism typically are older, have less education and income, are more conservative politically and are more fundamentalist in their religious beliefs than the average person, the study found.

They also are more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest than people who don't watch religious programs, the researchers said.

People who watch religious programs frequently express greater confidence in their local church leaders than "light viewers" and "non-viewers," they said.

About one of every four religious programs mentions local churches, and one in 10 urges viewers to attend church, the study found.

San Francisco Examiner
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.
D. 152,400 SAT. 118,356

APR 28 1984
BURRELLE'S


# The electronic church

For many years, Roman Catholics and mainline Protestant leaders have been concerned about the emergence of what they called "the electronic church," which included such TV preachers as Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, Robert Schuller and Jerry Falwell, and the more sophisticated "TV magazine" programs such as "The 700 Club," with Pat Robertson and "PTL Club" with Jim Bakker.

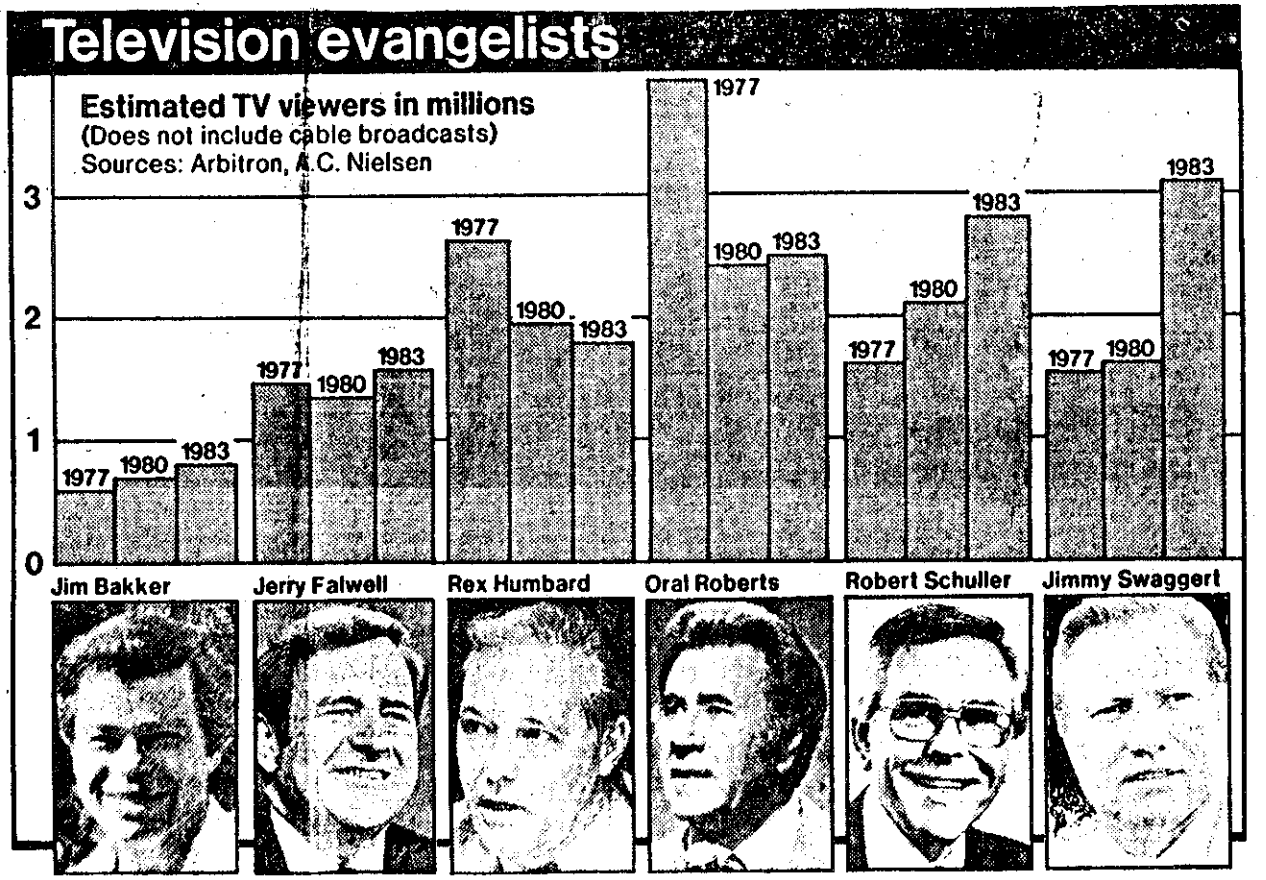
One Catholic leader put it this way: "Our concern about the growth and power of the electronic church was whether this phenomenon is taking people out of pews and dollars out of collection baskets."

Conversely, such organizations as the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), whose "700 Club" appears on 150 broadcast TV stations, as well as on cable TV, wondered if their programming was prompting "unchurched" Americans to make a religious commitment.

Therefore, the National Council of Churches, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, most TV ministries and even Canadian denominations cooperated in sponsoring a study called "Religion and Television," by the Gallup Poll and Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania. Such diverse partners had never cooperated before.

"There is some good news and bad news for everyone, so the research must be right," said George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg school, at a press conference last week in New York.

"Precious few are watching," said Dave Clark, vice president of CBN. The official number of viewers is 13.3 million. But as Bill Fore of the NCC pointed out, that figure refers only to those who watched 15 minutes or more per week. Those watching an hour or more per week are only 7 million — 3 percent of the population.




Examiner graphic/David Lemon

Further, they are the "already converted."

"Viewers of religious programs are by and large the believers, the churchgoers, the contributors," the study said. And they are "somewhat older, lower in education and income, more conservative, more 'fundamentalist' and more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest."

For example, half are over age 50, and 38 percent have only a grade-school education.

Christian TV's failure to evangelize is a relief to leaders of churches with declining members (Methodists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians) or stagnant growth (Catholics). Richard Hirsch, secretary of communications for the Catholic bishops, said: "The electronic church is not posing any kind of threat for mainline churches. It is not a phenomenon sweeping the country," even though the number of Christian TV and radio stations are growing rapidly.

However, the religious broadcasters could take comfort from part of the study results. "Religious television enhances people's overall church life," said George Gallup Jr. during an appearance on "The 700 Club."

"That is what we have been saying for a long, long time," said the Rev. Pat Robinson, holding up a copy of a headline from USA Today that read "TV Preachers Not Hurting Local Churches."

In fact, even though CBN's annual budget of more than $80 million is more than triple the national budget of the Catholic bishops, for example, CBN studies show that for every dollar contributed to CBN, viewers give $4 for other religious work, mainly to local churches.

"Viewers of religious programs are drawn by content they cannot find elsewhere on television," said the report. First, they like the preaching, the music, the experiences of having their spirits lifted and "feeling close to God" that the shows offer. They also like the conservative moral, social and political ideas presented.

The most frequent time for watching is Sunday morning, before most people go to church. A close second is churchtime itself, 10 a.m. to noon on Sundays.

These results should prompt some fundamental rethinking by those interested in providing a religious perspective to the broader public.

It is possible for serious treatment of religious themes to penetrate television and films. "Chariots of Fire" won an Academy Award, as did Robert Duvall for his acting in last year's film, "Tender Mercies." NBC's "Jesus of Nazareth" attracted tens of millions of viewers during Holy Week, even though it was a rerun. So did CBS's broadcast of a dramatization of Pope John Paul II's life on Easter night.

It is clear, however, that these are rare exceptions to the rule. Why?

Gallup says that 58 percent of Americans consider their religious beliefs "very important," which is about twice that of other modern nations. Clearly, however, religious television is failing miserably in attracting even these viewers, with only 3 percent of the public watching an hour a week — in a nation with sets on seven hours a day.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
ST. LOUIS, MO.
D. 236,888 S. 430,030

APR 28 1984
BURRELLE'S

# Preachers On TV Reach 13 Million



NEW YORK — A two-year study financed by 39 Catholic and Protestant organizations has determined that the actual audience for even the most successful of the TV preachers is far smaller than many of them had believed.

"Infinitesimally small for the huge amounts of money spent" was the way the Rev. Everett C. Parker of the United Church of Christ characterized the 13.3 million "regular viewers" of such religious programs estimated by the polling.

The Rev. William F. Fore of the National Council of Churches said the 13.3 million who watched as little as 15 minutes of religious broadcasting at a time amounted to about 6.2 percent of the number of people in households with TV sets.

The more liberal denominations had felt threatened by claims that TV evangelists were drawing 130 million regular viewers and siphoning contributions away from the local churches. With word of the poll, their representatives breathed a sigh of relief.

They already are beginning to reassess financial commitments to competing religious broadcast time.

Fore observed that when the study zeroed in on "regular" viewers of an hour or more of the religious programs, the audience dropped below 7 million people, or 3.14 percent of the total with TV sets.

At a news conference announcing the results, George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and a member of the research team, said he disagreed with describing as "infinitesimal" the audiences for such religious broadcasters as Pat Robertson, Jimmy Swaggart and the Rev. Jerry Falwell.

"Limited, stable, yes," Gerbner said. "But clearly, they are supporting the programs."

David W. Clark, vice president for marketing at Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network Center in Virginia Beach, Va., added, "No one is forced or coerced to give, as with the Internal Revenue Service. They give freely."

In response to an assertion by one of the researchers that the bulk of the funding for TV evangelists came from a relatively few large contributors, not many small ones, Clark said that only about 20 percent of Robertson's support comes from major donors. He said the annual budget for Robertson's CBN network was about $20 million.

Ben Armstrong, executive director of National Religious Broadcasters, said the "big question" facing his membership is, "How do we reach out to the large number of people not in our audience?"

Armstrong was especially pleased with the study's conclusions that the national, nondenominational, mostly fundamentalist religious broadcasters in his group were not draining the resources of local churches, but rather that their loyal audiences displayed a longtime allegiance to organized religion.

The combined survey of TV viewers by the Annenberg School and the Gallup Polling organization "found that the audience for religious TV is smaller than has been claimed, though this group is consistent in its viewing habits."

DAYTON DAILY NEWS
DAYTON, OHIO
D. 124,886 SUN. 220,633

APR 29 1984

BURRELLE'S

# Whose figures reflect church?

By JIM GALLOWAY
Cox News Service

6270

A two-year study sparked by disagreements between traditional and television preachers has found that the "electronic church" does not lure people away from the Sunday pew.

The University of Pennsylvania research, released recently in New York, also concluded that about 13 million people, most of them already converted, watch religious TV programs.

The figure represents only 6 percent of the viewing public and one-tenth of those claimed by some televangelists.

**THOUGH ORIGINALLY** commissioned to settle a dispute, the study warns the factions to stop worrying about each other and to pay more attention to the nation's "new religion" — prime time television.

Researchers found that the more television a person watched, the more likely he was to use it as a substitute for religion.

"Certainly it has its ritualistic aspects. It does certain things that religion has done," said Stewart Hoover, a project investigator with the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communication.

"There's a great deal (in television) that explains reality, teaches basic values and ethics," he said.

**THE PROJECT** grew out of a 1980 challenge by the National Council of Churches to Pat Robertson of the 700 Club. Mainline denominations have long blamed TV preachers for diverting money and attention from local churches, but until the Annenberg report, no conclusive research was available.

"Television ministries have been suspected of causing ... the erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions and general participation," said George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School. "Our study found no support for that charge."

An unusual alliance of 30 denominations, churches and television preachers ultimately put up $170,000 to form the Ad Hoc Committee on Electronic Church Research to finance the research. Donors included Robertson, the NCC, Jerry Falwell, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Southern Baptist Convention and the U.S. Catholic Conference.

The group chose the Annenberg School, which has a history of television research, and the Gallup Organization, which was in charge of a nationwide survey of viewers, as neutral investigators.

**"I THINK** everybody wins some and loses some," Hoover said. "In the public mind, the victor probably will be the electronic church, because we found they don't keep people out of church.

"But they've got some explaining to do, too, about those numbers."

During the 1980 presidential race, television evangelist Jerry Falwell, also founder of Moral Majority, was claiming that his *Old Time Gospel Hour* alone had a viewership of 50 million. One *Wall Street Journal* estimate last year put the number of viewers at 130 million, Hoover said.

While focusing on the link between church attendance and religious TV viewing, the study includes the most detailed examination yet of who watches religious television and what those programs say.

Religious programming in Atlanta and Philadelphia was examined for political, social and theological content. Viewers' impressions of individual religious programs and TV preachers were not recorded.

**PERSONAL INTERVIEWS** with 2,602 viewers — defined as anyone who watches 30 minutes per week — were conducted in major Northeastern and Southeastern cities.

Essentially, the study concludes that religious television neither steals audiences from local churches nor is good at building new congregations.

"Viewers of religious programs are by and large also the believers, the churchgoers, the contributors," an advance 14-page summary of the 500-page report says. "It appears to be an expression, confirmation, and cultivation of a set of religious beliefs and not a substitute for them."

Nor do contributions to local churches drop when a viewer sends an envelope to the Rev. Jimmy Swaggert and other TV evangelists, according to the study. The Annenberg report also notes that the electronic church "serves more to rally believers than to recruit or convert others."

**THE AVERAGE VIEWER** is likely to be older, lower in education and income, more conservative and more likely to live in the South and Midwest. Southern Baptists, Southern Presbyterians and independent fundamentalists make up the largest percentage of viewers.

Religious television viewers are less likely to believe in the "social justice" function of the church — helping the poor and oppressed — in favor of an evangelistic approach.

A higher percentage of religious television viewers voted in the last presidential election than did nonviewers of religious programs.

Religious TV shows were divided into two types, the syndicated Oral Roberts-type program and the televised church services offered by local churches.

MONTGOMERY, AL
ADVERTISER AND
ALABAMA JOURNAL
SAT. & SUN. 75,382

APR 29 1984

BURRELLE'S

# Impact of religious television programs studied

6270

By PETER KERR
New York Times Writer

NEW YORK — Religious television shows are not cutting into church attendance as some social scientists and religious organizations had suggested in recent years, according to a study of religious television programming released Monday.

The two-year study, conducted by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, also found that religious broadcasts appeal to 13.3 million people — 6.2 percent of American television viewers — who, for the most part, already have strong religious beliefs. The programs, the study suggested, fail to reach large numbers of viewers who are not actively religious, nor do they seem likely to make many new converts.

"This is both good news and bad news for evangelical broadcasters," said Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School. "The good news is that they do not reduce the number of people going to local churches. On the bad side, we found they are reaching a stable audience of those who are already religiously active."

The study, which was commissioned by a group of more than 30 religious organizations, represents the most extensive research to date on the phenomenon of "electronic church" programs. Since the 1960s the number of evangelical radio and television stations has risen dramatically, from fewer than 150 in the mid-1960s to more than 1,000 this year, according to the National Religious Broadcasters, an umbrella organization for television and radio evangelical groups.

But some religious organizations questioned whether television preachers, who often espouse fundamentalist beliefs, were taking people and money away from local churches by providing worshippers with an alternative at home. This was a major subject of discussion in a 1980 conference of religious organizations and social scientists under the auspices of the National Council of Churches and the United States Catholic Conference in New York City.

The study, designed to clarify the effects of religious programs, was supported both by groups that produce evangelical broadcasts and so-called

see RELIGION, page 36

continued from page 31

mainline groups, such as the National Council of Churches. The Gallup Organization in Princeton, N.J., assisted in the project, which cost $175,000.

The study found that viewers of religious programs were mostly people who attended churches and made contributions to religious organizations. These viewers also tend to be older, have lower incomes and less education than people who do not watch religious programs.

In addition, they are more likely to live in the South or Middle West, are more likely to have fundamentalist religious attitudes and more likely to be disturbed by what they see as moral laxity on regular television programs.

The study found that regular viewers of religious programming of any denomination numbered about 6.2 percent of the total number of people in television households, or about 13.3 million people.

Viewers of religious television, the study found, are no less likely to attend services than churchgoers who do not view such programming. The audience for religious programs, the study found, generally sees the programs as a complement to more traditional religious activities.

Another finding of the study was that religious programs, like other television fare, tend to underrepresent women, the elderly, children and members of minority groups.

Representives of religious groups that supported the study appeared to draw varied conclusions from the data.

"These are a very small number of viewers from a homogeneous group of people," said William F. Fore, a spokesman for the National Council of Churches. About the programs, Fore said, "I do not believe this is good evangelism, and I think the study shows that."

But David W. Clark, the vice president of marketing for the Christian Broadcasting Network, a major producer of religious programming in Virginia Beach, Va., said the study provided support for his organization's type of evangelical programming.

"We finally have an absolute finding that the programs don't decrease attendance at local churches," Clark said. As for the findings that the size of the religious programs' audience was limited, Clark said he believed the programs would reach more Americans if the programs were presented at more popular time periods. Most of the producers of the religious programs, he said, can only afford to buy television time late or early in the schedule when relatively few viewers are watching.

Staten Island Advance
STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.
D. 73,110 SUN. 80,254

APR 29 1984

BURRELLE'S

# TV ministries don't affect church going

PHILADELPHIA — The television ministries that attract millions of viewers and contributors are influential with their audiences, but watching religious programs doesn't keep people from church.

Those who support evangelical broacasters also attend and contribute to local churches, according to a two-year study of religion and TV by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications.

# You Can Fool 48% of the People All the Time . . .

by Dave Berkman

One of the more intriguing research efforts of late was undertaken by George Gerbner, dean of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications. He examined the degree to which television's fictions color our beliefs about reality.

Gerbner found that: "The more time one spends 'living' in the world of television, the more likely one is to report perceptions of social reality that can be traced to (or that are congruent with) television's persistent representations of life and society."

Translated into English, that means if we watch a lot of television, we come to believe that the real world is like the world portrayed on the tube. For example, when heavy television viewers were asked how often a police officer draws his or her gun in the course of a shift, 18 percent of the viewers supposed it was more than five times—whereas a majority of cops never fire a weapon once in the course of a lifetime career.

While only some 3 percent of the population are involved in an act of criminal violence in any year, 83 percent of heavy viewers believed the figure was 10 percent. Eighty-eight percent of Gerbner's heavy viewers also believed that 12 percent of their fellow citizens are involved in the commission of serious crimes—whereas here, too, the figure is closer to 3 percent.

My own research, which in all modesty I must describe as a landmark follow-up to Gerbner's work, reveals that heavy viewers of television today profess to hold the following views of real life:

- 87 percent of teenage girls are sexually precocious, yet retain their virginity; the others are drug-crazed child prostitutes.
- 96.8 percent of small towns are bossed by corrupt families who live yonder, in the big house on the hill.
- 50 percent of American-made automobiles can continue to speed recklessly through alleys and streets even after jumping over barriers and knocking down an Italian fruit vendor's cart; the other half are driven by bad guys.
- 86 percent of women in their 20s have busts measuring 37C or larger; the others are nuclear-research scientists who wear their hair in buns.
- 100 percent of homicides are solved.
- The solutions take 56 minutes—give or take 30 seconds.
- In blue-collar bars, at 90 percent of the tables, black men sit drinking light beer with their white buddies.
- 50 percent of beauty-contest winners will become proficient at sports analysis; the other half will be murdered.
- 88 percent of hemorrhoid sufferers and virtually all those with false teeth are eager to talk about their problems with the old man at the drug store.
- 85 percent of today's grandmothers spent the 1950s teaching their teenage daughters how to choose a detergent; the other 15 percent were mixing Kool-Aid.
- 72 percent of major business enterprises are owned by big, colorful families with tendencies toward incest, murder, and unkind language.
- 100 percent of hospitals are clean.
- 86 percent of filthy, lice-ridden bums are undercover cops in disguise.
- 70 percent of household products can talk.
- Instant coffee tastes just like fresh; maybe better.
- 75 percent of ocean cruises lead to marriage; the other 25 percent lead to divorce.
- 83 percent of cab drivers have hearts of gold beneath their tough exteriors.
- Egrets and loons seek out nesting grounds near oil refineries, whence they sense benevolent vibes.
- Psychopaths are easy to pick out of a crowd because they're always skinny and have messy hair, unless they're fat and bald.
- 91 percent of upwardly mobile black families owe their success to the mastery of the one-liner.
- Only 4 percent of Americans can be found dazed in front of the television set, and they all live in mobile homes.
- 100 percent of Americans live above the poverty line.
- 72 percent of male high-school teachers reject a student's sexual advance at least once a week.
- The other 28 percent accept.
- 85 percent of parents with pubescent children are widowed or divorced.
- 25 percent of all Junior Leaguers spend three of every four evenings answering telephones on-camera at the local public TV station.
- 89 percent of children not fluent in computer languages by age 18 are doomed to lives on welfare; the others are already successes in rock bands.
- 96.3 percent of all mean, petty, or vengeful adults will be reformed within 45 seconds after a lecture by any child. ■

*Gil Eisner*

*Dave Berkman is chair of the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.*

ASBURY PARK PRESS
ASBURY PARK, N.J.
D. & S. 143,000

MAY 4 1984

# TV preachers fail to get many viewers

By MICHAEL J. McMANUS

## Commentary

NEW YORK — For a many years, Roman Catholics and mainline Protestant leaders have been concerned about the emergence of what they called "the electronic church" — such TV preachers as Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, Robert Schuller and Jerry Falwell, and the more sophisticated "TV magazine" programs such as "The 700 Club" with Pat Robertson and PTL Club with Jim Bakker.

One Catholic leader put it this way: "Our concern about the growth and power of the electronic church was whether this phenomenon is taking people out of pews and dollars out of collection baskets."

Conversely, such organizations as the Christian Broadcasting Network, (CBN), whose "700 Club" appears on 150 broadcast TV stations as well as on Cable TV — wondered if their programming was promoting "unchurched Americans," to make a religious commitment.

Therefore, the National Council of Churches, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, most TV ministries, and even Canadian denominations — cooperated in sponsoring "Religion And Television," a study by The Gallup Poll and Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania. Such diverse partners had never cooperated before.

"There is some good news and bad news for everyone," said George Gerbner, dean of the Annenburg School at a New York press conference last week. "So the research must be right!"

"Precious few are watching," said Dave Clark, vice president of CBN. The official number of viewers is 13.3 million. But as Bill Fore, of the NCC pointed out, that figure refers only to those who watching an hour or more a week are only 7 million people — 3 percent of the population.

Furthermore, they are the "already converted." The study said "Viewers of religious programs are, by and large, the believers, the churchgoers, the contributors."

And they are "somewhat older, lower in education and income, more conservative, more 'fundamentalist,' and more likely to live in rural areas and in the South and Midwest."

For example, half are over age 50 and 38 percent have only a grade school education.

Christian TV's failure to evangelize is a relief to leaders of churches with declining numbers (Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcoplians) or stagnant growth (Catholics). Richard Hirsch, secretary of communications for the Catholic bishops, said "The electronic church is not posing any kind of a threat for mainline churches. It is not a phenomenon sweeping the country" even though the number of Christian TV and radio stations are growing rapidly.

The religious broadcasters could take comfort, too, however. "Religious television enhances people's overall church life," said George Gallup, Jr. on "The 700 Club."

"That is what we have been saying for a long, long time," responded the Rev. Pat Robertson, holding up a copy of a headline from USA Today: "TV Preachers Not Hurting Local Churches." In fact, even though CBN's annual budget of more than budget of the Catholic bishops, for example, CBN studies show that for every dollar contributed to CBN, viewers give $4 for other religious work, mainly local churches.

"Viewers of religious programs are drawn by content they cannot find elsewhere on television," said the report. First, they like the preaching, the music, the experience of "having your spirits lifted" and "feeling close to God" that the TV shows offer.

Second, they like the conservative moral, social and political ideas presented. Interestingly, the most popular of all is Jimmy Swaggart, seen by 25 percent of the viewers — twice the percent who see Jerry Falwell or Robert Schuller, for example. The next most popular are Oral Roberts (seen by 20 percent), followed by Pat Robertson's 700 Club, Jim Bakker's PTL Club and Billy Graham Crusades (18, 16, and 14 percent of religious viewers).

The most frequent time for watching is Sunday morning, before most people go to church. A close second is churchtime itself, 10 to 12 a.m. Sundays.

These results should prompt some fundamental rethinking by those interested in providing a religious perspective to the broader public.

It is possible for serious treatment of religious themes to penetrate television and films. "Chariots of Fire" won an Academy Award, as did Robert Duvall for his acting in last year's film, "Tender Mercies." NBC's "Jesus of Nazareth" attracted tens of millions of viewers during Holy Week, even though it was a rerun. So did CBS' broadcast of a dramatization of Pope John Paul II's life on Easter night.

It is clear, however, that these are rare exceptions to the rule. Why?

Gallup says that 58 percent of Americans consider their religious beliefs "very other modern nations. Clearly, however, religious television is failing miserably in attracting even these viewers, with only 3 percent of the public watching an hour a week — in a nation with sets on 7 hours a day.

First, relatively few people want to watch TV preachers or religious talk shows.

What's more important is there is little competent dramatic script-writing with religious themes. The Catholic bishops have begun some interesting pioneering, however. They have hired Hollywood producers to write dramatizations of the lives of Dorothy Day, a Catholic social activist, and Bishop Oscar Romero, an El Salvador martyr.

But the major TV ministries generally raise money to purchase more TV time where they ask for more money — to broadcast the same sermon to the same people. Why?

Regular viewers of religious TV should urge their favorite TV ministries to use some of their income to produce programs that the average people will watch.

CHARLES MARSHALL HOGAN
ATTORNEY AT LAW

Dr. Gerbner

May 19, 1980

Honorable George Edwards, Judge
United States Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit
Cincinnati, Ohio

Re : TV in Courtrooms Debate

Dear Judge Edwards :

Never before have I seen the adversary demolished so thoroughly as in the panel discussion on May 18. Dr. Gerbner made one of the best organized and persuasive presentations that I have ever seen. Dr. Elam convinced me that he is not only a great advocate but also a very fair-minded man. He completed the execution of the adversaries, including the moderator. The alleged moderator Nesson was advocating, not moderating. Dr. Gerbner set him down and out on the repartee.

Your remarks, from the standpoint of an experienced judge and an experienced candidate for office, were exactly right. I know whereof I speak.

Had the moderator not insisted on doing too much talking, I was set to comment about the TV revolution. Our election of presidents has too many of the earmarks of an Ordeal by TV. The process of legislation is affected by actors running for office via senatorial investigations. We have surrendered in these particulars to imagery in lieu of substance. We have surrendered to the private censorship by the networks. For better or for worse, this "drug" could have serious side effects on the courts. Permit me to say that the United States Circuit Courts and the United States District Courts are the greatest instruments for truth and justice in the history of law and government. They should not be obstructed by TV.

TV cameras would be as out of place in the Supreme Court room as some of the sick books like The Brethren.

I trust that our Federal judicial system and all of you judges and yours may continue to have all blessings.

Gratefully yours,

Charles M. Hogan

P.S. Judge Sherman and Howard Ain presented the TV side very well. I believe that the principal adversary was the moderator. I thanked Judge Jones and Mr. Higgins for a great conference.

CHARLES M. HOGAN
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(EVENING) 34,505

JUL 1 1984



# TV harms advantaged students more

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Socially advantaged youngsters demonstrate a more severe academic decline from heavy television watching than disadvantaged students, according to a newly released study.

The results of the study, published in the Journal of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, indicate sharp differences in the effect of television viewing on children of different social groups.

The findings, taken from a 1981 survey of more than 10 000 California sixth graders, showed the drop in academic performance among heavy television watchers was "greater and more consistent" among those from socially advantaged classes.

"Students who viewed more than six hours of television each day had sharply lower achievement scores in all three content areas (reading, writing, mathematics)," Mark Fetler wrote in the article, "Television Viewing and School Achievement."

But Fetler also found that achievement scores of students who watched relatively moderate amounts of television were higher than those who watched small amounts.

The study used parents' occupations to define social classes.

In explaining why the children of professionals tended to be more adversely affected by television watching, Fetler said, "One possibility is that affluent homes are more likely to contain books, magazines, stimulating games and parents who encourage their children to read, do homework and do well in school.

"The more time spent watching television in these homes, the less time could be spent in activities that sharpen skills relevant to success in school," he said.

For children of less affluent homes, the study found that a moderate amount of television watching provided some intellectual stimulation by exposing the students to new ideas, vicarious experiences and new vocabulary. Such exposure, Fetler said, could lead to academic improvement.

"Behavior in school is in reality affected by many individual psychological traits and by social relations in the family, the neighborhood and the school," said Fetler, a consultant to the California Department of Education.

"Television viewing behavior is affected by a similar complex of variables," he said.

THE MORNING CALL, MONDAY, JULY 2, 1984
ALLENTOWN

PENNSYLVANIA

# Heavy TV use hurts grades of advantaged

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A new study indicates sharp differences in the effect of television viewing on children of different social groups, with youngsters from more affluent homes suffering more academically from heavy television watching than disadvantaged students.

The findings, taken from a 1981 survey of more than 10,000 California sixth graders, were recently published in the Journal of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania.

The study showed the drop in academic performance among heavy television watchers was "greater and more consistent" among those from socially advantaged classes.

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"Television viewing behavior is affected by a similar complex of [illegible]," he said

USA TODAY July 2

# TV has negative effect on affluent kids' grades

PHILADELPHIA — Children from affluent homes suffer more academically from heavy television viewing than disadvantaged students, says a new study. The findings, taken from a 1981 survey of more than 10,000 California sixth-graders, recently were published in *The Journal of Communication* at the University of Pennsylvania. The study showed the drop in academic performance of heavy television watchers — more than six hours a day — was "greater and more consistent" among those from socially advantaged classes. These students "had sharply lower achievement scores in all three content areas" (reading, writing, mathematics), says researcher Mark Fetler. One reason: "Affluent homes are more likely to contain books, magazines, stimulating games and parents who encourage their children to read, do homework and do well in school," says Fetler. "The more time spent watching television in these homes, the less time could be spent in activities that sharpen skills relevant to success in school."

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SUN. 260,396

JUL 3 1984

BURRELLE'S

# Any connection between TV and reality is purely coincidenta

by Dave Berkman

One of the more intriguing research efforts of late was undertaken by George Gerbner, dean of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications. He examined the degree to which television's actions color our beliefs about reality.

Gerbner found that: "The more time one spends 'living' in the world of television, the more likely one is to report perceptions of social reality that can be traced to facts that are congruent with) television's persistent representations of life and society."

Translated into English, that means if we watch a lot of television, we come to believe that the real world is like the world portrayed on the tube. For example, when heavy television viewers were asked how often a police officer draws his or her gun in the course of a shift, 18 percent supposed it was more than five times -- whereas a majority of cops never fire their weapon in the course of a lifetime career.

While only some 3 percent of the population are involved in an act of criminal violence in any year, 83 percent of heavy viewers believed the figure was 10 percent. Eighty-eight percent of Gerbner's heavy viewers also believed that 12 percent of their fellow citizens are involved in the commission of serious crimes, whereas here, too, the figure is closer to 3 percent.

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☐ 87 percent of teen-age girls are sexually precocious, yet retain their virginity; the others are drug-crazed child prostitutes.

☐ 96.8 percent of small towns are bossed by corrupt families who live yonder, in the big house on the hill.

☐ 50 percent of American-made automobiles can continue to speed recklessly through alleys and streets even after jumping over barriers and knocking down an Italian fruit vendor's cart; the other half are driven by bad guys.

☐ 86 percent of women in their 20s have busts measuring 37C or larger; the others are nuclear-research scientists who wear their hair in buns.

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*Dave Berkman is chairman of the department of mass communication at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.*

HOUSTON CHRONICLE
HOUSTON, TEXAS
D. 419 870 SUN. 502,654

JUL 4 1984
BURRELLE'S

# Too little TV may also hurt pupils' test scores

PHILADELPHIA (UPI) -- Too little television may have the same bad effects on students as too much TV, a newly released study says.

A study of 10,000 sixth-graders in California shows students who watch a great deal of television achieved lower scores, but so do pupils who watch very little, said researcher Mark Fetler in an article in the Journal of Communication.

"Students who viewed more than six hours of television each day had sharply lower achievement scores in all three (studied) areas" — reading, mathematics and written expression," Fetler said Tuesday.

But he said there also was evidence that "students watching relatively moderate amounts of television have higher achievement scores than those who reported watching less."

In his study, Fetler examined the relationship between the students' television viewing habits, which were determined by a survey, and their performance in the 1981 California Assessment Program.

He said the study also shows students from affluent or advantaged families are hurt more by excessive television viewing than those from poorer or disadvantaged homes.

Fetler, a consultant to the California Department of Education, said one reason for the difference is that television viewing is more of a distraction for students from advantaged families.

"More affluent homes are more likely to contain books, magazines, stimulating games and parents who encourage their children to read, do homework and do well in school," he said.

"The more time spent watching television in these homes, the less time could be spent in activities that sharpen skills relevant to success in school."

The Journal of Communication is published by the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.

ATLANTA GA
ATLANTA JOURNAL AND
ATLANTA CONSTITUTION
SAT. 432,710 SUN. 543,253



# Heavy TV viewing linked to poor academic achievemen

6070

A study of 10,000 California sixth-graders has found that heavy television viewing appears to affect student achievement in elementary school.

Socially advantaged students are most likely to suffer academically if they watch a lot of television, according to a recent article about the study in the University of Pennsylvania's Journal of Communication.

"A trend of consistently lower achievement was associated with heavier viewing for students from professional families," researcher Mark Fetler wrote.

Fetler said that watching a moderate amount of television resulted in higher academic achievement for children whose parents are semi-professionals or skilled workers.

"Students who viewed more than six hours of television each day had sharply lower achievement scores" in reading, mathematics and written expression, Fetler said. However, he reported, "students watching relatively moderate amounts of television have higher achievement scores than those who reported watching less."

Offering an explanation for his findings, Fetler said, "One possibility is that more affluent homes are more likely to contain books, magazines, stimulating games and parents who encourage their children to do well in school. The more time spent watching television in these homes, the less time spent in activities that sharpen (academic) skills."

SCHOOL N

JUL 15 1984
BUBBELLES

# 1984 a Bad Year of Hay Fever Sufferers

By Ronald Kotulak
Chicago Tribune

For the 24 million Americans who suffer from hay fever, 1984 may go down as one of the worst years on record, according to the American Lung Association.

Hay fever actually is a broad term that covers all types of allergies to pollen. Though at least 75 percent of the victims are allergic to ragweed pollen, many also develop sneezing, itchy eyes and runny noses from other common pollens such as those from grass, trees and weeds.

This year already has been miserable for hay fever victims because heavy spring rains across the United States produced a bumper crop of pollen, the association said.

No relief is in sight, either, as ragweed plants will continue to shed their irritating pollen through August.

### TV SEEN AS FACTOR IN MAKING GRADE

Students from affluent families who watch a lot of television tend to have poorer academic records than students from similar families who are light TV viewers, according to a study of 10,000 California 6th graders.

One reason may be that watching up to six hours of television a day cuts into the time a student has for reading, homework or other intellectually stimulating activities, said Mark Felter, a consultant to the California Department of Education.

The top 10 TV programs watched by the heavy viewers in the study were "Midnight Special," "Vega$," "Dance Fever," "Flamingo Road," "Lou Grant," "Real Kids," "Quincy," "Soap," "Hart to Hart" and "Dynasty," Felter reported in the Journal of Communication, a publication of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications.

Favorite shows of the light TV viewers were "Bill Moyers' Journal," "Nova," "700 Club," "Sunrise Semester," "The MacNeil-Lehrer Report," "Washington Week in Review," "Masterpiece Theater," "PTL Club," "Meet the Press" and "Firing Line."

### LEFT FACE, FORWARD MARCH

Along with being right-handed or left-handed, people also can be classified as being "right-faced" or "left-faced," according to Karl Smith, a University of Wisconsin psychologist.

Most people are right-faced, but musicians tend to be left-faced, he said. Based on motion studies of lip, tongue and jaw movements, Smith found that right-faced people make more use of the right side of their faces while speaking; the right brow is typically raised higher than the left, the head often is turned to the left to expose more of the right side of the face and the right side of the mouth opens farther during speech than the left side. These habits are reversed for left-faced people, he reported in the Journal of the Acoustical Society of America.

A study of 574 people showed that 88 percent were right-faced, Smith added.

### HORMONE IN BRAIN LINKED TO STRESS

Scientists at Johns Hopkins University have located a hormone in the brains of animals that appears to regulate stress.

The discovery may help researchers in understanding stress and many of the common disorders linked to it, such as heart disease and high blood pressure, said Michael Kuhar, a Johns Hopkins neuroscientist.

When injected into the brains of animals, the hormone, called corticotropin releasing factor, attaches to specific brain-cell receptors and produces typical stress symptoms — increased heart rate, higher blood pressure and loss of appetite, he said.

### LIFE'S HEADACHES EASIER ON KIDS

Children, unlike adults, tend to have more headaches that occur on weekdays, are shorter lasting and less bothersome.

Harvard University researchers reported in the journal Archives of Neurology that children are quicker to bounce back after a headache.

Times-Picayune
STATES-ITEM NEW ORLEANS LA.
D. 274,260 S. 321,260

JUL 14 1984

BURBELLES

# Television seen as a factor in making the grade in class

Chicago Tribune

Students from affluent families who watch a lot of television tend to have poorer academic records than students from similar families who are light TV viewers, according to a study of 10,000 California 6th graders.

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St. Paul Minn.
Pioneer Press & Dispatch
SAT. & SUN. 240,259

JUL 14 1984
BURELLE'S

# Heavy TV viewers found poorer at making grade

Chicago Tribune

Students from affluent families who watch a lot of television tend to have poorer academic records than students from similar families who are light TV viewers, according to a study of 10,000 California sixth-graders.

One reason may be that watching up to six hours of television a day cuts into the time a student has for reading, homework or other intellectually stimulating activities, said Mark Felter, a consultant to the California Department of Education.

The top 10 TV programs watched by the heavy viewers in the study were "Midnight Special," "Vega$," "Dance Fever," "Flamingo Road," "Lou Grant," "Real Kids," "Quincy," "Soap," "Hart to Hart" and "Dynasty," Felter reported in the Journal of Communication, a publication of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications.

Favorite shows of the light TV viewers were "Bill Moyers' Journal," "Nova," "700 Club," "Sunrise Semester," "The MacNeil-Lehrer Report," "Washington Week in Review," "Masterpiece Theater," "PTL Club," "Meet the Press" and "Firing Line." □

# Study: TV habits affect child's achievement

## Advantaged suffer most

Children whose parents are earning a comfortable living in the professions or the executive suite have a lot to lose by spending endless hours in front of the television set.

A new study of the effects of television on school achievement suggests that socially advantaged kids — the ones whose parents earn a good living and are likely to encourage them to work hard in school — quickly lose ground academically the more they watch television.

Conversely, kids from impoverished homes tend to do a little better if they watch a moderate amount of television.

But nearly all kids in all social classes, the study found, do much worse when their television viewing gets up to the heavy level, beyond four hours a day. Six hours, incidentally, is closer to the average time the TV is on everyday in the typical American home.

This intriguing study was reported in the spring issue of the Journal of Communication, published by the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania. Researcher Mark Fetler, a consultant for the California Department of Education, reported his findings in an article called "Television Viewing and School Achievement."

Fetler based his study on a statewide test in reading, writing and arithmetic given each year to sixth-graders in California public schools. The researcher got his statistics from the test given in the spring of 1981.

Teachers helped out by writing information about the parent's or guardian's job on the back of the test. Without saying what the job was, they identified these job categories: 1) unknown; 2) unskilled workers or welfare recipients; 3) skilled and semiskilled workers; 4) semiprofessionals, clerical and sales workers, technicians; and 5) executives, professionals and managers.

Margaret Regan

ON EDUCATION

The pupils themselves gave the information about their TV habits.

They estimated the number of hours they watched everyday, and, in case they didn't estimate correctly, they told how often they watched each of 27 shows that were on television that year. They also answered whether they did their homework in front of the tube, watched the same programs as their parents and talked the shows over with the family, whether they are allowed to watch whatever they want, and so on.

The pupils were all granted anonymity in order to protect their privacy. Of the 250,000 kids who took the test, Fetler gleaned a representative sample of 10,603 students from 292 schools. He eliminated from the study any child who watched no television at all or didn't answer the questions about television.

While Fetler takes suitable scholarly precautions in warning that the results are not necessarily ironclad — he notes that many other factors besides television viewing influence a child's school achievement, such as personality and relationships in the family, neighborhood and school — his conclusions strongly support the idea that television is the great leveler of social classes.

In nearly all cases, students from the more privileged backgrounds did better on the tests than the poorer children. The differences are most pronounced among the kids who watch very little television. But those differences diminish the more the kids park themselves in front of the television.

Other researchers at the Annenberg School have already postulated the idea that heavy television viewing brings about a phenomenon they call mainstreaming — the more people watch TV, the more they tend to think alike, regardless of the kinds of differences one might expect in people of different classes.

It seems to be true for children too.

Fetler said the study itself doesn't explain why the advantaged kids stand to lose more by watching television but he has some interesting ideas on the subject.

"One possibility is that more affluent homes are more likely to contain books, magazines, stimulating games and parents who encourage their children to read, do homework and do well in school," he wrote. "The more time spent watching television in these homes, the less time could be spent in activities that sharpen skills relevant to success in school ...

"Less affluent homes would be less likely to contain books, magazines and other intellectually stimulating activities that would be displaced by television. Thus, compared to what is available, television would be relatively stimulating, providing new ideas, vicarious experiences and new vocabulary, and might translate into academic improvement, at least when in moderation."

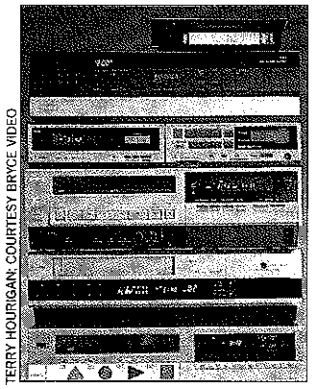
Lest some champion Fetler as an advocate of TV viewing for disadvantaged children, he stresses that only moderate doses help these kids.

What are parents to make of all this?

Fetler found that the kids who watched less were more strictly controlled by their parents. For example, they weren't allowed to do their homework with one eye on the TV, and they apparently weren't allowed to watch whatever they wanted.

While Fetler will only say that his findings *suggest* that children's success in school is undermined by watching large amounts of television, parents would do well to take his study seriously.

# The Video Revolution



TERRY HOURIGAN: COURTESY BRYCE VIDEO

## The boom in VCR's is overturning the tyranny of television and transforming the American living room into a private screening room. Eager entrepreneurs are building an entire industry around the videophiles, shaking the very foundations of the entertainment business.

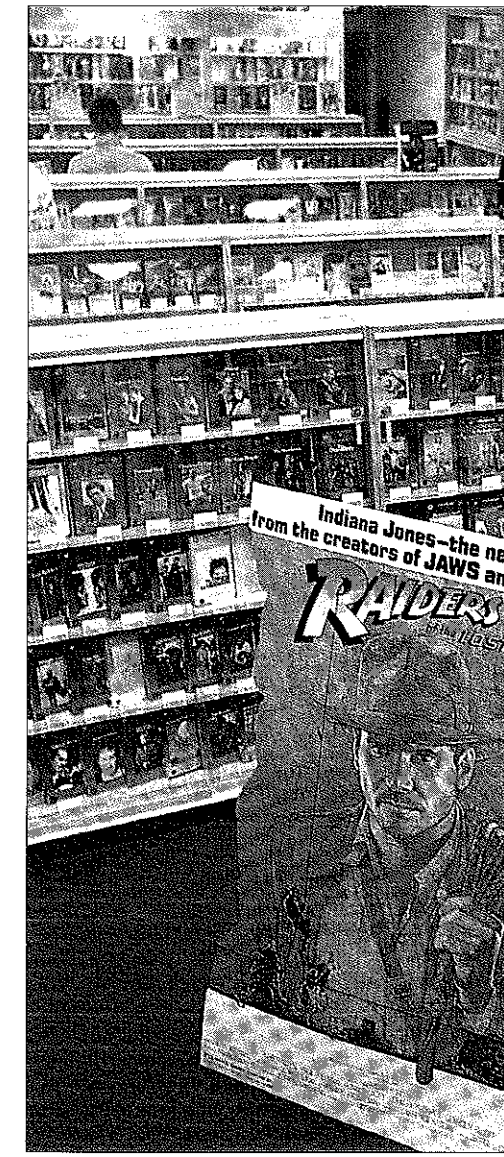
*Near closing time on a hot, humid night, Federal TV, across from Wrigley Field in Chicago, is packed with people waiting to rent tapes for their video-cassette recorders. To nurse Eileen Smith, 34, nine months pregnant, bliss would be unwinding in front of the TV watching Meryl Streep in "Silkwood." But lots of people had the same idea. "We're out. How 'bout 'Cujo'?" says a clerk. As people behind her groan, Smith dashes off to a video store in Lincoln Park. Out again. She finally finds "Silkwood" at the Chicago Public Library. "I can't say the VCR has changed my life, unless you count the night we rented 'An Officer and a Gentleman'," she says, patting her swollen stomach. "If we hadn't stayed up late to watch Richard Gere, I might not be in this condition."*

*Last November Barbara and Wayne Riley of Houston were eager to watch ABC's nuclear-holocaust drama "The Day After." But they didn't want to expose their three-year-old son, Cullen, to the graphic film. At 8 o'clock they popped a cassette into their VCR and taped the show to watch after Cullen's bedtime. As much of the country sat transfixed by images of nuclear devastation, the Rileys were on the couch entertaining Cullen with tapes of "Sesame Street"—using another of their four VCR's.*

JAMES A. COOK

*Video party in Denver: Just bring your own popcorn*

*For Louis Barrère, a San Francisco sound engineer, what started as a hobby became a consuming obsession. "I would tape 10 'Star Treks'," he says, "and then I would say to myself, 'If I have 10 of them, I really ought to have all of them; there are only 82.' That's how it grows." Barrère has just bought his sixth VCR; he wore out his first five in the course of amassing 1,000 videotapes—a collection so vast that he had to build a special closet to house it. But Barrère may be looking for another hobby. "It can get pretty expensive," he says. "I finally said to myself, 'This is crazy. I've got a Volvo in my closet that I can't drive'."*




*Browsing at Philadelphia's Movies Unlimited:*

Video revolutions are proclaimed so often that it would be tempting to dismiss this one as just another false alarm. But all the evidence says it isn't. Spurred by sharp price cuts and a surge in the availability of prerecorded tapes, VCR sales have galloped beyond the most optimistic projections. More than 10 million American homes now have at least one VCR—and that figure should hit 15 million at the end of 1984. By 1987, one in three households will have one. The private screening room, once the exclusive luxury of movie moguls, may soon be as common as the two-car garage. "Home video," says Richard Snyder, chairman of Simon and Schuster, "is going to be the next major mass medium."

Its arrival is shaking up almost every facet of the entertainment business. With video revenues on their way to becoming the largest source of film revenue after box-office receipts, directors, actors and writers are dickering with the studios over how to


TERRY HOURIGAN

*For the viewer, a welcome alternative to television's look-alike programming*

divide the extra loot. Studio executives, meanwhile, are busily seeking ways to mine the cassette market for even more. Music videos have spun new life into the record industry, and the spread of VCR's may turn music-video sales into a significant source of revenue. The satraps of other realms—broadcasting, cable TV, publishing and advertising—are trying to hold their own against the new competitor, grabbing for pieces of the action at the same time.

**Freedom:** The theme of this uprising is power to the people. Ever since the television set took control of the American family, it has ruled dictatorially, delivering look-alike programming that varies only with the time of day. More than any other system, the VCR lets viewers overturn television's tyranny. For early users, that mostly meant either "time shifting"—taping a program to watch at another, more convenient hour—or watching X-rated films. But the VCR movement owes its newfound strength to the vast array of programming now available. Choices range from megaflicks like "Tootsie" and rock epics like "Duran Duran" to "Curious George" and Jane Fonda's "Workout." "It's freedom," says Los Angeles screenwriter Dana Olsen. "When I was a kid I was a prisoner of the tube; now it does what I want when I want it."

That freedom begins with a technology that originated in the United States in 1961 and is now dominated by Japan, where giants such as Sony, Hitachi and Matsushita manufacture VCR's for the world. American companies get their slice of the $5 billion hardware market by selling Japanese machines under their own labels.

The versatile little machines have created a whole new industry: the sales and rental of prerecorded cassettes. A video outlet can be anything from a drugstore where one counter supports a stack of tapes to 30-store chains like Erol's in Washington, D.C. Together, the 14,000 outlets that retail cassettes rang up $1 billion in revenues last year, mostly from rentals—and according to many analysts, that figure could rise to $5 billion by 1988 (chart, page 52).

To reach this rosy state the video industry had to survive a fairly sickly childhood. In the mid-1970s videophiles began copying television shows to sell to fellow addicts. What early VCR owners wanted most was movies, but given the small number of machines in circulation, the major studios couldn't be bothered to license their films. Finally, in 1978 video visionary André Blay persuaded Twentieth Century-Fox to sell him the cassette rights to 50 movies, including "M*A*S*H" and "Patton," for $6,000 each. Blay's tapes were placed in electronics stores, but low volume and steep manufacturing costs kept the price so high ($79.95) that very few sold. "Then damn American ingenuity set in," says Jack Silverman, who founded Commtron, the nation's largest video-cassette distributor. Retailers began to rent cassettes instead of selling them, "and they spawned an industry."

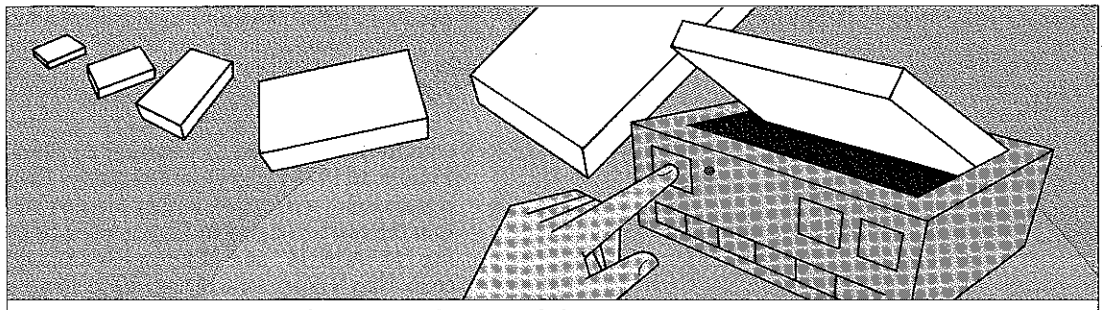
**Heroes:** To hear Silverman tell it, the founding of the home-video industry is a story as stirring as the founding of the Republic: "The real heroes of the video movement are those little mom-and-pop retail stores—the guy who got a second mortgage on his house and borrowed from his aunt to open a retail store and endured hard times until it boomed. They were dentists' wives, looking for a career in liberated America, bookkeepers whose kids ran it so they could realize the American dream of owning their own business and Vietnamese boat people who didn't even speak English. Little by little these little guys built an entire industry and did it during a deep recesssion."

Now people are rushing to cash in. "It's an easy business to get into," says Steven Savage, co-owner of New York's New Video. "You just buy some tapes, put up a sign that says 'Video' and if you have a good location, people will come in." In fact, you can get into the business just by buying a video vending machine—for $16,000—from Essex Engineering, a Connecticut firm. The customer inserts a credit card and chooses one of the machine's 168 tapes; if the tape is not returned, the account is billed for the purchase price.

Video signs are popping up everywhere. In Houston, Safeway and Randall's supermarkets not only offer tapes, they also rent VCR's: Safeway charges $9 a night, Randall's $11. In Illinois, Dominick's Fine Foods chain offers a package deal: 10 tapes for $21. "At that price," says customer Eileen Smith, "it's hard to go out for a quart of milk without returning with a movie."

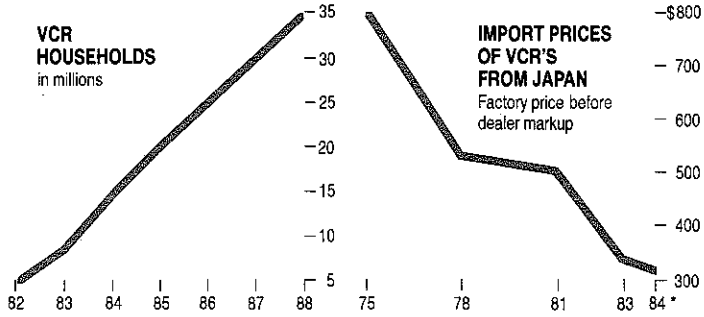
And in New York, renting tapes can take you to the cleaners. Last April Tai J. Kwon turned part of his Greenwich Village dry-cleaning shop over to video cassettes. Why cassettes? "I read about it in the newspapers," says Kwon, in heavily accented English. "I didn't have any experience. I just opened." But he had done some market research: "A lot of people had video cassettes when they came into the cleaners," he says. And he recognized that both cassettes and dry cleaning require a return trip every two days or so.

It's getting harder to find virgin terri-



## A NATION OF ARMCHAIR MOVIE MOGULS

**VCR sales are surging as import prices continue to fall and entrepreneurs rush to provide the beleaguered television viewer with alternative programming.**




Source: F. Eberstadt & Co. estimates




Source: Television Digest *First quarter

**HOME-VIDEO SOFTWARE MARKET**

| TOTAL REVENUES | 1983 $1 billion | 1988 $5 billion |
|---|---|---|
| Program Type | | |
| Movies | 67% | 50% |
| Adult | 14% | 8% |
| Music | 4% | 25% |
| Instructional/ Informational | 7% | 6% |
| Children's | 7% | 8% |
| Other | 1% | 3% |

Source: F. Eberstadt & Co. estimates

DEBRA FREEMAN—NEWSWEEK

tory. Alaska, for example, is a video hot spot. Dan Apted, co-owner of Video Concepts in Anchorage, rents tapes to 22 bush communities, delivering them by air. "One guy rents it," he says, "and half the town comes over to his house to watch it."

When too many people get the same good idea, it can turn bad. Like dozens of others, Jean Lightbourn went into video retailing because there wasn't a place near her home—in scruffy southwest Detroit—where she could rent cassettes for her VCR. She opened her shop, Video Focus, four months ago. But within two weeks two other video outlets had invaded the neighborhood. Staring forlornly across the street where yet another video store has an "Opening Soon" sign in its window, she says, "If I had known this was going to become a video block, I would have remained a consumer."

In fact, the pressures on mom-and-pop retailers are enormous. For one thing, capital outlays are high. Kwon, for example, spent $40,000 to stock 1,000 titles, and he's saving up for 1,000 more. Many outlets use "clubs"—offering discounts on rentals for large up-front "membership" fees to improve cash flow and buy more inventory. To be sure of having popular tapes on hand, a store must carry multiple copies of hot titles. Larger dealers, like Movies Unlimited in Philadelphia, carry up to 7,000 titles; owner Jerry Frebowitz finds that a larger selection allows him to charge higher rental prices than some small operations. The competition will get even tougher if mass merchandisers like K mart and 7-Eleven, which are now testing the waters, jump in.

For Hollywood the only worry may be how to churn the stuff out fast enough. But the major studios had to be dragged into the business—by video pirates. Bootleggers were selling illicit copies of "Star Wars" and "Raiders of the Lost Ark" for as much as $1,000 each. "A whole black market had grown up to satisfy a consumer demand we were ignoring," says Steve Roberts, president of Twentieth Century-Telecommunication. "So we decided to get into the bootlegger's business and make some profits for ourselves."

Which is just what they've done. Video rights for "Silkwood" fetched $1.5 million in January. "Supergirl," which hasn't even started filming yet, brought $3.25 million for the North American rights alone. And George Lucas just sold "The Empire Strikes Back" to CBS-Fox for an astounding $15 million. By 1988, according to conservative estimates, home video will be contributing up to 25 percent of a film's revenues.

Even so, the film studios' reluctance to enter the field allowed independent companies to gain a solid grip on key parts of the business. Early on, a few small companies, most of which dealt in pornographic films, bought up the video rights to popular television series and children's programming. Others brought out a number of instructional tapes. Little known Karl Video markets one of the most popular sellers, Jane Fonda's "Workout." Roughly 30 independent marketers account for most of the nonmovie trade. Belatedly, the studios formed their own video-marketing companies (some are joint ventures like CBS-Fox), but they are pretty much confined to selling their own releases. A few very successful producers, like the Salkind Co. ("Supergirl") and George Lucas, are powerful enough to retain the video rights to their own films.

**Foresight:** In addition, Hollywood has been all but shut out of the video-distribution business. After producing a film, most studios deliver the prints directly to theaters, making good money for their trouble. But film executives didn't believe video cassettes would ever repay the costs of handling them. Now, once the actual cassettes have been manufactured (by firms such as Bell & Howell in Chicago), the studios must turn them over to distributors like Silverman's Commtron (1983 sales: $125 million) or Sound Video Unlimited (projected 1984 sales: $90 million), which in turn deliver them to retailers. "The film companies through the years have failed to have much foresight about the future," admits Alan Hirschfield, president of Twentieth Century-Fox. "We didn't do it with TV. We failed with cable, and we allowed others to seize the distribution of home video."

*Assembling Sony Betamaxes: The hardware is Japanese*

Even their partial share

# TALES OF THE TAPES: VIDEO'S MOST POPULAR FARE

**VCR's are used for "time shifting"—recording a program for viewing at a more convenient hour—and playing prerecorded cassettes. Movies now dominate the cassette trade, but music videos and nontheatrical material may one day gain comparable popularity. Cassettes can be bought or rented; most movies sell for $79.95, although Paramount has released a few blockbusters at $39.95. The following are the best performers in each category.**

PARAMOUNT

**Jack Nicholson and Shirley MacLaine in 'Terms': Top renter**

PARAMOUNT

**Eddie Murphy and friends in 'Trading Places': Hot numbers**

**'Hill Street Blues': Drama that bears repetition**

ABC

**'All My Children': Daytime TV for the working people**

## ALL-TIME BEST-SELLING CASSETTES

**Title (Units sold)**

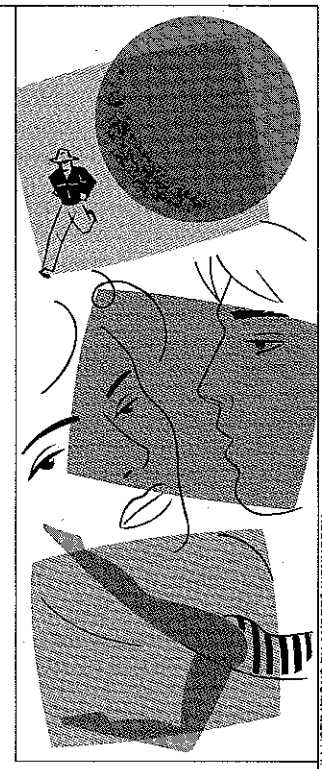
1. Raiders of the Lost Ark (600,000)
2. Making Michael Jackson's Thriller (450,000)
3. Jane Fonda's Workout (420,000)
4. Flashdance (305,000)
5. An Officer and a Gentleman (220,000)
6. Terms of Endearment (205,000)
7. Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (200,000)
8. Trading Places (175,000)
9. Staying Alive (170,000)
10. Star Wars (150,000)

## CURRENT TOP-SELLING CASSETTES

**Title (Weeks on list)**

1. Terms of Endearment (7)
2. Jane Fonda's Workout (116)
3. Raiders of the Lost Ark (33)
4. Cartoon Classics Limited Gold Edition Mickey (6)
5. Scarface (9)
6. Making Michael Jackson's Thriller (31)
7. Cartoon Classics Limited Gold Edition Donald (6)
8. Money Hunt (3)
9. Cartoon Classics Limited Gold Edition Minnie (5)
10. Vertigo (1)
11. The Right Stuff (5)
12. Cartoon Classics Limited Gold Edition Disney's Best (4)
13. Culture Club: A Kiss Across the Ocean (3)
14. Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (74)
15. Let's Break: A Visual Guide to Break Dancing (6)
16. Silkwood (8)
17. Cartoon Classics Limited Gold Edition Pluto (5)
18. Children of the Corn (2)
19. Trading Places (20)
20. Jane Fonda's Workout Challenge (20)

Source: Billboard Magazine



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDERS WENNGREN

## CURRENT TOP-RENTAL CASSETTES

**Title (Weeks on list)**

1. Terms of Endearment (7)
2. Scarface (9)
3. The Right Stuff (5)
4. Silkwood (8)
5. Blame It on Rio (2)
6. Educating Rita (4)
7. Children of the Corn (3)
8. Christine (8)
9. Sudden Impact (10)
10. Uncommon Valor (13)
11. All the Right Moves (7)
12. Broadway Danny Rose (2)
13. Two of a Kind (3)
14. Gorky Park (11)
15. Rear Window (10)
16. Under Fire (14)
17. Raiders of the Lost Ark (34)
18. The Dead Zone (16)
19. Trading Places (20)
20. Tank (1)

Source: Billboard Magazine

## MOST-RECORDED TV PROGRAMS

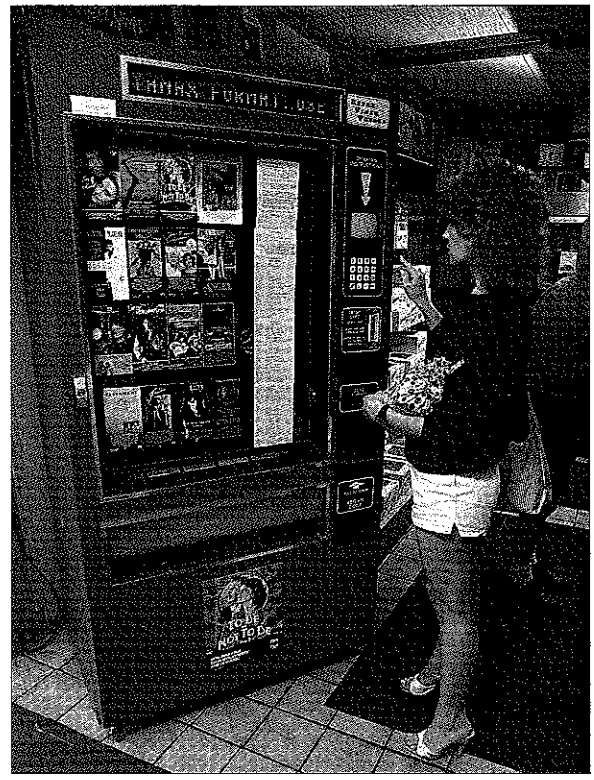
1. All My Children
2. General Hospital
3. Days of Our Lives
4. As the World Turns
5. Guiding Light
6. One Life to Live
7. Hill Street Blues
8. Dallas
9. The Young and the Restless
10. Dynasty (tie)
10. Cheers (tie)

Source: A.C. Nielsen Co.

of the industry, however, is flooding the major studios with enough cash to force an overhaul of their intricate financial structure. "The home-video explosion has changed the movie business more than anything since the advent of TV," says Paramount president Michael Eisner. "All arrangements with the writers, the directors and the actors, the cinematographers, everybody, will have to change." Last month, for example, the Directors Guild—preparing to strike over the issue—accepted a new contract giving directors an increased share of home-video revenues.

Hollywood executives, meanwhile, are fighting the "first sale" doctrine in federal copyright law that prohibits the studios from getting additional royalty payments once they have sold a tape to a dealer. "Composers get compensation when their songs are played; why shouldn't the creators of a movie be paid when their film is rented 50 times?" rails Fox's Hirschfield. Two bills moving through Congress would repeal the first-sale rule, but the video retailers are determined to stop them.

A neater way to handle the rental problem would be to encourage cassette sales, from which Hollywood extracts a full measure of profit. In an attempt to tilt the market in that direction, Paramount released "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan" in November 1982 at $39.95, half the going rate for most first-run movies. The experiment paid off, and last December Paramount put out "Raiders" at the same price; with 600,000 copies sold, it reigns as all-time top seller.



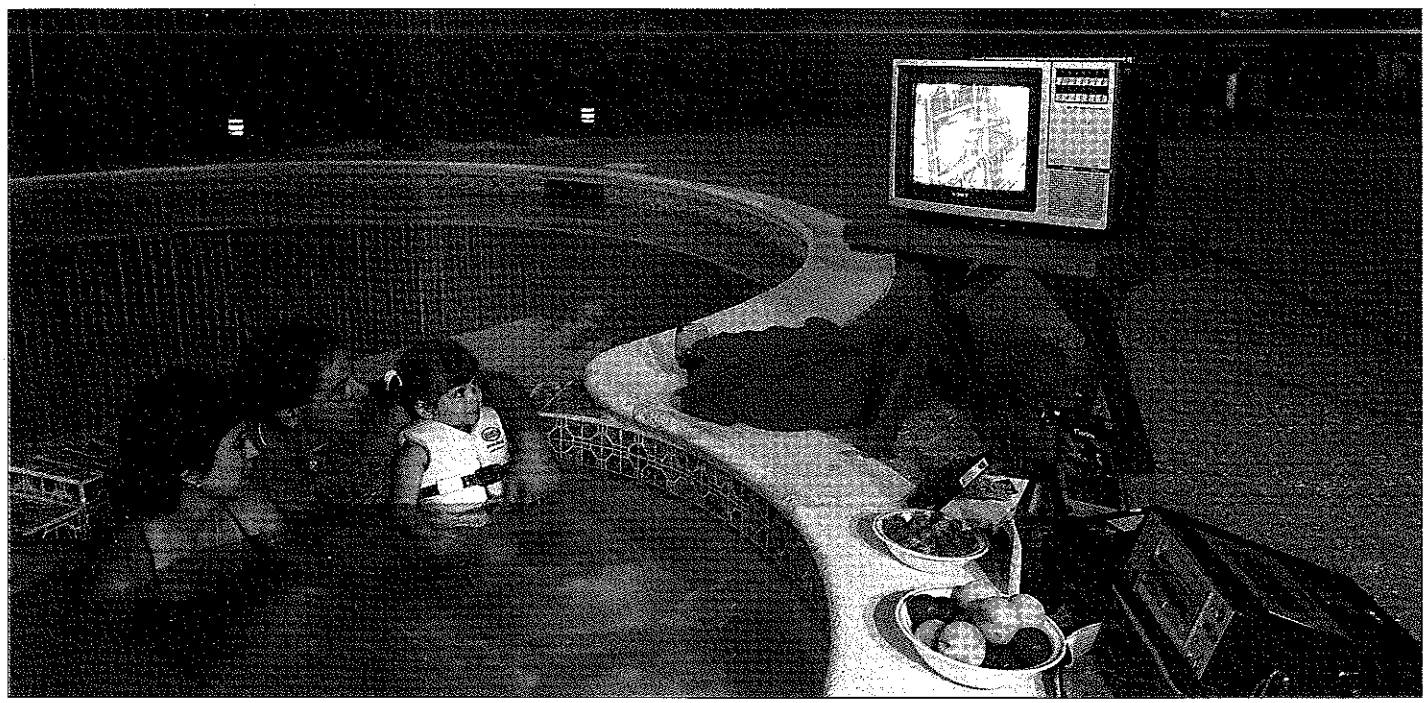
JAMES POZARIK—PICTURE GROUP

*Videotape vending machine: The trick is convenience*

So far, no major studio has followed Paramount's lead—on the ground that price reductions don't pay. RCA/Columbia's "Tootsie," for example, became the second title to break 100,000 in sales, even though it is priced at $79.95. "We would have had to sell 300,000 titles at $39.95 to give us the same profits," insists RCA/Columbia president Robert Blattner. CBS-Fox also has announced that it will release all its big hits at $79.95. Even Paramount still uses a two-tier approach: if it does not expect a film to sell well at the retail level, even at a reduced price, it sets its list price at $79.95 to make what it can from dealers who will be renting it out.

With music videos, there is no contest between sales and rental: people want to play them repeatedly, like records, not return them after one viewing. "You haven't seen the video explosion yet," says Gene Giaquinto, president of MCA Home Video. In addition to MTV, the cable channel that plays them 24 hours a day, as many as 300 programs nationwide are devoted to music videos. While sales of music videos are still small relative to movies, F. Eberstadt & Co. estimates that by 1988 they will account for a quarter of the home-video market. And many record stores struggling through the recent rock-and-roll slump found video sidelines to be their salvation.

**Synergy:** All these dollars flowing into video have to be coming out of someone's pockets. Theater owners would seem to be likely victims, but on the contrary, they are flourishing—with record revenues and an increasing number of screens available to the public. That isn't necessarily a paradox: VCR's appear to inspire enthusiasm about movies, persuading some people who had stopped going to theaters to return. And with increased revenues from video rights, Hollywood is turning out more films: 144 through June of this year, compared with 102 in the first half of 1983. Accordingly, Larry Moyer, who runs a theater chain in the Portland, Ore., area, has opened 10 video stores and begun to sell new and used tapes at his 12 theaters. He got his first taste of synergy when "Indiana Jones and the



JAMES D. WILSON—NEWSWEEK

*The Diba family enjoying tape in a California tub: 'The ultimate indulgence,' but the technology can turn out to be cost-effective, too*

Temple of Doom" opened at two of his theaters: lobby sales of its predecessor, "Raiders of the Lost Ark," took off. "We'll never stop going to the movies," says film historian Ron Haver, owner of 400 cassettes and 250 videodiscs. "You never get over the moviegoing experience where you sit with 1,000 other people and confront that larger-than-life image which dominates you in the dark."

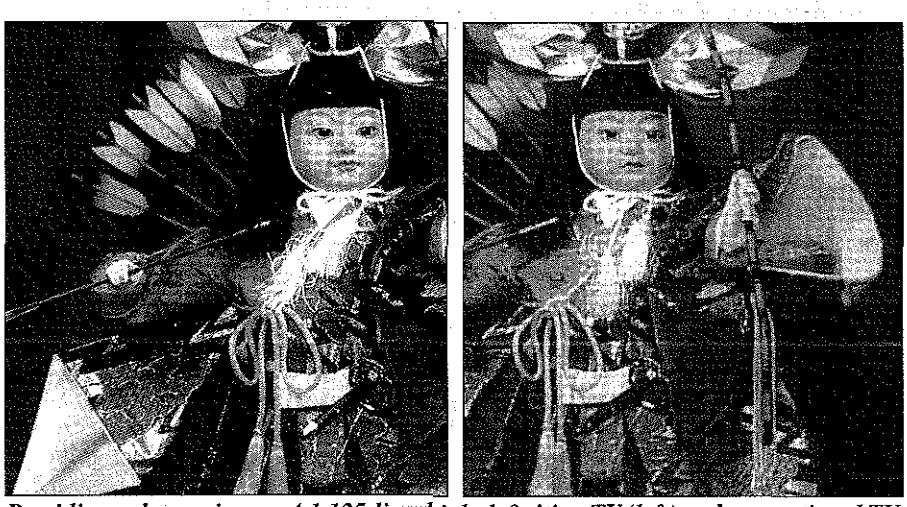
Pay-cable movie services such as Home Box Office and The Movie Channel have no such allure, and their pockets are noticeably less swollen these days. Home video is now growing twice as fast as pay cable. Movies are generally available on cassettes six months before they hit the movie channels, and VCR's offer vastly greater selection. Linda and Allen Brumlow began subscribing to a cable system last November. "We didn't get the movie channels because everyone we know kept complaining about seeing the same movies over and over," Brumlow explains. "We got the VCR instead."

The commercial TV networks—and their advertisers—are also feeling the home-video crunch. Cable TV and local stations have already nibbled away at network audiences, and VCR use could take an even bigger bite. Advertising agency BBDO predicts that by 1990 networks will be pulling only 65 percent of the prime-time audience—down from a lordly 91

# TV Sets of the Future

In the snowcapped mountains near Provo, Utah, Robert Redford and a crew of veteran filmmakers at his Sundance Institute film workshop recently experimented with a new video technology—high-definition television (HDTV). To purists, no video technology can match the quality of 35-mm film. But even the skeptics at Sundance were impressed: where conventional television produces only flat, mediocre images, the HDTV equipment creates sharp images with the stunning appearance of three-dimensionality.

As a technology, television today is not much different from what it was when Hopalong Cassidy and the Mouseketeers ruled the airwaves. The broadcast standards used today were set in 1941; color was introduced in 1954. But with the explosive growth of VCR's, computers, cable and other video technologies, television is on the verge of a major technological transformation. "The whole nature of the TV set is going to change," says Lee Isgur, consumer-electronics analyst for Paine Webber.



*Providing a sharper image: A 1,125-line, high-definition TV (left) and conventional TV*

The new wave of technological innovation has already begun. In 1981 Sony introduced its Profeel monitors, breaking the TV set into separate components. Typically, a component television system has a high-quality monitor—video screen—that has seven or eight input and output jacks so that it can display video signals from VCR's, video-laser-disc players, a computer, cable or conventional broadcast television. The tuner, which can pick up as many as 169 broadcast and cable channels, is a separate unit. Instead of the small, tinny speakers found on TV sets, component systems often have full stereo speakers. For those who want the reverberating "surround-sound" of a movie theater, a Dolby Surround Sound decoder will produce sound on four speakers, two in front of the viewer and two behind.

Although some VCR's and laser-disc players provide stereo sound, broadcast TV does not. But that will soon change: recently the Federal Communications Commission approved a new standard that will allow TV stations to broadcast in stereo. Instead of a single monaural channel, the Zenith/dbx standard provides three audio channels for each video channel—two for stereo sound and a third, called SAP for separate audio program, which broadcasters will likely use for simultaneous foreign-language broadcasts. (In Japan, where stereo TV has been available for six years, broadcasters have used the extra audio channel differently: baseball viewers have a choice of listening to announcers who root either for or against the hometown team.) In the United States regular stereo broadcasting for some programs—such as "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson"—is expected to begin this fall. Special stereo decoders will be needed to pick up the signals; the decoders can be plugged into newer "stereo-ready" TV sets, and some manufacturers are bringing out models with the decoders built in. (None have announced decoders for older sets, however.)

**Tricks:** The next wave in video technology will be the introduction of digital television. In a digital-TV set, the conventional analog video and audio signals are converted and processed in the binary digital code—a series of ones and zeros—that computers use. Digital television makes it possible to do tricks with the signals. For instance, the images can be stored in a memory momentarily so that ghost images can be canceled out. Japan's Matsushita Corp., which brought out the world's first digital television in June, designed the set so that it will display two images at once, letting the viewer watch one show while monitoring a second channel or a VCR or videodisc playback in a corner of the screen. A digital set developed by NEC of Japan can freeze up to four frames in memory, then print out the images on a thermal printer. Aside from the innovations it makes possible, digital technology should eventually cut the cost of television assembly by putting much of the circuitry on a few silicon chips.

While the first digital-TV sets should be on the American market by the end of the year, the more exotic technology of high-definition television will be slower to arrive. HDTV provides a stunning improvement in picture quality, with much higher resolution and a wider screen than the old 525-line standard adopted in 1941. But broadcasters and manufacturers have not yet agreed on a new standard, and until they do HDTV will remain only a bright idea. Says William Connolly, president of Sony Broadcast Products, which has developed an experimental HDTV system: "This is a case where the technology is ready but the economic hurdles still have to be crossed."

WILLIAM D. MARBACH with JENNET CONANT in New York, CHRISTOPHER MA in Washington and DAVID LEWIS in Tokyo

percent in 1977-78. So far, though, steady increases in the overall number of homes with television sets have kept network revenues growing.

And like movie theaters, television networks have certain unique assets. For one thing, many people prefer to watch the same things that everyone else is watching—and to watch them at the same time. "Network TV is here to stay," says George Gerbner, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communication. "It's the only thing that gives us a sense of commonality as a culture." David Poltrack, the ratings expert at CBS, notes that some of the most commonly recorded programs are daytime soap operas, which means that VCR's may be helping the networks reach millions of working people they would otherwise miss. Nor is anything likely to challenge network-TV advertising as one of the most effective ways to launch a new product. Even so, advertisers are exploring ways to get ads on cassettes, including the possibility that people would buy pitch-carrying cassettes if they were offered at a significantly lower price.

**Formats:** While swallowing their Gelusil, worried executives can comfort themselves with the thought that for all their love of gadgets, Americans have been remarkably cautious when it comes to forming lasting attachments to new machines. Video-game machines and videodisc players, for example, are two innovations that fell flat; RCA announced that it will stop producing videodisc players, which cannot record material, this year. But the market is far from settled. Buyers must still choose between the two VCR formats, Beta and VHS, which offer different advantages and drawbacks in quality and convenience. Beta machines, popular overseas, account for only a small portion of domestic VCR sales. The market could be further complicated by a new format, 8 mm, which is now being introduced for use with some portable video cameras.

Whatever the format, though, home video has some strengths that bode well for its survival. Above all, it appeals to the great American love of freedom, which these days is generally synonymous with convenience. "We wouldn't go anywhere on Friday nights, because we had to be home by 8 p.m. to watch 'Dallas'," says Barbara Riley. "But now we just tape it and watch it when we come back." John Diba, a car-stereo-store owner in San Francisco, owns four VCR's, including one in his car and one that he sets up outside so he can watch while soaking in the hot tub.

But VCR's aren't just for sybarites, as Diba attests: "Even my babysitter, the girl who struggles day to day, has a VCR." It can, in fact, be highly cost-effective. With rental tapes available for as little as 99 cents a night, an evening at home can be much cheaper than a trek to the movie theater. Shelly Berger's son Joshua, 17, who lives down the block from his divorced father in Beverly Hills, brings girlfriends to his father's paneled media room to watch movies on the VCR. "It's become a cheap date for him," says Berger. "He'll pop in a couple of movies and wait for his dear old dad to order sushi."

The comforts of home require no sacrifice in selectivity: 200 titles, old and new, hit the market each month, and most films are available on tape within a year of release.

DRAWING BY LEVIN © 1979 THE NEW YORKER MAGAZINE, INC.

*'Now, remember, feed the cats twice a day, water the plants once a week, and this is a list of the programs we want videotaped'*

While the popularity of X-rated tapes, which once held 80 percent of the market, has cooled, children's programming is hot: Disney cassettes are so popular that toddlers swap them in nursery school. And when all else palls, video cameras have created a new genre, "domestic drama," homemade tapes of a daughter's 40-point basketball game, for example, that she can study to improve her defense. The advent of cheap, portable cameras, in fact, may give a significant boost to VCR sales.

There is another side to the programming versatility of VCR's: many adults use them to control what their children see. Says Atlanta mother Amy Misner, "I don't like the idea of my chidren spending a lot of time in front of the tube. But I'd rather they'd watch an hour of Disney than 10 minutes of cartoons."

Whether people are watching soap operas or "La Traviata," though, the truth is that for a nation already hopelessly addicted to television, VCR's furnish yet another excuse for spending time in front of the tube. "I have people who come in and watch between four and seven movies a week," says Michael Pollack, co-owner of New Video in New York. "I worry about them. Sometimes I say, 'Go read a book, go talk to somebody'." Yet VCR's can be liberating. "We used to watch a lot of shows to get to a show," says Barbara Riley. "Now we just set the timer. We're watching less TV." And of course, some people are immune to the VCR's charms. When New York writer Michael Wolff learned his wife was pregnant, he immediately bought a VCR in anticipation of long evenings at home. But he hardly uses it. "When you can watch anything you want, there's no sense of urgency, so you end up watching nothing," says Wolff. He has only used $90 of the $100 in free rentals he got for joining the video club at Video Connection. He even bought a camera to make videotapes of his daughter, Elizabeth, but "they made her look like a bank robber." Wolff, of course, is probably the kind of person who still reads books; hardly typical.

**How-to Tapes:** Where, in fact, do the humble booksellers stand amid all this video turmoil? As ABC's Michael Dann sees it, they could end up big winners. "Entertainment will not be the basis for the VCR's success in the long term," he says. Jane Fonda's "Workout" is just the beginning: Dann bets that instructional programming of all kinds, from cooking to carpentry, will have enormous appeal. Some publishers have already begun. Simon and Schuster, for example, plans to sell video cassettes in bookstores and price them only slightly higher than hard-cover books. "I don't know where this market will take us," says chairman Snyder, "but I do know there is a lot of room out there for nontheatrical video."

If Snyder is right, and the VCR comes to be a vehicle for delivering new kinds of programming, it may yet enhance the cultural landscape. Chances are, though, that it will remain just a new way of watching the same old stuff. Technical revolutions generally have not produced cultural advances, and perhaps they should not be expected to. The VCR is pretty nifty as gadgets go, and that alone seems to ensure that it will take up permanent residence in the American home, right alongside the beloved box.

ERIC GELMAN with JANET HUCK in Los Angeles, CONNIE LESLIE and CAROLYN FRIDAY in New York, PAMELA ABRAMSON in San Francisco, MICHAEL REESE in Chicago and bureau reports

# Gerbner to speaks on TV's version of reality today

by Bob Steen

George Gerbner, the nation's leading authority on the social impact of television, will deliver this morning's lecture.

Dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, Gerbner will address the subject: "Television: The Message Behind the Message."

According to a feature article in Newsweek magazine, Gerbner uses behavioral research to construct an indictment of the message television conveys. "He has turned his lens on TV's hidden victims," says the article, "—women, the elderly, blacks, blue-collar workers and other groups—to document the ways in which video-entertainment portrayals subliminally condition how we perceive ourselves and how we view those around us."

Gerbner and his associates spent 15 years videotaping television programs, then analyzed them in detail. On the basis of his findings, he then questioned people from a broad range of social circumstances. The results of his survey showed that those who were heavy television viewers had perceptions of life skewed by what they saw on TV, while light viewers had a more accurate view of reality.

The native of Hungary finds that television warps people's perceptions in such areas as gender roles, age, race, work, health and crime. He agrues that the need of television sponsors to reach and entertain their most prominent segment of viewers, white, middle-class females between the ages of 18 and 49, causes them to present a version of life on the tube that tends to ignore other groups and lifestyles.

In light of television's influence over the American population, Gerbner believes the networks have a responsibility to be faithful to reality as well as entertain their most prominent segment tions, a child in the United States absorbs more than 30,000 "stories." These stories have replaced other institutions such as the church as the setter of social norms of behavior and belief: "If you can write a nation's stories," he remarks, "you needn't worry about who makes its laws. Today television tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time."

Dr. George Gerbner

Beginning his career on the staff of the San Francisco Chronicle, Gerbner has worked as an editor in the U.S. Information Service, a partner in a public relations firm, and has held research and teaching positions at a number of American universities.

He is editor of the Journal of Communication, and co-editor of Annenber/Longman Communication Books.

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# Reviews

## Gerbner lecture

by Jane Cadwell

Telecommunication has become the new mode of storytelling out of which we weave an invisible web called culture, Dr. George Gerbner told the Amphitheater audience yesterday morning.

Television is a ritual among Americans and has become somewhat of a religion. Television has become something which is shared by all people, regardless of their economic state, geographical position or age. This is the first time that a large segment of our culture has cut through these classes.

Gerbner stated that not only has television abolished isolationism, but the average American child is born into a family in which a machine tells most of the stories. How can a parent compete with the variety and activity of a television, Gerbner asked.

Television has created a new standard by which children judge society. This is a skewed standard however. Through several years of research, Gerbner has found that television misrepresents most aspects of society. In the world of television men outnumber women 3 to 1. The age groups are misrepresented as well as ethnic groups, occupations, and acts of violence in everyday life.

Gerbner said that his studies show that the more one is exposed to the world of television, the more one is likely to be afraid of violence and to consider oneself a likely victim. Also, studies have shown that the more exposure one has to television, the more complacent one is apt to be about good nutrition and exercise. A magical belief in the omniscience of the medical field is also instilled in those who

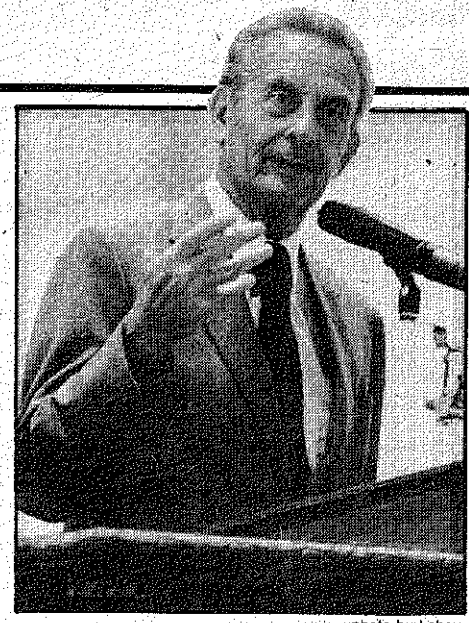

photo by Lahey

Dr. George Gerbner

are heavily exposed to the medium.

Television is also breeding a new individual who is less tolerant with the government and more greedy in response to paying taxes.

The present culture of telecommunications has evolved from stories which in the beginning depended on memory, ritual and repetition. The industrial revolution and the printing press broke up this ritual, and put the interpretation of stories into the hands of individuals as opposed to administrators. These beginings have led us to the era of telecommunications which Gerbner said is here to stay. Therefore, he intimated, we should be aware of how it is manipulating our society. We should know the message behind the message, he said.



## Q and A

by Bob Steen

Moderator Joe Johnson began the question and answer session by asking Gerbner if he had done any work on the recent phenomenon of MTV and music television. The speaker said that he was unable to give a research-based reply, but noted that the undercurrent of brutality and inhumanity in prime-time television is also present in music television.

Does public television portray a world similar to that which commercial television portrays, asked one listener. "Noncommercial television in the U.S. is a supplement, not a substitute service," Gerbner replied. He said that the financing for public television is ten times less than that of commercial television. He referred to the BBC as an example of a system financed by user license fees, which results in less of an emphasis on instant gratification in the programming.

A member of the audience asked if it is dangerous to have television controlled by money and corporations. The speaker said that it is implicit in his point of view that the market orientation of television is useful in some ways, but that it should not be the central basis for judging the story-telling of television. He believes that it is important to broaden the resource base so that appropriate reward is provided for good programming.

What message do paid political announcements convey? They essentially clinch the lessons of television entertainment for lesser minds, said Gerbner, explaining that "they are competing in and appealing to 'the new populism' ". This is the emphasis on safety and personal security influenced by television, which encourages people to call for strong measures in solving national and international problems.

9/22/1984 Unknown Publication

BURRELLE'S

# Impact of violence on television examined in PBS documentary

Do violent images affect television viewers? What does 30 years of research and congressional inquiry show? Are the networks trapped in the ratings game? Does the public get what it deserves? These questions and others are examined in a one-hour documentary entitled "On Television: The Violence Factor," airing Friday at 9 p.m. on PBS and Channel 25.

Hosted by veteran TV journalist Edwin Newman, "The Violence Factor looks at the behavioral, political and financial implications of TV violence in news and entertainment programming. The documentary is made up of eight interconnected segments: Violence and the News, The Money Factor, TV and Behavior, TV Violence and Real-life Crime, Thirty Years of Congressional Inquiry, Good Violence/Bad Violence, The Circle of Blame, and The Public Interest.

### New public debate

Mary Megee, executive director of On Television, Ltd., says, "By telling the TV violence story on television, rather than on the printed page, we intend to provoke new public debate and discussion about the rights and responsibilities of television-makers, at a time when Congress and the FCC are altering the principles governing the way TV operates in the U.S."

The discussion and debate begin right on the program as viewers (adults, teens and children), TV executives, and social scientists express their strong views on this explosive issue. Those interviewed include U.S. House Telecommunications Subcommittee Chairman Tim Wirth of Colorado, Steve Allen, NBC Chairman Grant Tinker, Joan Ganz Cooney of Children's Television Workshop, Dr. George Gerbner of the Annenberg School of Communications, and Ron Powers of CBS News.

### TV as a powerful tool

"The Violence Factor" looks at television as a powerful tool of commerce, reviews the findings of numerous scientific studies and Congressional hearings conducted during the last 30 years, and compare gratituous violence to violence used in appropriate context. The program also accesses the possible relationship between TV violence and a pronounced increase in real-life crime, as well as the influence of television on children.

The impact of TV on the young is dramatically illustrated. Edwin Newman reports that following an episode on the ABC series "Happy Days" in which Fonzie obtained a library card, librarians nationwide saw a 500 percent increase in the number of new library cards requested by nine- to 14-year olds. Demonstrating one negative effect, a viewer states that after he watched a TV show in which shoplifting "looked easy," he "went out and tried it."

At the end of the hour, Newman summarizes what viewers can do to contribute to the programming on television. These steps range from writing the networks and the managers of their local television stations to working with citizens groups and participating in public hearings on television.

"The Violence Factor" was produced by On Television, Ltd., in association with South Carolina Education Television.

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SEP 29 1984

BURRELLE'S

# TV fosters fear, sexual stereotypes, researcher claims

## Basic inequalities of society become harsher, critic says

Religious News Service

NEW YORK — A leading critic of the TV industry claims that the violent, sexy and stereotypic world portrayed on televison reinforces prevailing inequalities in the American culture, and says that is why big business continues to pay to produce it.

The TV world's "pecking order," as revealed in the sex, race and age of its victims and victimizers, socializes people for their role in an unequal power structure," said George Gerbner, director of a research project on the effects of television viewing.

Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia, was one of seven experts who spoke at a hearing sponsored by the National Council of Churches's Committee on Sex and Violence in Film, Cable and Television.

The nine-member group, led by the Rev. James Wall of Chicago, editor of *Christian Century* magazine, will hear from TV industry people, government sources, and TV viewers at later hearings in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and a Midwestern city not yet selected.

The Rev. William F. Fore, head of the council's Communication Commission, said the panel wants to address problems created by sex and violence on TV without abandoning the council's commitment to the constitutional guarantee of free speech.

Gerbner, announcing the findings of his latest research, said his conclusions are very different from the usual concerns about television violence. Much previous criticism has focused, he said, on TV's role in inciting aggression "and on the easily refutable claim that TV is the cause of violence."

Instances in which a viewer is incited to violence by television are rare, whereas TV's effect on the masses is to cultivate the sense that they are living in a "mean world," he said.

Gerbner's research showed that frequent viewers were more likely to feel insecure and vulnerable about the safety of their neighborhood and to be fearful of crime.

Reaching virtually all homes and watched non-selectively, TV constitutes a common environment that shapes common conceptions of society, he said.

TV violence is a "dramatic demonstration" of "who can get away with what against whom," Gerbner said. Disproportionately represented as victims of violence in TV drama are women — especially foreign, non-white, elderly or very young women. Gerbner said television serves as an "internal colonization" process whereby less favored segments of society are taught to be afraid and dependent. Those made fearful may then "welcome repression if it comes in the name of security."

The quality of television is resistant to change because it is "insulated from public participation b either the ballot box or the bo office," and because the powe hierarchy which television rein forces works well for the corpora tions that control what goes on TV he said.

The broadcast industry has con sistently marshaled "furious polit cal resistance" to any effort re-evaluate the present system commercial networks, he said.

Gerbner called for a vigorous ne "environmental movement" mad up of parents, educators, religiou and political leaders to clean up th "environment of symbols."

He urged the committee t recommend some mechanism t finance "a freer commercial systen one that can afford to present fairer, more peaceful and mor democratic world of television."

BROADCASTING
WASHINGTON, D.C.
W. 35,000

OCT 8 1984

BURRELLE'S

**Gallup on religion.** Pollster George Gallup Jr. will be among the speakers at the 42d annual Convention of National Religious Broadcasters in Washington Feb. 3-6, 1985. He will discuss results of a study done by the Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J., in conjunction with the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, that sought answers to such questions as who watches religious TV and why, and how viewers' church-going behavior relates to religious programing (BROADCASTING, April 23). Also slated to appear is Billy Graham, who will address the convention banquet on Feb. 6. Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and the Rev. Jerry Falwell will debate religion and politics on Feb. 5.

# TV Sex and Violence Reinforce Society's Ills, Professor Says

Religious News Service

NEW YORK—The violent, sexy and sexist world of television reinforces prevailing inequalities in the American culture, said a leading communications specialist, and that is why big business continues to pay to produce it.

University of Pennsylvania comunications professor George Gerbner told a National Council of Churches hearing that the problem of TV violence is not so much that it inspires imitators but that it convinces the majority of viewers that they are living in a "mean world."

Gerbner, who directs an extensive research project on the effects of television viewing, said research shows that heavy viewers were more likely to feel insecure and vulnerable about the safety of their neighborhood and are more fearful of crime.

TV violence is a "dramatic demonstration" of "who can get away with what against whom," said Gerbner, who heads the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. Gerbner said that women are disproportionately represented as victims of violence in TV drama, especially foreign, nonwhite, elderly or very young women.

He said television serves as an "internal colonization" process in which the less favored segments of society are taught to be afraid and dependent. Those made fearful may then "welcome repression if it comes in the name of security."

Gerbner charged that the TV world's "pecking order," as revealed in the sex, race and age of its victims and victimizers, "socializes people for their role in an unequal power structure."

Since the mid-1970s, said Dr. Gerbner, TV has become "more sexy but no less sexist." Most nudity and other "explicit vulnerability" on TV is female; "most assertion of power is male." Men outnumber women 3 to 1 in prime-time dramas, and women tend to play more restricted, dependent roles than in real life. On a "sexism index" devised by researchers, heavy viewers of TV scored most sexist, with the exception of one group. "Some people," Gerbner said, "are so sexist that the relatively sexist world of television is a liberalizing experience."

Gerbner was one of seven experts who testified before the NCC's Committee on Sex and Violence in Film, Cable and Television. The nine-member group will hear from TV industry people, government sources and TV viewers in subsequent sessions.

"Our children have grown up, and we have lived, on a steady diet of 16 entertaining acts of violence— two of them lethal—in prime time every night." That this violence "is historically unprecedented and shows no real sign of receding," he said.

Change is needed, he said, in the law that makes advertising dollars a tax-deductible business expense. He observed that consumers actually pay the cost of television, included the price of products they buy—a form of taxation without representation.

The Annenberg dean called for a vigorous new "environmental movement" made up of parents, educators, religious and political leaders to clean up the "environment of symbols." He said reduction of violence and exploitive sex on TV could come only if more public resources are allocated to that end.

# DISCRIMINATION IN HOLLYWOOD

## HOW BAD IS IT?

A special report on the struggles of minorities and women to make a living in television—and how it affects what you see

By Michael Leahy
and Wallis Annenberg

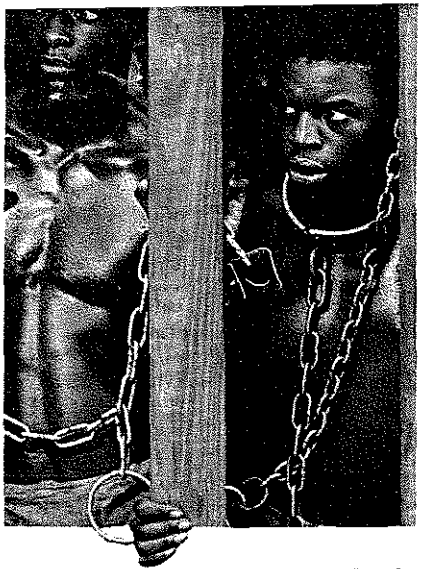
**A** woman director, a victim herself, agrees to talk about discrimination in the television industry only on the condition that *her name not* be used. "If you use my name . . . , you might as well bury my career," she says softly. Hers is a familiar name to some in Hollywood's inner circles, a name that inspires comments like "enormous potential" and "a nice touch."

She worries about being blackballed even more than she agonizes over a personal nightmare of three years before, when a producer suddenly broke his promise to hire her to direct an episode of his hit action-adventure series. "He had seen some of my work for which I had won [an award], and he was really excited to have me," she recalls. The producer informed neither his cast nor crew of the *identity of his new director. Later, the star* of the series, hearing that a woman was slated to direct an episode, stormed into the office of the producer. "I won't do it," said the star, an adamant man. "Women can't write or direct action-adventure. You know it." The producer cajoled his star; the star would not yield. Finally, the producer sheepishly called the woman to tell her she could not be hired.

*The woman director says she will not* reveal the name of the series, producer or star. "If it gets out, they'll know who it came from," she says. Long ago, she resigned herself to silence, believing that eventually the phone would ring and another producer would say that he wanted her to direct a series. Three years later,

**"*Simon & Simon* couldn't have been a top-10 show if the leads were black. There's evidence in the Nielsens for that."**

—Robert Harris,
president, Universal Television



*LeVar Burton (at right) as Kunta Kinte.*

**LeVar Burton "hasn't worked on ABC since *Roots*, except for one *Fantasy Island*. The most dispensable actor in the business is a black dramatic actor."**

—Dolores Robinson, LeVar Burton's manager

she is still waiting. "I hope and expect that sometime soon I will get a nice opportunity," she says. "I *have* to think that. Judging by all the people who are always talking about equality."

There is always talk about equality in Hollywood from producers and studio executives. They pride themselves on being pioneers, on creating shows that bring positive images of minority groups into millions of American homes where none might enter otherwise.

Those producers were all the more shocked; then, when the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission opened an inquiry recently into alleged discrimination against ethnic minorities and women in the entertainment industry.

As other investigations and threatened legal actions followed—a suit by the Directors Guild against Columbia and Warner Bros. studios, and a Writers Guild complaint to be filed with the EEOC—some in Hollywood's "creative community" were outraged.

"I just can't believe that the Federal Government or anyone else would go after an industry that has generated such positive images of women, blacks and other minorities," one producer fumed.

"This is absolutely appalling. We have helped other people to understand changes in America, to see what is right and wrong—bigotry, war, all those things. We've been forerunners."

Of course, such portrayals have always been largely written, directed and produced by white males. There has always been a certain irony in that, a paternalism that could not be missed, and ultimately, women, blacks, Hispanics and Asian-Pacifics began to attack a tokenism that effectively excluded them from key positions in television writing, production and management, an exclusion that came to affect even the roles they played. →

Globe Photos

**"There is an idea out there that women can only write and direct certain things; that they can't do car crashes, football games or bar brawls."**

—Carol Roper, writer

continued

Minority actors were generally cast in less than five per cent of all dramatic prime-time television and motion-picture roles, a reflection, in part, of producers' and studio executives' conviction that series with minority themes and minority leads would result in low Nielsen ratings and, therefore, disaster. Moreover, in the 1983-84 season, only a scant number of shows employed black staff writers, and these were, predictably, series with black stars or largely black casts—*Diff'rent Strokes*, *The Jeffersons*, *Webster*, *Just Our Luck* and *Benson*, which hired two black writers. No Asian staff writer could be found on television during the season, nor any Hispanic staff writer after the demise of a short-lived ABC series, *a.k.a. Pablo*.

Women fared better than ethnic minorities in some sectors of television, worse in others. In no season, however, did they receive representation proportionate to their numbers. And, like ethnic minorities, they were underrepresented in the most important creative sectors of television. In a recent year, women directed only 10 per cent of all television production and wrote only 17 per cent of all prime-time network programming (and less than 15 per cent of all theatrical movies). Only six per cent of the writers at Paramount Television were women, and at Universal Television, only one of six episodic series had women on its writing staff. Among the independent television producers, MTM Enterprises employed the fewest women writers, less than eight per cent. There were no women on the staffs of MTM's *St. Elsewhere* and *Remington Steele*, two series with major female characters.

And the statistics do not begin to convey a sense of personal stories, of careers impeded and, in a few cases, derailed by discrimination. They do not tell you, for instance, about a director and writer named Beth Brickell, who won a 1981 Houston International Film Festival award for "A Rainy Day," a film about a mother-daughter relationship starring Mariette Hartley. But, aside from an aborted episode for a canceled series, Brickell received no offers from network television for the next three and a half years.

The statistics do not begin to tell you about LeVar Burton, who, after exploding into the public eye with his searing portrayal of Kunta Kinte in *Roots*, played, in the next two years, a sullen street kid who ends up in jail; an inmate who becomes a baseball player; a wife beater and an imprisoned deaf mute. He had been typecast, and his personal manager, Dolores Robinson, knew it. "They couldn't see LeVar playing some character who was a positive symbol, like some professional person," says Robinson. "They have him playing criminals or misfits. . . . He hasn't worked on ABC since *Roots*, except for one *Fantasy Island*. One *Fantasy Island*! The most dispensable actor in the business is a black dramatic actor. Look at *Roots*: [the black actors] were struggling to find work after they had done the most successful TV show of all time."

The statistics tell you nothing about Karen Hall. In 1983, at 26, already considered to be one of television's finest young writers, Hall accepted an offer from MTM Enterprises to join the writing staff of *Hill Street Blues*, fresh from *M*A*S*H*, where she had served as the series' executive story consultant. At the end of her second season, Karen Hall resigned from *Hill Street*'s writing staff. (This season, independently, she will write three episodes for *Hill Street*.) ". . . Women and minorities are vastly outnumbered, especially at *Hill Street*," says Hall. "I was the only one. I'd say something like, 'I think this scene might be offensive to women' . . . and someone would roll his eyes and say, 'Here comes the women's lib crap.' . . . I know that talking about this might make it difficult for me."

Or as LeVar Burton says, "It is important to be judicious when talking in this town."

One who has not been judicious enough is Julie Johnson, a stunt coordinator for *Charlie's Angels*, who, four years ago, openly complained that studios and production companies all over town were taking away work from minority and women stuntpeople by putting wigs on →

continued

stuntmen so that they could do women's stunts, and "painting down" white stuntmen so that they could look black. She filed a class-action suit against The Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers, the Screen Actors Guild and three stunt associations. Julie Johnson has not worked since.

Typical of Hollywood's defense against such allegations is this reaction by one leading producer: "Understand, people fall through the holes all the time in this business," he says. "*Discrimination*? This town has always fought bigots. How could anyone question the good intentions of an industry that has created shows like *The Jeffersons*, *Good Times*, *St. Elsewhere* and *Hill Street Blues*?"

Like others in the TV establishment, he talks a great deal about *St. Elsewhere* and *Hill Street Blues*. But on the sets of those shows, there is an uneasiness, a suspicion that some of the minority portrayals are facile, stereotypical. Rene Enriquez, a Hispanic who stars as a police lieutenant on *Hill Street*, complains bitterly that his character has been undercut. "I was one of the original eight stars," he says. "Now the cast is at 15. My character hasn't been developed at all. Everyone else's has grown, but not mine. . . . What that suggests is not good. . . . What does that say about *Hill Street* or the people who write it? . . . It's very depressing."

Things are worse in the offices of *St. Elsewhere*. In late March, producers Tom Fontana and John Masius called in Kim Miyori, an Asian actress who starred as Dr. Wendy Armstrong. The series' original script had called for Wendy Armstrong to be played by a "pert redhead," but then the producers had listened to Miyori read for the role and minds changed. "Pert redhead" was stricken in favor of "young Asian woman," and Miyori suddenly had a regular role in a prime-time television series. Virtually overnight, she became a potent symbol in the country's Asian communities, which for years had endured Asians in roles as obsequious butlers and menservants, the kind of characters that Miyori calls "F.O.B."—Asian slang for "Fresh Off the Boat." It is precisely the kind of role played in *AfterMASH* by actress Rosalind Chao, who stars as a Korean immigrant, able to speak only halting English and married to a returning United States serviceman.

Miyori represented something quite different, and wherever she went, Asians stopped her to say how proud they felt. "Most of them had always thought they had no place in this business," she says. "I was a symbol that things were different." Yet, privately, Miyori felt dissatisfied. Her part had not grown in months; Wendy Armstrong had been given no life outside the hospital, and so she wondered now, sitting in the room with the producers, what Fontana and Masius could possibly want.

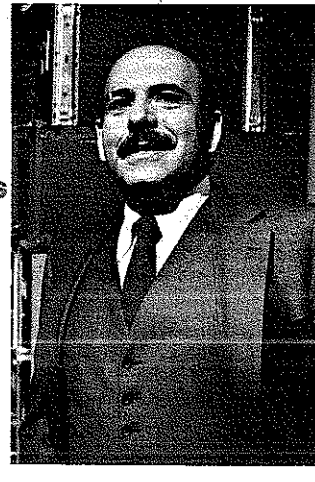
Fontana broke the news: Wendy Armstrong commits suicide in the next episode.

For a moment, Miyori thought he was joking, but Fontana began talking about details of the suicide. Miyori realized that he was serious. "Why?" she asked.

"He told me that they couldn't write as well for my character," Miyori recalls Fontana saying. ". . . He said that my character hadn't developed like

**"I was one of the original eight stars. My character hasn't been developed at all. Everyone else's has grown, but not mine. It's very depressing."**

—Rene Enriquez, *Hill Street Blues*



Gary Null

the others, wasn't as interesting. . . . How *could* it be? You never saw Wendy Armstrong out of St. Eligius Hospital, not with her family or friends. And you don't see any Asian writers involved, obviously."

The number of minority writers on *St. Elsewhere* and *Hill Street Blues* is, to be precise, zero. "Sometimes," says black actor J.D. Hall, who has been a guest star in three *Hill Street* episodes, "you get a sense of how not having any minority writers limits a show's perspective. . . . In two episodes of *Hill Street*, I was a criminal. . . . The third time, I was the friend of a welfare mother. . . . It's as though those are the only roles there are for blacks, the only things those writers can envision." MTM executives and such producers as Bruce Paltrow of *St. Elsewhere* will not comment on the absence of minority writers on their shows.

It is not much different at the other production companies and studios. Robert Harris, president of Universal Television, pauses when asked how many minority television writers Universal has on staff. "I don't think we have any," he admits finally. "It is very hard," he says. "There are not many."

The membership roles of the Writers Guild of America, West include just over 100 blacks, 45 Hispanics and six Asian-Pacifics among its 6300 members—numbers destined to be low because, before anyone can become a member, he has to have sold a property or been hired as a writer by one of the studios bound by a Writers Guild agreement.

Minorities, then, usually find themselves confronting a second barrier. "There is a feeling that the black writer can only write 'black'," insists Naomi Gurian, a representative of the Writers Guild, West. "Producers don't feel that a black or a Hispanic can write, for instance, about whites in a sitcom."

Studio executives publicly deny this, but a former producer of a hit detective series concedes privately that you "regularly hear talk of how this 'new guy'— →

continued

which is sometimes shorthand for some black or Chicano—thinks he can write a certain thing, but the producers doubt whether he understands what is funny in Beverly Hills. Of course, you never hear anybody saying the white guy can't write 'black.' . . . . It can be a very tight little club."

But there is another, even larger problem: "Lots of white producers and executives just don't believe a program written by black people about black people can make it," says Topper Carew, one of the few successful black producers. "They look at the Nielsen ratings, and that's it."

*Cagney & Lacey* is one of the few prime-time network shows employing women as writers and producers.

"It's hard to argue with the numbers," says Universal's Robert Harris, smiling. ". . . *Simon & Simon* couldn't have been a top-10 show if the leads were black," he declares. "Just *couldn't* be. There's evidence in the Nielsens for that." It seems an extreme write-off of all black actors, and so a visitor asks him if he thinks *any* dramatic TV series with a minority lead will ever succeed.

"I'll tell you what the facts and figures are," he says. "Aside from comedy shows, there has never been a long-running hit series with an all-black cast or a single black lead. . . . *Harris and Company*, a show about a black, middle-class family, didn't work. Neither did *Get Christie Love!*, about a black [woman detective]. All fell through. What does that tell you? I mean, what can you do about the numbers?"

*What does that tell you?* In one way or another, it is what executives always ask: how can they urge a network to take a chance on a show that no one will watch? And they are quite convinced of that: *no one* will watch. Some of these men want very much to see a minority series succeed, but, as with Robert Harris, their jobs hinge on making shows that attract huge audiences. So they will quickly tell you how bad the Nielsens were when black actor James Earl Jones starred in the 1979-80 CBS series *Paris*, and shrug.

Maybe Leonard Goldberg, one of Hollywood's most successful producers, sees the truth most clearly. Through the '70s, Goldberg produced *Charlie's Angels* and a string of other hits with Aaron Spelling. "Listen, this business has nothing to do with social consciousness, unless it sells," he says. "If Aztec human sacrifices sell, then that's what we'll make."

Out of this fealty to the Nielsens has been born a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy: black dramas have not succeeded; therefore they will not be attempted, insuring that none ever will succeed. Minorities have virtually no mentors in positions of power, no studio presidents or executive producers to push their projects. You can find a handful of respected black directors and line producers in television, men like Ivan Dixon, Georg Stanford Brown, Charles Johnson—and Bill Duke, who directed episodes of *Cagney & Lacey*, *Dallas*, *Knots Landing* and *Falcon Crest*. But you rarely see blacks as writer-producers, those who create shows and write the scripts.

Many black actors and their agents now accept whatever roles come their way, feeling fortunate, on the one hand, to be working, but disturbed, on the other, that their opportunities seem limited to playing cultural stereotypes—a black welfare mother, a black pimp, an Asian houseboy—"the only part of the minority existence," insists producer Topper Carew, "that white producers find in their Times and Newsweeks."

Hearing about problems like these every day, Bill Duke sees only one solution to the exclusion of minorities. "We need to get black producers who can hire other people. In other words, we need financial and artistic power and control. We need people to take charge and begin doing it for themselves."

That sounds good to Peter Kwong at SAG, but Kwong has heard the same lines for years. "Power is pretty much in the same hands," says Kwong. "I mean, nobody is giving up, but the problems are worse today for everybody—blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Pacifics and women."

You rarely hear women mentioned in discussions with minority representatives. They keep the focus on ethnic discrimination, just as women's representatives usually confine their attacks to issues of the gender gap, the two groups' problems not always being similar.

Women directors have to fight a suspicion that they cannot preside over a band of males unaccustomed to seeing a woman in charge; that they cannot be, in short, tough. "There is an idea out there that women can only write and direct certain things; that they can't do car crashes, football games or bar brawls," says Carol Roper, who has done scripts for series on NBC and CBS.

"You'll find resistance from producers who say crews won't listen to a woman director," adds Leonard Goldberg, whose production company has hired a long list of woman directors, producers and writers in recent years. "They wonder whether a woman can kick butt, handle stunt- →

continued

men, do chase scenes, scream 'Cut!' When a woman is unsuccessful, these guys say, 'I told you so.' Of course, they don't ever say that when a man fails. . . ."

At the networks, you can find a few women executives—according to a recent survey by *Entertainment Tonight*, four of 22 at ABC, and seven of 21 over at CBS (NBC declined to supply figures). But no network, aside from cable's USA Network, whose president is Kay Koplovitz, has a woman executive in top management. "Women don't have any real power at the three networks," insists Koplovitz. "There is not one woman VP. There's no one among them who can say yes to a project. No one with final say."

Those most helpful to women have not been crusaders, but cool Hollywood executives like Dick Rosenbloom, president of Orion Television, which has hired women to write 37 per cent of its projects, a record no other production company comes close to equaling. At Orion, women have written the hit series *Cagney & Lacey* and a score of TV-movies. Terry Louise Fisher has become *Cagney & Lacey*'s producer-story editor. Rosenbloom sees what Orion has done as strictly good business. "You want the most talented people," he explains. "I think you'll see women receiving more acceptance as producers see how much they can help them."

**W**ith problems so pervasive in all the guilds, and no signs indicating that women or ethnic minorities will soon gain the kind of power that can effect change, more women and minorities are looking to the courts for redress. Last month, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's attorney in Los Angeles presented her report to the commission's Washington officials, who would soon decide whether to pursue a formal investigation. Sumi Haru and other officials at SAG fear that the EEOC will do nothing. "You *know* they are counting on nothing happening," says Naomi Gurian at the Writers Guild. "They are sitting tight at the networks and studios, waiting for it to pass."

*They* are. "You know, there *they* are, ensconced in their big offices, trying to keep minorities off their TV schedules so that Americans won't have to feel guilty looking at something," a black director declares one afternoon. The words always evoke images of moguls conspiring in private projection rooms. But in the real Hollywood, admen do studies to see which audiences have disposable income for cars and cleansers, and 30-year-old programming executives, pointing assuredly at the Nielsens, speak solemnly about which shows will not be watched. In the real Hollywood, there are production schedules, budgets and numbers to be feared: that is all.

**"A**side from a few jobs, does it really matter to anyone outside Hollywood?" a producer demands one evening. Maybe he should have spoken with George Gerbner, a man who has never programmed a TV show in his life, who labors in a cluttered office. A continuing study by Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and one of the Nation's leading social scientists, has concluded that television cultivates indelible attitudes of sexism and racism. Heavy television viewers, Gerbner has reported, are more likely than light ones to believe that "women should take care of the home and leave the running of the country to men," and to support the proposition that "white people [should] have the right to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods." George Gerbner has an ominous thought on what all this means. "If you can write a nation's stories, you needn't worry about who makes its laws," he writes.

Gerbner has numbers to support his conclusions, too. Everyone in this business has numbers, but Gerbner's numbers speak of a cost that all the Nielsens and other indices cannot measure. They speak, indirectly, of the cost of the numbers themselves. In the end, it is their force that will have to yield if television is to change. For the EEOC and anyone else involved in lawsuits, investigations, or "studies," it promises to be a long and, perhaps, a sadly quixotic battle. END

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PRM-TVGUIDE SKED 10-15
TELEVISION CREATING 'NEW POPU-
LIST'

14/6220

RADNOR, Pa. (UPI) -
PEOPLE WHO WATCH TELEVISION
MORE THAN FOUR HOURS A DAY
TEND TO HOLD INCONSISTENT VIEWS
ABOUT THEMSELVES AND POLITICAL
AND SOCIAL ISSUES, A COMMUNI-
CATIONS PROFESSOR REPORTS IN TV
GUIDE MAGAZINE.

GEORGE GERBNER, DEAN OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA'S
ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF COMMUNI-
CATIONS, CITES IN THE MAGAZINE'S
OCT. 20 ISSUE A CONTINUING STUDY
BEGUN IN 1967 BY THE ANNENBERG
SCHOOL.

THE STUDY DEFINED HEAVY
TELEVISION VIEWERS AS THOSE WHO
WATCH FOUR HOURS OR MORE EACH
DAY, A DEFINITION THAT INCLUDES
NEARLY HALF OF THE AMERICAN
VIEWING POPULATION, GERBNER
WROTE.

THE STUDY FOUND TELEVISION
CREATED "NEW POPULISTS" WHO
"THINK LIKE CONSERVATIVES, WANT
LIKE LIBERALS AND CALL THEM-
SELVES MODERATES," GERBNER
SAID.

"THEY HATE REVOLTS, EXCEPT
TAX REVOLTS," HE SAID. "THEY
WANT TO CUT TAXES BUT IMPROVE
EDUCATION, MEDICAL CARE AND
SOCIAL SECURITY. THEY DISTRUST
BIG GOVERNMENT BUT WANT IT TO
FIX THE ECONOMY AND MAKE THE
STREETS SAFE FOR THEIR DAUGHT-
ERS."

HEAVY VIEWERS HOLD RELATIVELY
RESTRICTIVE ATTITUDES ABOUT SEX-
RELATED ACTIVITIES, P E R S O N A L
RIGHTS AND FREE SPEECH, THE
STUDY FOUND.

"HEAVY VIEWERS - ESPECIALLY
LIBERALS - ARE MORE LIKELY THAN
LIGHT VIEWERS TO OPPOSE COM-
MUNISM, HOMOSEXUALITY, ABOR-
TION AND LEGALIZING MARIJUANA,"
HE SAID.

THE FINDINGS CONTRADICT BE-
LIEFS THAT TELEVISION FOSTERS
LIBERAL VIEWS.

"OUR DATA SHOW THAT, IF
ANYTHING, ITS NEW POPULISM
UNDERMINES LIBERAL SUPPORT FOR
WOMEN, MINORITIES AND POLITICAL
AND PERSONAL FREEDOMS," HE
SAID.

"VIEWING TENDS TO MODERATE
SOME EXTREMELY RACIST VIEWS,
BUT IT ALSO UNDERMINES THE
SUPPORT FOR RACIAL EQUALITY,
ESPECIALLY AMONG THOSE WHO
PROVIDE THE BULK OF SUCH
SUPPORT - THE LIBERALS."

THE PARADOX MAY BE RELATED
TO THE INFLUENCE ON TELEVISION OF
ADVERTISERS, TV PROGRAMMERS
AND POLITICAL PARTIES, ALL OF
WHICH SHUN EXTREMES TO APPEAL
TO THE BROADEST POSSIBLE AUDIEN-
CE, GERBNER SAID.

"TELEVISION TENDS TO BLEND
O T H E R W I S E DIVERGENT SOCIAL
ORIENTATIONS - AND TO MODIFY
POLITICAL EXTREMES - BY PULLING
THEM INTO THE CURRENT OF ITS OWN
BROAD MAINSTREAM," GERBNER
SAID.

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OCT 16 1984

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TV WORLD

'PBS'S 'THE BRAIN' FASCINATING TV VIEWING

BY JULIANNE HASTINGS 14/6210
UPI TV REPORTER

NEW YORK (UPI) -- COMBINING HUMAN INTEREST STORIES WITH RESEARCH REPORTS AND AWESOME PHOTOGRAPHY, PBS'S NEW SERIES "THE BRAIN" PROVIDES A SPELLBINDING LOOK AT NATURE'S MOST REMARKABLE THREE-POUND MACHINE.

THE EIGHT-PART SERIES FUNDED PRIMARILY BY THE ANNENBERG-CPB PROJECT AIRS WEDNESDAYS AT 8 P.M. EDT AND IS PART OF A COLLEGE-CREDIT TELEVISION STUDY COURSE.

DON'T LET THE COLLEGE CREDIT STUFF THROW YOU. THIS SERIES IS FASCINATING TELEVISION FROM START TO FINISH.

THE EXPERTS SPEAK IN ENGLISH, NOT JARGON, AND SUCH WORDS AS DEPRESSION, EPILEPSY AND SCHIZOPHRENIA AREN'T JUST BARKED OUT AT YOU BY A TALKING HEAD, REAL CASE HISTORIES ARE EXAMINED AND DESCRIBED.

GEORGE PAGE, DIRECTOR OF ARTS AND SCIENCES PROGRAMMING FOR WNET-NEW YORK WHO ALSO HOSTS PBS'S "NATURE" SERIES, IS THE ON-AIR REPORTER FOR THE SERIES.

EACH SEGMENT OF THE SERIES CONCENTRATES ON DIFFERNT PARTS OF THE BRAIN AND THE FUNCTIONS THAT ARE CONTROLLED THERE.

AMONG THE WELL-KNOWN PERSONALITIES WHO MAKE APPEARANCES IN THE SERIES AND DEMONSTRATE VARIOUS FUNCTIONS AND DYSFUNCTIONS OF THE BRAIN IS OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST GREG LOUGANIS, WHOSE NEAR-PERFECT DIVES ARE USED TO DEMONSTRATE HOW VISION AND MOVEMENT ARE COORDINATED. BRITISH COMEDIAN TERRY THOMAS, DISCUSSES HIS BATTLE AGAINST PARKINSON'S DISEASE AND CHOREOGRAPHER AGNES DE MILLE TALKS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF A STROKE SHE SUFFERED IN 1975.

SCIENTISTS DISCUSS NEUROBIOLOGICAL TRIUMPHS, LEARNING AND MEMORY, STRESS AND EMOTION, WHERE THOUGHT, LANGUAGE AND PLANNING OCCUR, VARIOUS BRAIN DISORDERS AND THE UNCONSCIOUS "ANIMAL BRAIN" THAT CONTROLS THE SEX DRIVE, AGRESSION AND DEPRESSION.

"THE BRAIN" IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF SERIES TO PREMIERE ON PBS THIS FALL AS A RESULT OF THE ANNENBERG-CPB PROJECT. OTHERS INCLUDE "THE CONSTITUTION: THAT DELICATE BALANCE" AND "CONGRESS: WITH THE PEOPLE"
WITH EDWIN NEWMAN

THE PROJECT WAS CREATED IN 1981 TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO EXPLORE NEW WAYS OF DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

A GRANT OF $150 MILLION FROM THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS IS PROVIDED TO THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCATING TO DISTRIBUTE AT THE RATE OF $10 MILLION YEARLY FOR 15 YEARS.

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FUNDING FOR "THE BRAIN" ALSO WAS PROVIDED BY THE JAMES S. MCDONNELL FOUNDATION, THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGICAL AND COMMUNICATIVE DISORDERS AND STROKE, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND CIBA-GEIGY CORPORATION.

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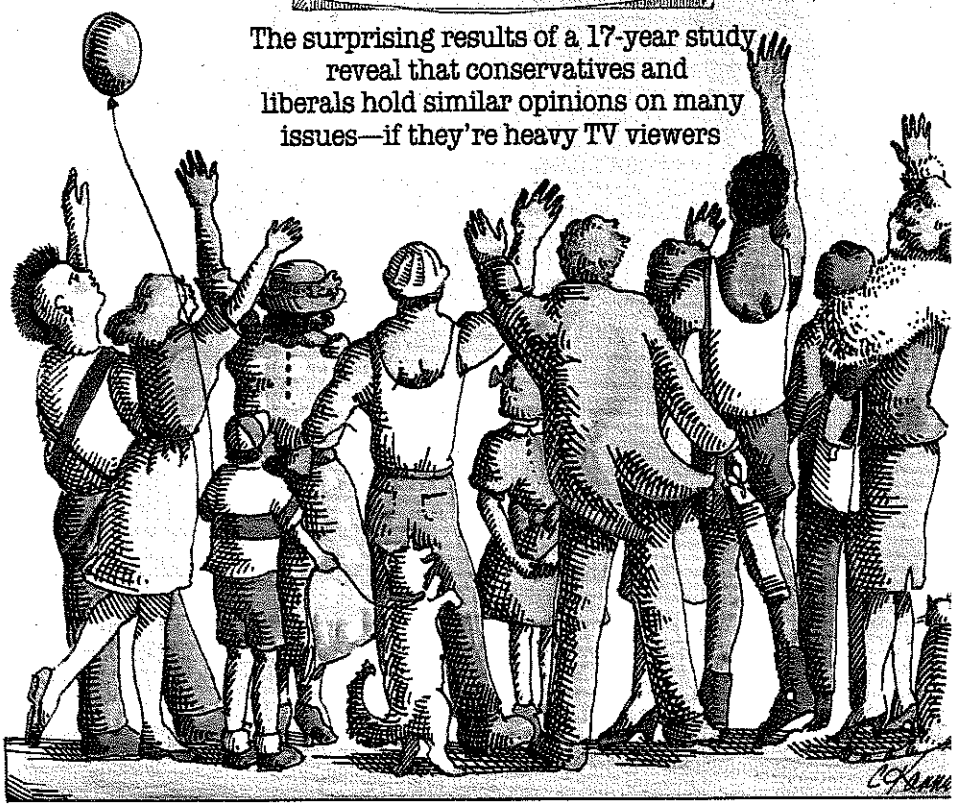
TV Guide
Oct. 20-26, 1984

The Mainstreaming of America

# Television Makes Strange Bedfellows

**The surprising results of a 17-year study reveal that conservatives and liberals hold similar opinions on many issues—if they're heavy TV viewers**



Catherine Kanner

By George Gerbner

If a man is permitted to write all the ballads, he need not care who makes the laws of the nation. The Scottish patriot Andrew Fletcher said that in 1704. He may have been the first to recognize that the legends, songs and stories of a culture exert a subtle and invisible power that kings, presidents and popes could only dream about.

Today, television actual-

ly wields that power. For the past 17 years, we have been systematically studying TV's effects on our conceptions of violence, health, occupations, religion and politics (see box, page 23). We analyzed patterns of responses to many questions about life and politics in many surveys of men and women, young and old, nonwhite and white, rich and poor, uneducated and highly educated, and other social groups of viewers. Each survey also asked how much television the respondents watch.

One conclusion became inescapable. Those who watch more television in any group—the heavy viewers—tend to think and act more like the heavy viewers in other groups than do the light viewers. (On most surveys, watching four hours or more of television a day defines a heavy viewer. That group includes almost half the American viewing population.)

Heavy viewers tend to have lower incomes, and less education than do light viewers. So, in order to separate the role of television from the effects of other circumstances in life, we must compare light and heavy viewers in the same social groups. When we do that, we find that the heavy viewers *of otherwise very different groups* tend to share many perceptions. In short, television's slow but steady contribution to the way new generations define themselves politically is blurring traditional differences between groups. These general findings translate into some striking specifics. For example:

☐ Heavy viewers in groups that tend to be the most reactionary and bigoted are less sexist than the light viewers in the same groups.

☐ On the other hand, heavy viewers in groups that are otherwise the most liberal tend to be *more* sexist than their light-viewing counterparts.

☐ Both low-income and high-income Americans who are heavy viewers tend to see themselves as plain working people of "average income."

☐ The more television they watch, the less likely Republicans are to call themselves conservative—and the more likely they are to regard themselves as moderate or liberal.

How to explain these findings? Advertisers, television program producers and political parties share a common need—the need to appeal to the broadest possible audience. The advertiser wants to get his message to every nook and cranny of a vast and fragmented land. The producer, with millions of dollars riding on every ratings point, has little choice but to construct a symbolic world of the broadest possible sales appeal at the least cost. The political party wants to sway the greatest number of potential voters to its cause.

In each case, this shared need means shunning "extremes," presenting conventional consumer values and striving for a safe, respectable, middle-of-the-road balance in most things. Thus, television tends to blend otherwise divergent social orientations—and to modify political extremes—by pulling them into the current of its own broad mainstream.

One byproduct of this mainstreaming process is the potent political brew we shall call the New Populism. It is a new, curious and perplexing political-social orientation whose members hold views that are often inconsistent and paradoxical.

New Populists think like conservatives, want like liberals and call themselves moderates. They shun what they see as "extremism" but demand harsher verdicts (although not the death penalty) in the most jail-happy criminal-justice system in the civilized world. They hate revolts, except tax revolts. They want to cut taxes but improve education, medical care and social security. They distrust Big Government but want it to fix the economy and make the streets safe for their daughters.

New Populists scorn "The Establishment" but dote on the rich and famous. They graciously permit women to work both inside and outside the home, and allow that minorities have made →

*Dr. George Gerbner is professor of communications and dean of The Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.*

continued

some progress, but resent and resist any loss of privilege. They are losing confidence in people who run virtually all institutions, including religion, but express trust in God, America—and television.

The role television plays in shaping attitudes toward basic political issues depends on who the viewers are and how they relate to the television mainstream. Consider the issue of women running for high office. The generally restricted and dependent role of women on television cultivates in the minds of viewers a generally restrictive attitude about women. At the same time, the television experience also makes most viewers believe that their outlook on life is "moderate."

The effect of heavy viewing is most noticeable among groups farthest from television's middle-of-the-road mainstream. For example, heavy viewers among reactionaries and bigots take a *less* sexist position, while heavy viewers among liberals are *more* sexist. Specifically, liberals who are light viewers generally say they would vote for a woman for President (or Vice-President); heavy-viewing liberals, however, are less likely to say they would vote for a woman—thus joining the moderates and conservatives of the New Populist television mainstream.

The current runs in the same negative direction, but deeper, on the question of race. Viewing tends to moderate some extremely racist views, but it also undermines the support for racial equality, especially among those who provide the bulk of such support: the liberals.

Television also cultivates relatively restrictive attitudes about sex-related activities, personal rights and free speech. Heavy viewers—especially liberals—are more likely than light viewers to oppose communism, homosexuality, abortion and legalizing marijuana. Thus, contrary to the charges of some critics, television is no liberal conspiracy. Our data show that, if anything, its New Populism undermines liberal support for women, minorities, and political and personal freedoms.

The dangerous, crime-filled world that viewers see on television further compounds the paradox. The more they watch, the more they tend to express a sense of apprehension and fear of being victimized. They want more protection, more money for fighting crime and drug abuse, more money for defense, and also a nuclear freeze—but no more taxes. Among all political persuasions, heavy viewers hold these conflicting beliefs more than do light viewers in the same groups. That paradoxical mix cultivated by television is one reason the electorate is at odds within itself, as political analysts have noted. Can those paradoxes be resolved? That depends on whether those who are not well served by the television mainstream can make their voices heard, and find ways to equalize the flow of influence between television and the citizenry. What we need, perhaps most of all, is a prime-time television program alerting viewers to the hidden political messages behind the messages they know about. (END)

## The Research Project

This report presents highlights from an ongoing research project whose findings have been published in more extensive form in scholarly journals. The research project, which has been conducted since 1967, is called Cultural Indicators and is conducted at The Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, by a research team of social scientists that includes, besides Dr. Gerbner, Drs. Larry Gross, Nancy Signorielli and Michael Morgan (now at the University of Massachusetts), and doctoral candidate Stewart Hoover. Readers with serious scholarly and research interests should consult the researchers' articles that have appeared in the Spring 1982 issue of the Journal of Communication and the Spring 1984 issue of Public Opinion Quarterly.

# Curbing media sex and violence by means other than censorship

**CURTIS J. SITOMER**

POLITICAL extremists and religious zealots sometimes do us a good turn. They get our attention by dramatically depicting problems that need urgent attention.

But unfortunately they often come up with the wrong solutions.

For instance, morality cannot be legislated or litigated (nor should it be) by sanitizing courts and pledging judges to "Christian" values. At the same time, censorship of books and movies won't quell baser instincts. And even if it did, such government-imposed bans raise serious questions of abridgment of constitutional guarantees of free speech.

Values are preserved and nurtured not merely by striking down old laws and substituting new ones, but by fully utilizing the free democratic process to focus on problems and come up with thoughtful, reasoned solutions.

**JUSTICE**

A study commission of the National Council of Churches (NCC) appears to be tackling sex and violence in television and films in just this way. And it is to be commended for its approach. The NCC has launched a year-long investigation of the issue; it recently held a first set of public hearings in New York. Others are planned for next year in Los Angeles and Washington.

The Rev. Dr. James M. Wall, the project chairman and editor of The Christian Century, explains that this endeavor is "the first religious national study to seriously examine problems presented by sex and violence in the communications media and at the same time dedicated to preserving the constitutional freedom of speech."

Quite an order! Is it really possible to curb sex and violence in the movies and on television without abridging individual rights?

The NCC's study group thinks it is. And so far, witnesses at its hearings have recommended, among other things, public education that not only emphasizes "critical viewing" but focuses on raising individual consciousness; the employment of more women and minorities by the TV industry; and exploration of ways to make the visual media more financially accountable to viewers and less dependent on advertising revenues.

The sad statistics show that sex and violence on television are expanding — even during prime-time, family-oriented programming periods. And these elements are coming into an increasing number of homes via videotaped programs, cable TV, and rented films.

What's more, "aggressive pornography" — including male-dominated "slasher" films — are reinforcing a callous attitude toward women, rape, and violence, University of Wisconsin researcher Edward Donnerstein told the commission. In fact, some films depict women responding positively to pain and suffering, Dr. Donnerstein points out.

Another witness, George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, says that television has created a "mean and violent world" and cultivated a pattern of inequality and domination. Professor Gerbner explains that women, ethnic minorities, the poor, the uneducated, and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to television's "mean-world syndrome."

Researchers are not quick to assert a direct causal relationship between television or movie violence and "real world" crime, however. And some media officials urge the NCC and others looking into this issue to look more for reasons behind public acceptance of this kind of betrayal in the media.

Perhaps public attitudes and the lure of the lurid need to be explored. But this should not become an excuse for letting movie and television producers off the hook. There is ample evidence that media violence, including the depicting of sexual domination of women, does not promote healthy attitudes and that it may trigger antisocial behavior in some people.

Some communities have flirted with local ordinances that attempt to restrict pornographic books and films on the basis that they promote male domination and so violate the civil rights of women. Federal legislation along these lines is expected to be proposed next year. Although the rationale is provocative, it must be questioned whether such laws smack of censorship and are in conflict with free-speech protections.

The answer lies in a change in public attitudes. Violence and sexual deviation in the media should be unacceptable to civilized and sensitive individuals. And one hopes this would include many of those who peddle this shabby merchandise in the name of free enterprise.

The Rev. Dr. Wall is a strong advocate of individual and voluntary curbs on violence. He rejects the whole idea of censorship, which he says "is abhorrent to a free society, because it blocks artistic expression and the search for truth."

But in a recent Christian Century editorial, Dr. Wall draws a parallel to the environmental movement and urges a broad-based solution. "We know that when pollution threatened to engulf us, state and federal laws were needed to force industries to halt the contamination of our land, air, and water," he says. Media sex and violence certainly contaminate our cultural environment. It's time to purify the atmosphere.

**A Thursday column**

November 1, 1984 UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA VOLUME 2, NO. 5

the PENN PAPER

# TV homogenizes politics of viewers

## *Liberal, conservative differences blurred, study shows*

**By Jan Snyder**

Whether they claim to be liberal or conservative, Americans who watch a lot of television share similar political views on a variety of issues ranging from taxation to crime.

By creating a mainstream of political thought among heavy viewers, television has created a "New Populism," says Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications.

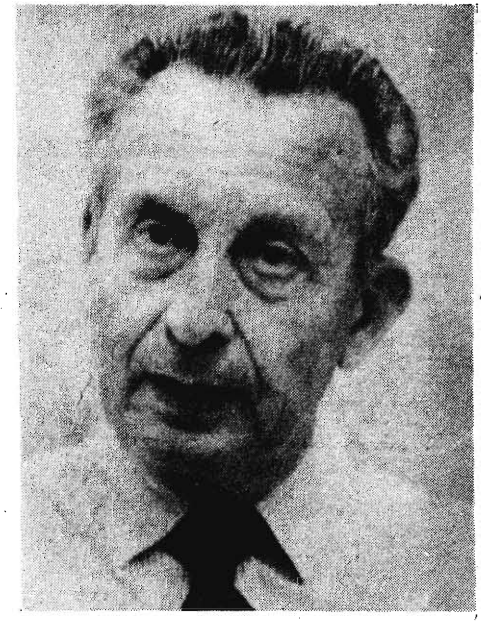
According to Gerbner, television's heaviest viewers constitute a media-induced political mainstream. "In short, television is blurring traditional orientations and shifting the way people define themselves politically," he said.

This homogenized group of "New Populists," says Gerbner, often expresses opinions that are inconsistent and paradoxical.

"New Populists think like conservatives, want like liberals and call themselves moderates," he said. "They shun what they see as 'extremism' but demand harsher verdicts—although not the death penalty—in the most jail-happy criminal justice system in the civilized world. They hate revolts, except tax revolts. They want to cut taxes but improve education, medical care and social security. They distrust Big Government but want it to fix the economy, make the streets safe for their daughters and the world safe for democracy.

"New Populists scorn 'the establishment,'" Gerbner continued, "but dote on the rich and famous. They graciously permit women to work both inside and outside the home, and allow that minorities have made some progress, but resent and resist any loss of privilege. They praise freedom but fear anyone who uses it in an unconventional way. They are losing confidence in people who run virtually all institutions, including religion, but express trust in God, America—and television."

*See Television, page 6.*



*George Gerbner*

# Television

*Continued from p. 1*

Responses to numerous surveys of men and women of various racial groups, economic status and education levels have confirmed television's ability to moderate the views of individuals who define themselves as liberal or conservative. These heavy viewers, who watch more than four hours of television daily, are likely to share the same perceptions of the world, Gerbner said. "Regardless of their race, gender or social-economic status, heavy viewers tend to think like each other."

Research by Gerbner and his colleagues showed:

—Heavy television viewing results in a more sexist outlook among whose who call themselves liberals

—However, television's mainstreaming effect is also seen in a small group of highly prejudiced individuals who are less sexist as a result of heavy viewing

—Heavy viewers representing both low-income and high-income groups are more likely than light viewers to regard themselves as ordinary working people of "average" income

—Republicans who watch a lot of television are more likely than light viewers to say they are moderate rather than conservative in viewpoint

Also, the researchers found that heavy viewers are more likely than light viewers to oppose communism, homosexuality, abortion and legalizing marijuana.

"The difference in political orientation between light and heavy viewers is most apparent among self-described liberals who are generally the most distant from the television mainstream," said Gerbner. "Far from being a liberal conspiracy, television viewing signals the virtual collapse of the liberal stand on political, but not economic, issues."

According to Gerbner, these research findings relate to the common needs of television producers, advertisers and political parties. Because each must appeal to the broadest possible audience, the creators of TV programs construct a symbolic world that appeals to a large group of people with a wide range of social views.

"In each case," he said, "this shared need means shunning political (and most other) extremes, presenting conventional consumer values and striving for a safe, respectable, middle-of-the-road balance in most things.

"Thus, television tends to blend otherwise divergent social orientations—and to modify political extremes—by pulling them into the current of its own broad mainstream."

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# The TV Election

THE PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS
Nov. 2

With each year, television takes firmer control of the way we elect people.

In 1960, Richard Nixon's heavy beard and active sweat glands made him look like the shameless but furtive creep he later turned out to be. Television had swayed its first election.

Kafka

In 1964, an artfully done TV commercial made candidate Barry Goldwater look like the kind of madman who was into nuking 3-year-olds. The ad was pulled, but the impression stuck.

But by 1968, Nixon had apparently learned a thing or two. His television appearances were far more staged and his makeup was better. At least we then had the capacity to be shocked when Joe McGinniss' "The Selling of the President" revealed just how cynical the packaging of Nixon had been.

The process has now reached high art. Reality is fed into television, which transforms it into a new perception of reality. We look for explanation of it all to "TV Guide," which is literature for people who don't read. That's enough to make Franz Kafka dizzy.

In a recent issue of "TV Guide," Dr. George Gerbner, dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, made several interesting points about television's effect on the electoral process.

Gerbner sees heavy viewers (those who watch more than four hours a day) as sharing a set of TV-induced points of view. "In short," he says, "television is blurring traditional orientations and shifting the way people define themselves politically." Heavy viewers, for example, tend to be more sexist, except for a few nut cases whose prejudices are moderated by TV.

Heavy viewers also tend to be opposed to communism, abortion, homosexuality and legalizing marijuana, although anybody who can see links among this mixed bag of politics, personal orientation and recreational habits is either a raving maniac, a New Right ideologue or both. Other studies have shown that heavy television watchers tend to have a much greater fear of crime and terrorism than other people, presumably because TV provides a murder every few minutes and scares them out of what wits they have.

Gerbner calls these glazed-eyed folks "New Populists." "New Populists scorn 'the establishment,'" Gerbner wrote, "but dote on the rich and famous.... They praise freedom but fear anyone who uses it in an unconventional way. They are losing confidence in people who run virtually all institutions, including religion, but express trust in God, America — and television.

"New Populists think like conservatives, want like liberals and call themselves moderates," wrote Gerbner.

So in 1980, we get the first television campaign that's a TV show. Anything that goes on television eventually becomes a TV show. President Reagan limits his appearances to packaged commercials in which he is surrounded by the symbols of patriotism, piety and power. No idea that takes more than a minute to examine ever appears. Speeches are built around one-liners. It's little wonder that he's wildly popular with people, many of whom cannot explain why. They've merely been sold, just as they've been sold on a brand of toilet paper.

The Democrats respond with their own one-minute mini-dramas aimed at the same people, seated in front of the same tubes.

Does it bother you that democracy is now in the hands of people who can find nothing better to do than stare at a glowing box four or more hours a day?

If it doesn't, perhaps it should bother you that control actually goes to those who have learned to manipulate the poor souls.

Impressionism as his own vocabulary of expression—the dots of Pointillism, Monet's bright, immediate daubs, the strokes of Cézanne. By August he writes that the Impressionists will find fault, "because instead of trying to reproduce exactly what I have before my eyes, I use color more arbitrarily, in order to express myself forcibly." So it was with drawing. Van Gogh could not have been Vincent through grisaille or silverpoint, or the textural crayoned geometries of Seurat: he reinvented the reed pen, and the lines refer as much to him as to forces in nature—they are realized energies rather than outlines, emotive rather than depictive. "Could I, in Paris, have done the drawing of the boats *in an hour* . . . just by letting my pen go?"

It is very moving that after the breakdown he wanted to return to the orchards of his Arlesian virginity, a desire frustrated by his prolonged hospitalization. It is very moving as well that one of the final paintings is a view of Arles through blown trees, with a blasted trunk the color of an aged elephant as its main element, its broken, barren branches stuck hopelessly up into the surprisingly cheery sky. But the body of the show is the sequence of images, collectively as famous as any in the history of art, of the bedroom and of his chair, the night cafe, the Zouave, of the Arlesian woman, stacked hay and sheaved wheat suffused with what he ruefully speaks of as "the high yellow note that I attained last summer," when he kept going, as he admits, by means of coffee, alcohol and no food to speak of at all.

The show's terminal painting is the terrifying self-portrait with the bandaged ear, done early in January 1889. Since the lopped ear is the one art-historical fact everyone in our culture may be expected to know, everyone is obliged to work through the show with the foreknowledge of its occurrence: we stand toward the exhibition just as the audience to a tragedy does toward its enactment, knowing things the hero does not know, namely how it will inevitably end. What he was heading for is finally here, in the last room, on the last wall. Wearing a fur hat painted perhaps symbolically blue, the color of ice—the sojourn ended as it began in the gelid southern winter—Vincent stares into the pathetic mirror we saw in the study of his bedroom, his eyes slightly crossed, green as wine bottles. Wherever he is, he is cold, for he is wearing his heavy coat, and the yellow smoke from his emblematic pipe spirals upward, past the maroon band behind him, into the ocher space above, where it disappears in the strokes of lemon yellow which press down like a steady rain of paint.

There is a great temptation to see this painting as an exercise in color theory, with its pedagogic use of complementaries, a kind of lesson in chromatic necessity. It is also tempting to read it as an effort to demonstrate that he was in control again, "an unsentimental and composed self-appraisal," as Ronald Pickvance writes in the superlative and indispensable catalogue. Indeed, at first glance it has the air of an advertisement for something that requires the image of a Dutchman at peace—tobacco, perhaps, or beer, or cheese. But then one has to think of how much fury, how much madness, was being kept at bay, of what moral energy it required to hold that bandaged slash at an esthetic distance—as so much white to contain the acute greens and yellows, just a curve to balance that of the black-blue edges of the hat. The title could have been *Ceci n'est pas un fou.* And it would have been false. The picture cannot be separated from the man; and the man was lost. It is a mute scream.

It is a relief to round that panel at last and enter the frantic sales place, where the visitor can turn in his tour guide and make his purchases from among the jigsaw puzzles and engagement calendars, the posters and reproductions and finally the postcards where the images somehow belong and where they are safe. Reproductions with an undeniable decorativity, they are actually quite gay. The painted reality on the other hand is shattering, and it takes a particularly strong soul to think of walking through it twice. It makes one think of the horrors of exact recurrence of which Nietzsche made so much. □

# New Hope for Freud Sufferers

CAROL TAVRIS

THE NATURE OF THE CHILD. *By Jerome Kagan. Basic Books. 309 pp. $22.50.*

MOTHER CARE/OTHER CARE. *By Sandra Scarr. Basic Books. 302 pp. $16.95.*

THOU SHALT NOT BE AWARE. *By Alice Miller. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 331 pp. $15.95.*

Change, being an American value, is an American industry. Therapies, books, support groups and religious sects—everything from Alcoholics Anonymous to Zen—promise renewal: change your unfashionable looks, personality and style; change your persistent problems, grudges and griefs; change your irritating spouse, house and habits. Among the cornucopia of solutions, however, are three distinct, competing philosophies.

§ Adult change is parallel to child development. It proceeds in a series of biologically programmed stages that direct the passages of adulthood. This school, originally led by Erik Erikson with his eight ages of man ("man" being literal in this case), has produced such popular books as Daniel Levinson's *Seasons of a Man's* [again] *Life*, Gail Sheehy's *Passages* and Roger Gould's *Transformations.*

§ Adult change is difficult, but it can occur through intensive, introspective therapies that liberate the "real self" and shuck off the demands of mere existence. This is the humanist/religious school, which basically believes that change is possible if you *want* to change, or think about it enough, or have a religious conversion. Wayne Dyer's repetitive pep talks and Billy Graham's endless preachments fall into this category, as do self-help books in all their incarnations. Of course, when belief or conversion fails to deliver the promised change, readers conclude it is their fault for not trying hard enough; the advice, they assume, is fine.

§ Adults don't change. Personality is formed in childhood, and although therapy can help you understand why you are what you are, you can't ever make major alterations in the basic blueprint. This is the fundamental premise of the psychoanalytic school, succinctly summarized in the title of Alice Miller's highly popular first book,

*Carol Tavris, a social psychologist, is the author of* Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion *(Simon and Schuster/Touchstone).*

*Prisoners of Childhood*. However, the age at which personality is supposedly fixed has been undergoing a sort of downward creep in recent years. First it was roughly age five, at the Oedipal crisis. Then it was three, and we began reading that the first three years of life were crucial to a child's development. Lately it's come down to age one, and some analysts are arguing that nothing really matters after that, not even Harvard or HUAC, the Pulitzer Prize or Ronald Reagan.

The communications researcher George Gerbner once noted that the distinctive feature of human beings is not language or toolmaking or, Lord knows, wisdom. "Man," he said (speaking generically), "is the only animal that tells stories—and lives by the stories he tells." Theories of change matter because they affect private lives, social policy, advice to parents and the therapeutic treatment of people who have been abused or otherwise victimized, at any age.

And that is why it matters that all three most popular theories of change are, in their fundamental premises, wrong. The fields of child development and adult development are burgeoning with new data, much of it the results of decadeslong research. They are showing that the first three years of life have little predictive power for late childhood, let alone adulthood; that people can and do survive terrible early experiences; that parents do not create children in their own image, no matter how many toys and technologies they provide, because children have something to say about the kind of people they become. Some aspects of personality do remain consistent across the life span, but by and large adults are not prisoners of childhood. Adult change, however, depends on adult experiences, circumstances and relationships. It does not occur because a programmed internal clock goes off at ten-year intervals or because an individual merely wishes to be different. It is caused by, and sustained by, an individual's social and material world.

The consequences of this research for the stories we tell about childhood, parent-child relations and the possibility of change are revolutionary. Two books that tell the new story brilliantly are Jerome Kagan's *The Nature of the Child*, seven essays on the philosophy and psychology of child development and its relation to adulthood, and San-

dra Scarr's *Mother Care/Other Care*, a clearheaded, scientifically grounded analysis of the emotional and political issue of day care. (As an adherent of Calvin Trillin's Blurb-Disclosure Law, I will state that I have written a laudatory blurb for Scarr's book and do know and admire the author. Her work is still superb.) Both books, unusual in social science, are lucid and readable. Scarr's is actually a case in point of the larger issues raised by Kagan, and together they challenge some of the most cherished notions of the right (mother care is the sine qua non of child rearing; mothers had better be there every second of a baby's first eighteen years; the family is the most formative influence) *and* of the left (environment is all, biology is nothing; abused, deprived children become abusive, deprived adults).

In his first chapter, Kagan explores the themes of continuity and change, biology and experience, not as antithetical constructs but as parts of a whole. Anthropologists have observed that Westerners hear music or conversations by listening to the notes or words. The Eastern way is to listen to the silences between the sounds (the Japanese call the spaces between events *ma*). Similarly, Westerners see development as a connected set of events and results, even when they must impose connectedness retrospectively, as psychoanalysis does. Kagan hears the *ma* in development.

For the fact is that many infant qualities do not last, and infant experiences do not have a lifelong impact. Some are outgrown. Some are supplanted with maturation. Some are overturned by experience; indeed, Kagan cites study after study to show the startling number of "deprived" children who outgrew their early experiences and went on to lead healthy, contented lives. Kagan uses the metaphor of a marble rolling in a trough: because the marble rolls in a straight line, we cannot infer anything about the inherent property of marbles to roll in a straight line. Most people used to live in environmental troughs. Poor children grew up to be poor, middle-class children got into good schools, and *voilà*! theories of the consistency of personality prevailed. In recent decades, the troughs have been breaking down and, correspondingly, so has evidence of the consistency of personality. The factors related to adult satisfaction, behavior and emotional problems are almost invariably other adult experiences, not childhood ones.

But neither Kagan nor Scarr concludes that children are infinitely malleable, either. Children bring two things to every experience that their parents and their environments cannot control: temperament and interpretation. It is not that parents make no difference, for of course they do; it is that what parents do has no predictable result. The reason, says Kagan, is that children impose meanings on experience; what matters is not what the parent does, but the intention the child imputes to the parent's action. "If it were otherwise," he argues, "we could not explain why the children of Puritan parents were not less well adapted than today's youth, or why the young adolescent boys of an isolated New Guinea tribe who perform ritual fellatio on older boys regard themselves neither as sexually deviant nor as an oppressed minority." This idea represents a major departure from psychoanalysis, which assumes common, indeed universal, meanings and interpretations of childhood experience. And it means that people are not prisoners of childhood unless they believe they are.

All guilty parents should proceed directly to *Mother Care/Other Care*, which untangles the knot of worries that many modern parents are led to feel, regardless of how they raise their children. Scarr gently ribs those who try to raise a "gourmet child, the intensely reared infant who is enticed or forced into learning funny symbols in the crib," even as she deflates those who decry day care for failing to be as good as mother care or who fear the dire effects of maternal employment. After reviewing what research has shown and not shown on these matters, Scarr concludes that most day-care situations, like most family situations, are good enough for children to develop normally. Only extreme conditions of deprivation and abuse, in home or institution, will slow down a normal child's natural rate of maturation.

That said, Scarr goes on to discuss realistic dilemmas for working mothers, and fathers; the nature of babies and toddlers (what they need and how much they can learn as they grow); and, finally, she includes an evaluation of modern day care in America with a checklist of what parents should look for in services and caretakers. Throughout, Scarr dissects the popular advice of "experts." You may remember the media's enchantment, for example, with "bonding," the mystical attachment between mother and infant, without which healthy baby development was thought to be doomed. "Does this mean," asks Scarr, "that you can't go to the bathroom alone, never mind to work, without destroying the baby's psyche?" She reassures the reader at once. No.

Many psychologists and nonprofessionals fear and dislike the arguments set forth in these two books. If parents don't have a lifelong effect on their children, aren't their power and responsibility as parents diminished? If children are more flexible than we thought and can survive even disastrous childhoods, doesn't this give cruel parents the license to be abusive? If children have different subjective responses to the same experience, based on their temperament and perceptions, why should we try to improve objective conditions? If childhood isn't the crucible of personality and opportunity, doesn't that give the Reagan Administration permission to kill even more services for children?

Those are possible consequences of this view of human development, but my feeling is that cruel parents and governments already have as many rationalizations as they need. There are also more heartening consequences. If change is possible throughout life, you don't have to "catch" a person at some critical age, and a child is not doomed by age 10. If parents are not omnipotent, perhaps they can relax and not be intimidated by experts whose views seem to shift with the needs of the labor market. If one's interpretation of experience is more important than the experience, then therapies that dwell on the power of childhood trauma may in-

# A REPORTER AT LARGE

## AN EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE

IN January of 1981, shortly before his inauguration, Ronald Reagan made his first visit to a foreign leader since his election. From his home state of California he travelled to Ciudad Juárez—just across the border from Texas—for a meeting with José Lopez Portillo, the President of Mexico. According to one of Reagan's aides, the purpose of the visit was to "set a good tone for developing friendly relations;" and to help mark his entrance upon the international stage Reagan took along a present for his host—a Remington rifle. The weapon could have been meant to symbolize Reagan's sense of what the style of his Presidency would be, and, since the presentation was photographed for the newspapers back home, it could also have been intended to reassure those voters who had elected him in the hope that he would provide the nation with what they viewed as a tougher and more decisive leadership than Jimmy Carter's. Millions of Americans had come to believe that the United States needed a more "American" President than Carter—one who could better represent not necessarily the trigger-happy but the trigger-ready side of the nation's character. And what better way was there to symbolize the beginning of an aggressive, no-nonsense Presidency than by the token of good relations—a kind of "peacemaker"—which the newly elected Chief Executive took with him to Mexico? Moreover, Reagan was widely admired within the nation's gun-owning community, and if he had not had its enthusiastic support he might not have been elected as overwhelmingly as he was. To its members, he seemed more likely than any President in recent memory to represent and defend what they regard as their constitutional right "to keep and bear arms"—to own as many guns as they want and to use them in whatever legal manner they please. It is plausible to suppose that the wide readership of the nation's gun-and-hunting press voted solidly for him, including the readers of *Pistolero*, a magazine of idiosyncratic outlook that claims to be published "For Americans who believe that God, Guns & Guts Made US Great!" The President is himself, of course, an admirer of guns, and though he's not a hunter, he favors the practice of trophy hunting, or shooting animals for sport. "Trophy hunting," he told *Field & Stream* magazine in 1980—echoing a view that prevails within the hunting community—"is a form of harvesting." He added, "I like to shoot, and I have done my share of varmint shooting on the ranch. I am not much of a hunter, but I believe I would enjoy it more if I were going to use the meat." The powerful and influential National Rifle Association counts him among its members, and takes credit for delivering a large number of the votes that elected him. He is the first candidate for President the N.R.A. has ever endorsed. *Reports from Washington*, an N.R.A. publication, stated in November of 1980: "The political clout of the nation's gun owners and sportsmen was clearly evident in the final outcome of the November general election. In addition to a landslide victory for President-elect Ronald Reagan, the first Presidential contender to receive an N.R.A. endorsement in the organization's history, pro-gun candidates of both political parties were swept into office in Senate and House races."

Reagan is, however, not the first President to be associated with the N.R.A. or to be identified with the use of guns. A number of Presidents were former soldiers. Andrew Jackson has been called "the dean of duellists" and America's "most violent President." Abraham Lincoln was a decent marksman while growing up on the frontier. Theodore Roosevelt, perhaps the greatest gun enthusiast to have lived in the White House (Mark Hanna once referred to him as "that damned cowboy"), was a member of the N.R.A., and so were Taft, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nixon. What distinguishes Reagan is that, as the first Presidential candidate to have been endorsed by the N.R.A., he is the first occupant of the White House to be formally linked to the gun lobby's fight against most ef-

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forts to regulate the civilian ownership and use of firearms.

There's an irony of some interest in all this. In almost no other part of the world are civilians as free to own and use guns as they are in America. No major political office anywhere has lost so many of its occupants to civilian gunfire as the Presidency of the United States; nor have other world leaders been shot at as frequently by the citizens of their own nation. In 1835, Richard Lawrence attempted to kill Andrew Jackson in Washington; luckily, his pistols misfired. In 1865, John Wilkes Booth murdered Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre, in Washington. In 1881, Charles Guiteau shot James Garfield at a railroad station in Washington, inflicting wounds from which the President did not recover. In 1901, Leon Czolgosz assassinated William McKinley at an exposition in Buffalo. In 1912, John Schrank shot and wounded Theodore Roosevelt during a campaign visit that the former President and then Bull Moose candidate was making to Milwaukee. In 1933, Giuseppe Zangara fired at President-elect Franklin Roosevelt in Miami, narrowly missing him. Instead, he hit Mayor Anton Cermak, of Chicago, who died from his wounds a few weeks later. In 1950, two Puerto Rican nationalists almost shot their way into Blair House, in Washington, intending to kill Harry Truman, but were themselves gunned down before they reached the President. Thirteen years later, Lee Harvey Oswald shot and killed John Kennedy in Dallas. In September of 1975, Lynette Fromme pointed a gun at Gerald Ford in Sacramento, and later that month Sara Jane Moore fired at him in San Francisco. And, most recently, in March of 1981 John W. Hinckley, Jr., shot and seriously wounded Ronald Reagan in the nation's capital.

If President Reagan's inclusion in that series of events is more ironic than the others'—in view of his popularity with and support of the pro-gun lobby—the fact doesn't seem to have made much of an impression on him. He has found no reason to change or soften his views on the question of gun ownership—to the great admiration of gunmakers and gun users. "Shooters, generally—at least, handgunners—are fortunate that we have the President we have," William Ruger, the president of Sturm, Ruger, one of the nation's larger gun-producing firms, said in a gun publication some months after Hinckley's attack on Reagan. A full-page tribute in *Pistolero* applauded the President for refusing to alter his pro-gun position. "Thank God for President Reagan, a man who, even after being shot, realizes that more gun controls are not the solution to our crime problem," its text read. "Here's a man of guts, common sense and vision. May he live to be 120!"

Americans who came of age during the past two decades or so are probably the first generation in the country's history to have grown up amid such an epidemic of gun attacks on Presidents and other prominent national figures—Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, George Wallace, Allard Lowenstein, and John Lennon. Shortly after the attempt on President Reagan's life, a reader wrote to *Newsweek*, "If you had told me in 1963 that in the next twenty years I would see one President shot to death, one wounded and one twice threatened by gun-wielding assailants, one senator killed and one wounded and one governor wounded, I would have said, 'You've got to be kidding! That's not the United States, it's a shooting gallery.' " Whether or not the United States can be called a shooting gallery, it unquestionably accommodates the world's largest and freest gun culture—one whose roots are deep in the nation's past.

"The United States is the only modern industrial urban nation that persists in maintaining a gun culture," the historian Richard Hofstadter wrote in 1970. "It is the only industrial nation in which the possession of rifles, shotguns, and handguns is lawfully prevalent among large numbers of its population." It is estimated that there are now nearly two hundred million civilian-owned guns, of every kind, in America, and that figure includes some sixty million handguns. In 1980 alone, about two and a half million handguns were made and sold in the United States, and about a quarter million more were assembled here from imported parts. In the late nineteen-sixties, one new handgun was sold every twenty-four seconds. Today, demand has doubled: two are sold every twenty-four seconds.

John Hinckley was not raised by a gun-owning family, but some of the views he came to hold and the ease with which he was able to acquire his firearms are typical of the nation's gun culture. Hinckley wanted to commit a "historical deed" with his gun in order to win the affection of an actress —a frivolous reason compared with,

say, John Wilkes Booth's; but the act he committed places him solidly within the history of American gun assassins. He bought his handgun in a pawnshop, easily and cheaply, just like many others who have killed or tried to kill public figures. And only a gun culture could have inspired his "Guns Are Fun!," a poem, written before his attack on President Reagan, that begins:

> See that living legend over there?
> With one little squeeze of the trigger
> I can put that person at my feet moaning
> and groaning and pleading with God.
> This gun gives me pornographic power.
> If I wish, the President will fall and the
> world will look at me in disbelief
> All because I own an inexpensive gun.

"The U.S. has preserved for its people the liberty to kill almost at will," said the *Straits Times*, of Singapore, which was among the many newspapers around the world that looked at Hinckley in disbelief.

NO firearm has been more damaging to civilian life in America—has been used in more robberies, murders, and other physical assaults—than the handgun. Yet none seems to have been more highly romanticized as a symbol of the nation's bond with gunfire. Devotees of shooting may see nothing strange in that pair of facts. But to Americans who are neither users nor lovers of guns it must seem a dreadful contradiction that a weapon devised chiefly for the purpose of killing human beings—which takes more than ten thousand civilian lives each year—should be the glamorous item of our culture that it is. It must astonish them to hear handguns being praised for their "beauty" and their "tasteful design," or being called by such stylish names as the Pathfinder, the Minx, the Abilene, the Redhawk, the Super Blackhawk, and the Diamondback. In his book "Great American Guns and Frontier Fighters," Will Bryant writes of firearms in America's past as having been "household" and "matter-of-fact" items. And when the guns were very good, Bryant continues, "they began to acquire almost human traits. . . . Men said that a gun was 'noble' or that it was 'vicious' or 'sweet,' or gave it a name like Betsy." By itself, a gun is "a cold machine, a thing of wood and metal," Carroll C. Holloway writes in "Texas Gun Lore," but "clothed with the rich garments of dreams it cannot be cold." We learn from a review of Albert Goldman's "Elvis" that Presley

"packed three guns in his later years," that he "kept one on the table while he ate," that he "thought nothing of running up an $85,000 gun bill," that he "thought nothing of drawing a gun on people who crossed him, or blasting away at a television set when a program annoyed him."

*Makers of the John Wayne* commemorative Colt .45 call attention to its lovely ivory grips and its elegant packaging—"a deluxe hand-finished oak presentation case" with a "selectively gold-plated plaque." They invite buyers to wrap their hands around the grips of a Colt and imagine themselves "right back through history" and feel the same "confidence" and "pride of possession" that the pioneers *did when the Colt was "man's con*stant companion on the trail." More recently, holders of the American Express credit card were offered the opportunity to obtain from the Franklin Mint re-created models of the .44-calibre Smith & Wesson revolver that Wyatt Earp used in the shoot-out at the O.K. Corral, in Tombstone, Arizona—"the West's most celebrated gunfight." The offer went on to state *that the re-created version of Earp's* gun "has an elegance that well bespeaks the style of a professional gambler and gunfighter."

Two years ago, the Bank of Findlay, in central Illinois, mixing the casual and the chic, offered depositors a pair of Colt handguns in lieu of interest. The offer brought in a deluge of new deposits—surpassing, according to a news report in the New York *Times, one bank executive's "wildest* dreams." A reason for the deluge, another executive explained, was that there weren't many liberals in Findlay; people there still believe, along with *Pistolero*, that "God, guns, and guts" are what "made the U.S. what it is today." Believing in these things, the people of Findlay must also know that robberies with guns helped to make the United States what it is. But, *given the kind of place that Findlay is,* the bank probably had no fear that the guns it was offering could one day be turned against its own tellers. Findlay, residents say, is "a quiet bedroom;" the kids are "excellent;" no one "gets rowdy in Findlay;" and the town "is as dry as you can get, except on New Year's Eve." The Bank of Findlay wasn't the only, or even the first, bank to offer guns as interest on deposits. *The Citizens First Bank of Ocala,* Florida, did so a few months earlier, and Robert Mock, the bank's executive

vice-president, was quoted in newspapers as saying that he got the idea from the Bank of Boulder, Colorado. When the Citizens First Bank began advertising in local newspapers, it got calls mainly from the Ocala area, Mock explained, but when it advertised in a national gun publication "calls started coming in from all over the country."

About the same time that the bank in Findlay was offering its pistols, Southern California introduced what may be the highest form yet of handgun snobbery—"the ultimate status symbol," it has been called. This is the Bijan designer handgun, which is embossed in twenty-four-karat gold, and which can be equipped—on special request—with a set of gold bullets. It was produced by an Iranian-born designer named Bijan Pakzad, whose showrooms, in Beverly Hills, New York, and Florence, have been known to stock ninety-five-thousand-dollar chinchilla bedspreads and other conspicuously expensive consumer merchandise. At the Beverly Hills showroom, one may also purchase the designer pistol, for ten thousand dollars. Pakzad is on record as making some rather proud statements about his handgun. Noting that "Gucci never did gold pistols," he has called his gun "a very chic and elegant form of protection," a thing that everybody "who is rich and loves guns will want." He has said that he designed "something so American" that even people who hated guns would want one, to touch and fondle, "because it's so pretty." He has further expressed the view that "every possession of a discriminating man, including his means of security, ought to be of the highest quality and taste."

WHEN ordinary, or more serious, handgun lovers meet to discuss what they admire in the weapons they use, the names Smith & Wesson, Charter Arms, Ivor Johnson, Browning, Ruger, and Beretta are almost sure to be mentioned—names of some of the major handgun manufacturers in the United States. But, highly prized though these companies' products may be, they aren't nearly as illustrious as the two handguns from which they all descend—the guns of Henry Deringer, Jr., and Samuel Colt. Deringer, a Pennsylvanian, came from a pre-Revolutionary gunmaking family. His father was one of the German immigrant gunsmiths who, around 1775, designed and built the venerable

Kentucky rifle—the first of the distinctly American long guns. The younger Deringer made his own mark in the eighteen-thirties, when he developed the pistol that bears his name (now spelled "derringer"). Light and palm-size—nothing like its contemporaries, the pepperbox (which had a cluster of revolving barrels) and the longer duelling pistol—it was the tiniest handgun yet made in America. And because it was also accurate, and deadly at short range, it was widely adopted as an indoor gun, though mostly in towns and cities. In San Francisco during the Gold Rush days of the eighteen-fifties, it was the favorite weapon of miners, gamblers, bankers, bartenders, brothel keepers, and prostitutes. Men carried it in waistbands, shirtsleeves, coat pockets, and the tops of high boots. Women wore it stashed under hats, corsets, garter belts, or in muffs or pocketbooks. It came to be known as the assassin's gun—especially after Booth used it to kill Lincoln. In short, the derringer was the Saturday-night special of its time—the first of the easily concealable snub-nosed weapons that have become so prevalent in the towns and cities of America.

But the derringer's early place in the development of civilian handgun violence has long been overshadowed by the Colt revolver, which made its first appearance about the same time. What made it a revolver, of course, was its revolving cylinder, containing chambers for separate bullets; it was one of the first practical pistols that could be fired several times in succession before they had to be reloaded. Unlike the derringer, Sam Colt's gun wasn't ideal for indoor use. It wasn't concealable. It was long and heavy, sturdily built, powerful at long range—good for outdoor shooting. The inaugural model was a .36-calibre five-shooter, which, after undergoing a series of changes, led eventually to the .45 six-shooter of legend. Sam Fields, a prominent advocate of handgun control, has written, in the *St. Louis University Law Journal*, "The modern handgun began its career of death and destruction . . . with the creation of the Colt .45 Peacemaker. . . . Such technology brought convenient ultimate violence within everyone's reach by supplying a dependable, easy-to-carry, ever-ready destructive device." Constructively and destructively—whether fired by the military, the police, or civilians—the Colt played a more dominant role in the affairs of

nineteenth-century America than any other handgun. Its particular uses on the frontier bequeathed an appeal that has possessed the nation's imagination ever since. "Whatever sins the six-shooter may have to answer for," the historian Walter Prescott Webb wrote in his classic 1931 study "The Great Plains," "it stands as the first mechanical adaptation made by the American people when they emerged from the timber and met a set of new needs in the open country of the Great Plains." Or, as Rick Hacker, an enthusiast of that weapon, has put it, the Colt is "as much a part of our American heritage as the Constitution and Thanksgiving."

Samuel Colt, an inventor from Connecticut, designed his revolver in the mid-eighteen-thirties and built the first models in Paterson, New Jersey. There was no immediate demand for Colt's revolver. The towns and cities of the nation had little or no use for so long and heavy and bulky a handgun. The little derringer suited their needs perfectly. The needs that the Colt revolver was ideally suited to meet existed at that time—in the eighteen-thirties and forties—mostly in the open spaces of the Southwest, and especially in Texas. Not only was the territory then struggling for independence from Mexico but, simultaneously, it was required to defend its settlers against the attacks of hostile Comanches. And the Texas Rangers—the chief military and police force of the territory—had found, much to their surprise, that the Indians were even more formidable adversaries than the Mexican soldiers. The Rangers, astride the finest horses in Texas, and armed with the best long guns then available—Kentucky-type single-shot rifles—were still outfought by the Indian warriors. Those Indians were superb cavalrymen—brilliant archers on horseback—and they had no fear of the white man's firearm. They knew that the Texans, after firing, almost always had to dismount in order to reload—for those single-shot guns had to be reloaded through their muzzles, and it was nearly impossible to re-stuff a muzzle on horseback. Basing their strategy on this fact, the Comanches would ride in only near enough to draw the first round of single-shot fire; then, while the dismounted Texans were reloading, the Indians would pour down en masse, strike quickly and devastatingly with their arrows, and swiftly retreat—before the surviving Texans were ready

to start firing again. When the Rangers realized how the Indians were fighting them, they devised a counter-strategy. Instead of letting off their single-shot rifles all at once, they began staggering their fire, shooting in platoons. But this method was only slightly more effective, for the Indians now held back their main attacking forces, sending in only a few riders at a time, until it seemed clear that the enemy's ammunition was exhausted. They then bore down on the Rangers and released their fusillades of arrows. "It was a situation which called for great economy and precaution," Walter Prescott Webb wrote. "It gave rise to such admonitions as 'Hold your fire,' 'Take steady aim,' 'Make every shot tell.' The marvellous marksmanship of that early day was due to the fact that the first shot was frequently the only shot."

What the Texans needed was a multi-shot gun that they could fire repeatedly from horseback and easily reload without dismounting. They first got their hands on such a weapon around 1839, when a few of the revolvers that Sam Colt had built in Paterson found their way—by means that have never been explained—into the Rangers' camp. The handguns were a godsend. During one of the first battles in which they were used, the Rangers killed or wounded about half of an eighty-man Comanche force and put the rest to flight. Colt's gun had shifted the odds decisively in favor of the Texas settlers. And the Indians, retreating before such a weapon as they had never confronted in the past, called it a "spirit gun"—magical in its ability to deliver so many bullets in succession. Other tribes later used the same term when, on the Great Plains, they encountered such formidable repeating rifles as the Winchester. But it was the discovery and use by the Texas Rangers of Sam Colt's invention which guaranteed its role in future dramas of American life.

"Without your Pistols," Captain Samuel Walker, of the Rangers, wrote to Colt, "we would not have had the confidence to have undertaken such daring adventures." In appreciation of the territory that had proved the worth of his handgun, and in recognition of the town in New Jersey where he had built it, Colt named one of the first models of his revolver the Texas Paterson. But, as a fighting man, Captain Walker had found limitations in that model which its designer could not have known about, and in his letter of

praise to Colt he went on to suggest that certain changes would make Colt's revolvers even more effective instruments of warfare. "With improvements," Walker wrote, "I think they can be rendered the most perfect weapon in the World for light mounted troops . . . the only efficient troops that can be placed upon our extensive Frontier to keep the various warlike tribes of Indians & marauding Mexicans in subjection. The people throughout Texas are anxious to procure your pistols & I doubt not you would find sale for a large number at this time." The suggested improvements included the addition of a trigger guard and a loading lever. Colt incorporated them into an advanced design of his gun, and about a thousand of the new weapons were later delivered to the Rangers. They performed as well as Walker had thought they would, helping the Rangers to complete their mastery over the Indians and over those Mexicans who had continued to raid the territory even after its independence.

With such a history of accomplishment, the Colt handgun became the favorite firearm of almost all gun users in Texas, and remained so even after Remington and Smith & Wesson had begun making *their* famous revolvers; for decades it continued to be more popular in Texas than in any other part of the nation. Sam Colt's company continued to develop and improve his revolver through and after the Civil War years, and in 1873 it produced the most famous of all his guns—and probably the most famous handgun ever made. This was the .45-calibre single-action Army six-shooter, otherwise known as the Peacemaker. It was used extensively and with great success by the armed forces of the United States; but it was mainly in the hands of prairie pioneers and fighters that it became an American legend. And it was mainly Texans who introduced it into the life and affairs of the Great Plains. First carried into that territory by cowboys, the Colt revolver soon became the chief weapon of outlaws, gunfighters, and lawmen—though they did, of course, use rifles as well. Mark Twain once said of a Smith & Wesson pocket revolver he took West in 1861 that though it looked like a dangerous weapon, it "had one fault—you could not hit anything with it." Almost no one ever said that about the Colt .45. It was the peerless fighting small arm of its day. Well balanced and easy to

handle, it pointed—someone said—as naturally and as accurately as a forefinger. With a Colt in his holster, no man on the frontier felt himself to be the inferior of a potential adversary. A frontier saying had it that God had created men of varying powers and abilities but Sam Colt had made them equal.

THE Colt's journey from Texas across the plains and into the Western heartland of violence and lawlessness was propelled by the spread of the cattle trade. By the end of the Civil War, there was a great demand for beef in the large cities of the East. Texas was the nation's cattle domain, and the expanding railroads, by which meat could be shipped to those who wanted it, had some of their major Midwestern depots in Kansas. To feed the tables of the East, to enrich the coffers of the Southwestern cattle barons, and to make an arduous, modest living for themselves, cowboys drove great herds of longhorns across the grasslands between Texas and Kansas. The journey often took months. And since it was perilous as well as long, the cowboys needed guns to protect themselves and their herds from Indians, rattlesnakes, and cattle thieves. More often than rifles they carried the Colt revolver—first the five-shooter and later the six-shooting Peacemaker.

The railheads of Kansas where the cowboys delivered their droves of longhorns were rowdy little cowtowns like Wichita, Newton, Hays, Dodge City, Ellsworth, Caldwell, and—perhaps rowdiest of them all—Abilene. The towns were never more disorderly than when the cowboys came in, with their tons of beef-on-the-hoof. But cowboys weren't the only, or even the main, causes of this disorder, which often led to gunfighting and murder. A town like Abilene had its core of God-fearing citizens—legitimate businessmen of all kinds and sedate families from the East who were transplanting themselves to the open and promising frontier. In his book "Small Town America," the writer Richard Lingeman describes these pioneers in the cowtowns of the plains as "the correct Puritanical mix of piety and Yankee business sense." But there also came a horde of gamblers, swindlers, bank and train robbers, horse thieves, cattle thieves, and professional gunfighters. And these elements, many armed with Colt handguns, stirred most dangerously to life when the cat-

tle drives came in: when the banks were loaded with money; when cash was flowing from hand to hand; when the saloons and brothels and gambling joints were most lively; and when the cowboys—having just been paid, after their months on grasslands trails—were out kicking up their heels and letting off steam.

Contrary to legend, few cowboys possessed the temperament of gunfighters. The trouble they caused in the cowtowns was mostly innocent trouble—the result of drunken celebration. Most of them came close to committing acts of violence only when lawmen tried to put an end to their spree. Some of them hated to think that the money they made from herding cattle came chiefly from the East; others had fought with the Confederacy, and still resented the Yankees they had lost to—they weren't about to submit easily to lawmen whom they saw as transplanted citizens of a region that had defeated them in the Civil War. In the rough towns of the frontier the lawmen's real problems were the bandits and gunfighters who terrorized the life of the plains. On the roster of Western outlaws were Clay Allison, "swift as water" with his six-guns; John Wesley Hardin, said to have killed more than forty men in ten years; Billy the Kid, who in a short career disposed of around twenty; Frank and Jesse James, the princes of bank and train robbing; the Dalton gang; the Clanton brothers; the Younger brothers; Belle Starr, "the Bandit Queen of the Indian Territory;" Bill Longley, with about thirty notches on his six-guns; and such other killers and marauders as Doc Holliday, Al Jennings, Butch Cassidy, and the Sundance Kid. These and many like them ruled the frontier underworld from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of the new century—and mostly, though not exclusively, with Colt .45s.

The lawmen whose unenviable duty it was to maintain a degree of order on the frontier—marshals and sheriffs, like Bat Masterson, Bill Tilghman, Tom Smith, Wild Bill Hickok, Ben Thompson, Pat Garrett, and Wyatt Earp—also relied heavily on their mastery of the big handgun. Masterson and Tilghman served, at different times, in Dodge City. Smith preceded Hickok as marshal of Abilene, where both men tried and failed to enforce mild gun-control ordinances. Garrett, a sheriff in New Mexico, ended the career of Billy the Kid. Thompson

once presided in Austin, Texas. Earp served in Dodge City and, later, in Tombstone, Arizona. "Talk about the rule of iron! We had it," the mayor of Abilene said of Hickok's tenure there. Hickok himself was later gunned down during a card game. A number of these lawmen came out of dark and lawless pasts—had been robbers and gamblers and killers before they were hired to wear a badge. In fact, some owed their lawful employment to town mayors who had heard of their exploits and reputations as feared gunmen. So in the frontier towns, as in much of urban America at a later time, the handgun served both sides of the law, worked both sides of the violent streets. In those early days, as in our own, the handgun was the main weapon of civilian murder and assault.

CIVILIAN gun violence did not begin with the invention of the Colt revolver, of course, or with the movement of cattle out of Texas. In Dickens' "Martin Chuzzlewit"—based partly on the novelist's first visit to America, in 1842—Chuzzlewit and his "fellow-wanderer" Mark Tapley are taken aback by the free and casual use of guns in the United States. In the town of Eden—which was based on Cairo, Illinois—the two Englishmen make the acquaintance of Hannibal Chollop, who, they discover, usually carries "a brace of revolving pistols in his coat pocket," and who utters boasts like "It ain't long since I shot a man down with that, sir. . . . I shot him down, sir, for asserting . . . that the ancient Athenians went ahead of the present Locofoco Ticket." When Tapley later mentions the "murderous little persuaders" that Chollop carries and is always ready to use, one Mr. Pogram comes heatedly to the defense of his fellow-American. How strange and singular, Pogram exclaims, is "the settled opposition to our Institutions which pervades the British mind." Chuzzlewit can scarcely believe what he has heard. "What an extraordinary people you are!" he replies. "Are pistols . . . and such things Institutions on which you pride yourselves? Are bloody duels, brutal combats, savage assaults, shooting down, and stabbing in the streets, your Institutions?"

Since Colt's gun wasn't yet in popular use, the shootings that Dickens heard and read about must have been done with derringers, pepperboxes, and duelling pistols. Still, such shootings weren't then as common in American life as they were later to become. And when one looks at the widespread modern fascination with handguns one can hardly help attributing much of it to the development of the mass-production gun industry (especially in the latter half of the nineteenth century) and what the popular media have done to glamorize the role of guns in the life of the frontier. Popular entertainment, by its heroic portrayals of gunfighters—whether they were respected lawmen or killers and bandits—has made the handgun seem an even more attractive and desirable arbiter of civilian conflict than it already seemed. Of the Americans who have been so influenced—who are still enraptured by the gun legend of the Old West—a writer for the *Wall Street Journal* said some years ago, "For most, it's enough to get the experience vicariously—by watching TV or movie heroes reassuringly gun down the bad guys. But for some, the lure of the legend is great enough to cause them to acquire peacemakers of their own."

Even before the popular media began their work, Easterners who visited the frontier had been returning home with exciting reports of a new style of life and a new kind of heroic American that the rough Western experience was breeding. They misjudged much of what they saw, however. Walter Prescott Webb has written, "The West appeared romantic to those who were not of it—to the Easterner, who saw the outward aspects of a strange life without understanding its meaning and deeper significance." Whatever the Easterner didn't understand, Webb went on, "was strange, romantic, spectacular." He didn't "ride horses," didn't "wear a six-shooter," didn't "herd cattle or wear boots or red handkerchiefs or spurs," and couldn't "quite see that a normal person could do such things." So when the Easterner saw the man of the West he "was at once impressed with the feeling that he had found something new in human beings."

It was Easterners—of whatever breeding or background—who began writing what later became the cheap escapist fiction of Western life and a staple of popular reading. And what some of those stories made of the cowboy—presenting him, for example, as an outlaw and a gunman—bore little

resemblance to the truth. Harry Chrisman, an authority on the Old West, has explained that real cowboys were "men who lived with their herds and knew no other life;" they "smelled of cow and horse dung, and seldom bathed;" they "wore beards that easily became nests for lice, fleas, or other vermin;" and "their underclothes were changed periodically, spring and winter, and were washed when occasion permitted." One would find "nothing romantic or glamorous in the appearance of an old-time genuine cowboy," Chrisman adds. The old-time genuine cowboy, one gathers, would be amused beyond words were he to return and see what stories and movies have made of him.

Easterners were also prominent among those who invented the movie Western. "The Great Train Robbery" (1903), one of the earliest of such movies, was shot in the East, in the New Jersey countryside; and Edwin S. Porter, who wrote and directed it, was born and raised in Pennsylvania. This genre of film entertainment was as American as baseball. Its appeal flowed from fast action, swift horses, the landscapes and horizons of the West (real or ersatz), the clash of good and evil, and the constant flare of gunfire. If all the gunmen weren't moral heroes, they were heroes of a different kind—exemplars of a distinctive American style. A bad guy was not exempt from capturing the affection of a movie audience if he had qualities of fast and exciting gunmanship. No man in a Western picture was worth much, was feared or respected, unless he carried a gun and knew how to use it. His mastery of that weapon—and, through it, over his adversary—was a sign of the manliness, the physical heroism, that audiences took to be typically and admirably American. That was probably why unarmed idealists and moralists—teachers, preachers, wandering intellectuals, and other men of Eastern "culture"—sometimes looked faintly ridiculous in a Western movie.

Westerns were not, to be sure, meant to be documentaries. They were an art form—an art form that translated reality, or what was taken to be reality, into entertainment. But even such a form may be expected to mirror shapes of the truth. And the Westerns' view of reality was often so erroneous that they didn't so much translate the past as falsify and romanticize it. Thus, the glint and glamour of movie-style gunfighting came to be

seen as a representation of what the real thing had been, and a pathological killer like Billy the Kid lives on in the national imagination as, in the words of a modern commentator, "a demigod of the Western myth." To law-abiding Americans of the Old West, there was nothing remotely godlike about Billy; to them, he was one of the more hideous by-products of the arduous pioneer struggle to build and extend the nation westward. The genuinely heroic peace officers, too, took a less romantic view of shoot-outs than the Western movies later did. The peace officers were tough and brave men, but they feared for their lives, and many of them disliked having to kill. They knew better than almost anyone else how necessary but also how terrible a weapon the gun was. In the early years of this century, after Bat Masterson had retired from law enforcement on the frontier and was living in New York, President Theodore Roosevelt offered to assign him to Indian Territory as a marshal. Masterson begged to decline. "It wouldn't do," he told the President. "The man of my peculiar reputation couldn't hold such a place without trouble. . . . I'd have some drunken boy to kill once a year. Some kid who was born after I took my guns off would get drunk and look me over. . . . In the end he'd crawl round to a gun play and I'd have to send him over the jump. . . . My record would prove a never-failing bait to the dime-novel reading youngsters, locoed to distinguish themselves and make a fire-eating reputation, and I'd have to bump 'em off. So, Mr. President, with all thanks to you, I believe I won't take the place. I've got finally out of that zone of fire and I hope never to go back to it."

Not unlike the shooting described in the dime novels, Western-movie gunplay took an intense and, in some cases, a lasting hold on the fancies of the young—even many who didn't grow up to adopt the handgun as an analogue of baseball. At the age of forty-seven, Sherwood Anderson, in an autobiography, described the effect that Wild West movies still had on his imagination:

> Even today I cannot go into a movie theatre and see there some such national hero as, say, Bill Hart, without wishing myself such another. . . . Now he springs lightly off a horse and goes toward the door of a lonely cabin. We, in the theatre, know that within the cabin are some ten desperate men all heavily armed. . . . Bill stops at the door of the cabin and takes a careful look at his guns, and we, in the

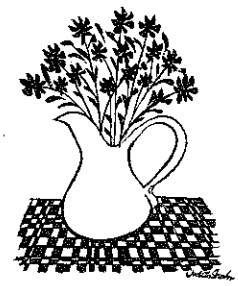
audience, know well enough that in a few minutes now he will go inside and just shoot all of those ten fellows in there to death, fairly make sieves of them. . . .

All these things we know, but we love our Bill and can hardly wait until the shooting begins. As for myself I never see such a performance but that I later go out of the theatre and, when I get off into a quiet street alone, I become just such another. Looking about to see that I am unobserved, I jerk two imaginary guns out of my hip pockets and draw a quick bead on some nearby tree. . . . As I sat in the movie house it was evident that Bill Hart was being loved by all the men, women and children sitting about and I also want to be loved—to be a little dreaded and feared, too, perhaps. "Ah! there goes Sherwood Anderson! Treat him with respect. He is a bad man when he is aroused."

In 1923, when Anderson wrote those recollections, the Western movie was scarcely two decades old. Anderson, who was born in 1876, must have seen not only William S. Hart but also such other early Western stars as G. M. (Broncho Billy) Anderson, Tom Mix, and Hoot Gibson. He couldn't yet have seen Roy Rogers, William (Wild Bill) Elliott, Gene Autry, and William Boyd, who helped make the Western even more popular. Nor could he have seen the modern films that brought the genre to the height of its appeal—movies like "Stagecoach" (1939), "My Darling Clementine" (1946), "Red River" (1948), "The Gunfighter" (1950), "High Noon" (1952), "Shane" (1953), "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" (1957), "Man of the West" (1958), and "Lonely Are the Brave" (1962). It was probably after the Second World War that the Western truly came of age—at least in the sense that some of the best-made and most memorable Westerns appeared then. *Life* reported in 1956 that American films had gone "gun-happy," that Hollywood had recently turned out eight movies with "gun" in their titles, and that actors were "busy learning to shoot and be shot." The new films were milking the gun craze that the earlier ones had helped to foster, and the gun craze was sustaining itself on the nourishment of the new films.

By then, Westerns were not the only movies featuring guns and violence. "The early thirties," the film historian Carlos Clarens writes, "were closer to the Wild West than to Watergate." He was referring to the spate of crime pictures Hollywood began releasing at that time which took their themes from lurid aspects of the Roaring Twenties. Like the West-

erns, they memorialized the status of guns and gunmen in the nation's social life—only their weapons included submachine guns, and their gunmen were modelled on the crooks and gangsters of the Prohibition era. In the twenties, the big cities of the East and Midwest became a second "West," a second "frontier"—a transformation that was influenced to a degree, no doubt, by the national romance with gunslinging that Western movies and dime novels had helped to promulgate. "Chicago was afflicted with such an epidemic of killings as no civilized modern city had ever before seen," Frederick Lewis Allen wrote in "Only Yesterday," a portrait of the era. New York could not have been far behind Chicago. And many of the new gangster movies were set in these two glittering towns—the Tombstone and Dodge City, perhaps, of urban America. However heinous the Prohibition hoodlums and gunmen were in reality, there was often something quite engaging about them when their life and deeds were flashed on the screen—especially when they were portrayed by actors like James Cagney, Humphrey Bogart, George Raft, Paul Muni, and Edward G. Robinson. The gangster had become yet another star of the movie houses—another who made gunplay and murder an exciting form of entertainment. When they left the movies, grown men imitated the accents and struck the poses of Bogart and Robinson and Cagney.



It would be foolish to claim that because of the orgies of killing they witnessed on the screen moviegoers found killing itself to be attractive, but not so foolish to say that many did find guns to be an attractive weapon. And killing with guns was often such a commonplace of those movies—so casual, even gratuitous, an incident—that it cannot have been difficult for viewers to become desensitized to the true and awful nature of the act. Unless it was the blowing of a kiss, nothing looked easier on the screen than pulling a trigger that released an invisible and impersonal bullet. No human contact was necessary. There wasn't a neater or purer gesture. There wasn't a more abstract instrument of killing than the gun. It isn't surprising that American speech, borrowing freely from the language of gun movies and the crime culture, has so easily adopted bloodless euphemisms for murder like "rub out," "ice," "off," "blow away," and "terminate."

When television began its own influential career, in the early fifties, it took up not only the new tough-guy crime film but also that beloved old swaggerer the Western. According to the 1982 *Guns & Ammo Annual*, "In the early 1950s, with television gaining a foothold in more than half of the American homes . . . the cowboy once again rode into America's imagination, and in his holster he carried, as did his real life counterpart in the last century, the . . . Colt sixgun. In the hands of new-found heroes, the old Colt was once again proving itself. Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and John Wayne became as closely identified with the Colt as did Masterson, Earp, and Garrett of another era." And some of the most absorbing series on television were shows like "Gunsmoke," "Have Gun Will Travel," "The Rifleman," and "Wanted: Dead or Alive." "At every nightfall, twenty to thirty million American homes rock with the sound of sudden gunfire," *The Nation* reported in 1959. "The gunmen are merely TV actors acting as if . . . they were living west of the Mississippi in a brief period following the year 1870." Certain consequences were to be expected, and they occurred. According to a *Life* article ("Bang! U.S. Boys Bite the Dust"), American children—"small fry"—were to be seen "crumpling from imaginary bullets, then rising again to whip gun from holster and fill the air with the bark of make-believe shots." Credit for inspiring the children in their dramas of gunfire didn't belong to movies and television alone. It was shared by the nation's toymakers, who estimated in 1956 that their sales of toy guns for that year would exceed thirty million. And by the early sixties—before a temporary sag, caused by uneasiness over the war in Vietnam—toy-gun sales amounted to a hundred million dollars a year.

If gun movies and television shows saturated the imagination of children—as they had saturated the imagination of their elders—it doesn't mean that children always understood the violent meaning of their behavior when they reënacted the shoot-outs they had witnessed on the screen. Pauline Kael has written of "the naïveté of our own childhood, when we had

innocently believed in faultless protector-heroes." And Robert Warshow, another judge of the film culture, issued this bit of advice: "Watch a child with his toy guns and you will see: what most interests him is not (as we so much fear) the fantasy of hurting others, but to work out how a man might look when he shoots or is shot. A hero is one who looks like a hero." Warshow added, however, that the man wearing a gun lives in a world of violence, and that his "image" or "style" is one that "expresses itself most clearly in violence." Therefore, the hero that a child would like to resemble must be such a man. And, if so, violence is what clearly defines the heroism that the child wishes to emulate.

A report released in 1982 by the National Institute of Mental Health concludes that "violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teen-agers who watch the programs." In an article that appeared in a 1969 issue of *Stanford M.D.*, a publication of the Stanford University Medical Alumni Association, the child psychologist Alberta Engvall Siegel cited studies showing that "young children imitate with fidelity the aggressive behavior they observe adults perform," whether the observation is of real life or of something on a screen. Among the studies she cited was a survey conducted in 1968, by the *Christian Science Monitor*, during the six weeks after the murder of Robert Kennedy. The *Monitor* found that the most violent evening hours on television were between 7:30 and 9 P.M., when an estimated 26.7 million children between the ages of two and seventeen were watching. During those hours, the survey found, there was a TV murder or other form of violent death once every thirty-one minutes. In 1981, Representative Ron Mottl, of Ohio, told the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications, which was holding hearings on "The Social/Behavioral Effects of Violence on Television," that "the average high school graduate has been exposed to 18,000 television murders." The subcommittee heard testimony from a number of other witnesses. Professor George Gerbner, dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, said, "Humans threaten to hurt or kill and actually do so—which is basically our definition of violence—mostly to scare, to terrorize, or otherwise impose their will upon others. Symbolic

violence carries the same message. It is a show of force. It is a demonstration of power. It is the quickest and clearest dramatic demonstration of who can get away with what and against whom. Basically our opinion is that those are the lessons it teaches. . . . And indeed our study shows that many of these messages are conveyed to the viewers. . . . Television has brought about the virtual immersion in violence into which our children are born." Dr. Thomas Radecki, a psychiatrist who is chairman of the National Coalition on Television Violence, testified, "I can comfortably estimate that twenty-five to fifty per cent of the violence in our society is coming from the culture of violence being taught by our entertainment media, most strongly by the television and movie industries."

The New York *Times* carried this report in April of 1983:

"There can no longer be any doubt," said Dr. Leonard D. Eron, of the University of Illinois at Chicago, "that heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior, crime and violence in society." Television violence, Dr. Eron said, "affects youngsters of all ages, of both genders, at all socio-economic levels and all levels of intelligence. . . ."

According to a study made by Dr. [Linda S.] Lichter and her husband, S. Robert Lichter, 250 criminals turned up in 263 prime-time programs in the 1980-81 season. They committed, she said, 417 crimes, or an average of 1.7 per show. . . .

On the small screen, she said . . . murder is 100 times more prevalent than it is in reality and television crime in general is 12 times more violent than crime in real life. . . .

Though John W. Hinckley, Jr., may have failed to kill President Reagan when he shot him in 1981, Mr. [Daniel] Schorr [the news commentator] said, he successfully manipulated "a medium that celebrates violence" and made himself into "a media celebrity." He cited Mr. Hinckley's first question to his Secret Service interrogator: "Is it on television?"

None of these studies can be called definitive, of course; there are others that disagree. In any case, why is it that our film shows are so full of gun violence? Max Lerner's answer, in "America as a Civilization," may be instructive: "The American conquers as a man of action, he puts his faith in action, and he expects action in his movies." It may be, Lerner adds, that "movies reflect the strain of interior violence and tension in the culture." Warshow makes a similar point when he says of Westerns that they "offer a serious orientation to the problem of violence"—an orientation "such as

can be found almost nowhere else in our culture."

IT has been clear for generations now that Americans are more prone to violent confrontations with one another than are people in any other developed society, and that the issue is too often settled by someone's pulling the trigger of a handgun. Yet the death toll from those confrontations remains alarmingly high. Between November of 1963 (when President Kennedy was assassinated) and November of 1982, nearly four hundred and fifty thousand people were killed with guns—by murder, accident, or suicide—and almost four and a half million more were wounded or were robbed at gunpoint. Between 1963 and 1973, while the war in Vietnam was taking 46,121 American lives, firearms in America were killing 84,644 civilians. Statistics for the first few years of the eighties are just as impressive. It has been estimated that between fifty million and sixty million handguns are owned by civilians, and, according to the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, two million new ones are being bought every year. The F.B.I.'s annual compilation "Crime in the United States" reveals that in 1983 there was one violent crime in America every twenty-six seconds, one aggravated assault every forty-nine seconds, and one murder every twenty-seven minutes —the majority of such murders being committed with firearms. Of the 18,673 murders committed in 1983 for which the weapon is known, forty-four per cent were committed with handguns, seven per cent with shotguns, and four per cent with rifles; knives and other cutting instruments accounted for twenty-two per cent; other dangerous weapons—blunt instruments, poison, explosives—accounted for thirteen per cent; and "personal" weapons (hands, fists, and feet) for seven per cent. In 1983, a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* noted that pistols accounted for eighty-three per cent of all firearms used in suicide. "It is conceivable," the study said, "that the rise in the suicide rate might be controlled by restricting the sale of handguns."

It's unlikely that these figures would be striking to leaders of the nation's pro-gun movement, who maintain that "guns don't kill people—people do." But the statistics suggest that firearms, by their very nature, make it far easier for people to kill than other weapons

do. It would appear, then, that if there weren't so many guns around, and if they weren't so easily available, there wouldn't be as many murders as there are. D. H. Lawrence once asserted that "the essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer." As long as the leaders of the pro-gun movement maintain that people are killed by people, and not by guns, then —faced with the fact that the annual murder rate in the United States exceeds that of any other advanced society in the world—they can scarcely disagree with Lawrence's judgment that we are essentially a nation of killers. Other people might prefer to say that there are just too many guns in America, that America is much too fond of guns, and that Americans find it far too easy to acquire and own guns.

Two psychiatrists wrote in 1969, "If the United States had the same gun homicide rate as Japan, our 1966 gun death toll would have been 32 instead of 6,855; if our suicide rate by gun were the same, only 196 persons would have killed themselves with a gun instead of 10,407. Our homicide-by-gun rate is 35 times that of Germany, Denmark, and England, and seven times that of Canada and France." In 1980, a London newspaper called John Lennon's murder a "peculiarly American death." And, according to another London journal, "the freedom to carry guns has brought forth monsters" in the United States. That year, there were eight handgun murders in England and 10,012 in the United States.

Millions of the handguns now in America were acquired for self-protection—which isn't hard to understand, for the crime rate is alarmingly high, and the fear of crime has never been greater than in recent years. "I've worked too hard for what I've got to let anybody take it away from me," a Maryland man told a writer for *Baltimore Magazine* in 1981, soon after going out and buying himself a handgun as protection against thieves who had been burglarizing the neighborhood. "I already went through the normal procedures of barring myself in my own house: I have a dog, I have all the preliminaries. I even thought of tear gas. And there's no point in my moving somewhere else, it's everywhere. And the police can't always be where they're needed. So I bought a gun." And many city dwellers like him have had reason to feel more secure after acquiring guns to protect themselves. Yet a terrible irony of this precaution is that guns bought for protection end up doing far more harm to the owners, their families, and their personal acquaintances than they do to intruders. According to the F.B.I., fifty-seven per cent of the murders committed in 1983 were "by relatives or persons acquainted with the victims." In addition to such killings, a large number of deaths and injuries were caused by gun suicides and gun accidents. As Mark Twain once said, there's no more dangerous weapon in the house than an unloaded gun.

In the Bronx, a four-year-old girl shoots and seriously wounds her two-year-old brother; she had believed the gun to be a toy. In New York's Westchester County, an actress shoots herself in the abdomen while cleaning a handgun that had been acquired for self-protection. When, despondent over the coming divorce of his parents, a thirteen-year-old boy in Georgia puts a gun to his head, his mother begs him to take her life instead; he obliges, putting a bullet through her skull. During an argument that breaks out at a wedding party in Colorado, the mother of the bride fires a rifle at her husband, misses him, and hits and kills her new son-in-law. In Brooklyn, a sleeping three-year-old boy is killed by a bullet his father had aimed at his mother. Those aren't just incidents that *can* happen when there's a gun in the house. They and hundreds of others actually occurred in 1982 and 1983. There was this incident, in 1981, reported by the *Times:*

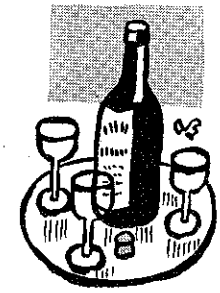
> Mr. [Lionel] Fredette had just come in from feeding the animals.... His middle daughter ... who did not like guns, was ironing a pair of jeans ... preparing to go out with her friend, Mary James.... Miss James ... said something to the effect that she didn't like guns.... Mr. Fredette stopped directly before her ... unholstered the gun, unchambered it, emptied a load of shells into his left hand, closed the hand on five—which he apparently thought were six—shells, snapped the chamber shut and pointed the six-inch barrel at the juncture of his nose and forehead.... He looked at Miss James with his crisp blue eyes. "Do you think I would do this if it were loaded?" he asked. As the two young women watched, he pulled the trigger twice. The gun made an oiled clicking sound. He pulled it a third time, and the firing pin struck the waiting sixth shell, a soft-nosed bullet.... This bullet entered Mr. Fredette's head but did not exit. He died instantly.

Few gun owners seem to be swayed by any such stories, however. After the *Times* said in a 1982 editorial that "a gun in the home is virtually useless as

a deterrent to crime" and that "more than 90 percent of break-ins occur while residents are away from home," a gun-owning reader, in a letter to the editor, denounced the paper's comments as "patronizing and elitist." "People are not that concerned about accidents and attacks by family members," the letter said. "The number one issue, rather, is the terror and fear of vicious criminal attack by unknown, depraved criminals." There's truth on both sides of that exchange, and it indicates why for some time to come there may be an impasse in the gun debate. On the side of the letter writer, there is indeed the terrible rate of crime and the justifiable fear of it. On the side of the *Times*, there are the statistics showing that the presence of guns in the home is counterproductive: that they're far more damaging to family members than to the criminals they're meant to stop; that burglars don't, as a rule, break and enter when they have reason to believe that someone's at home; that when burglars do break into a home the loot, along with cash and jewelry, that they find most attractive is a handgun. It has been estimated that more than two hundred thousand handguns are stolen from private homes every year—swelling the considerable arsenal already in the streets.

THAT arsenal is made up chiefly of snub-nosed handguns—or snubbies, as they're called. The snubbies are more dangerous than bigger handguns for the obvious reason that they are so easily concealable. With their two-inch and three-inch barrels, nicely palm-size, they can be carried in a coat pocket without showing the slightest bulge. One cannot tell when one is in their presence. They're strictly for killing or wounding people. They may look like toys—they're so cute and petite—but, especially at short range, they are devastating. The reporter Joseph Albright says of them, "One flick on the trigger and out barks one-third of an ounce of lead at 735 miles per hour, shaped to plow a mushroom cavity into someone's gut." Most of these weapons are of two kinds. The better and more expensive kind is made here in America and costs from one hundred to four hundred dollars. It's highly prized but hard to come by in the streets, for its price puts it beyond the means of the average criminal. But since even the average criminal knows a fine "piece" when he sees one, he often

goes directly for it when he breaks into a gun store or a middle-class home—where it probably wasn't called a snubby but a mini-gun, a midget gun, a lady's gun, or a baby pistol. It is mostly when a concealable handgun, expensive or cheap, falls into the hands of hoodlums that it is referred to as a snubby. And it is the cheaper kind—assembled here with parts imported from Germany, and costing fifty dollars or less—that is most prevalent in the streets. Because it costs so little and is widely used in certain urban black neighborhoods—where it has been known to take more lives than illness and auto accidents combined—the cheap snubby is also called a ghetto gun. It is even more commonly described as a Saturday-night special, a term that Robert Sherrill explains in his book of that title: "In the late 1950s and early 1960s, when mischievous residents of Detroit could not get their hands on guns in their hometown, they would simply hop in their cars and tool down to Toledo, Ohio, less than an hour away, where guns were sold in candy stores, flower shops, filling stations, shoeshine stands, anywhere at all. Since a great many of these purchases were made to satisfy the passions of Saturday Night, Detroit lawmen began to refer to the weapons as Saturday Night Specials." By that name, Sherrill goes on to say, "the language of Americana was enriched." So much so that inner-city blacks, once the principal buyers and users of Saturday-night specials, have been joined over the past decade or so by the other races and ethnic groups of America. "We used to find guns primarily in the poor neighborhoods," a New York City policeman told a *Times* reporter in 1975. "Now it's getting into the better neighborhoods." John Hinckley, the son of wealthy white parents, used a Saturday-night special in his attempt on President Reagan's life. Mark Chapman used one to murder John Lennon. And Arthur Bremer used one to cripple George Wallace. In several Western and Southern states, almost anyone may enter a gun store and leave with a snubby. In Texas, where Hinckley got his, buying a handgun takes only a little more time than buying a six-pack of beer, and less time than buying a pair of boots: one has only to prove that one is twenty-one or over, produce a driver's license, and assure the gun dealer that one is not a drug addict or a convicted felon. The pawnbroker who sold Hinckley his snubby later reported that the young man met every requirement for buying a firearm in Texas. "People are going to blame us for selling the gun that shot the President, but we have no way of knowing," he said. "We don't even remember him."



Just as appalling is the number of teen-agers who, in the manner of Hinckley, have been turning to handguns for violence and kicks. In 1981, a CBS television documentary reported from Los Angeles on the handgun culture that has sprung up among members of the teen-age generation. A policeman there spoke, with some trepidation, about "fourteen-year-olds carrying .38 revolvers." A criminal-court judge spoke, with a mixture of astonishment and resignation, about kids who "carry guns to school like we used to carry cigarettes." These youngsters—who steal their weapons from homes and gun stores or buy them in the streets—kill with little or no provocation and with hardly a sign of remorse. "You're afraid to go to work," one woman testified. "You're afraid to go to church. You're afraid to go to school. You're afraid to look at somebody, because occasionally they'll tell you, 'I don't like the way you look at me.' " Ed Bradley, the CBS correspondent, was moved to describe them as "the most violent and disturbing generation that this country has ever spawned."

What made them take so casually and so violently to handguns? "Kids are growing cold," one adult resident of Los Angeles told Bradley. "They're growing older and colder. They have no home raising, they have no love." The criminal-court judge offered the opinion that such kids "have no stake whatsoever in society" —that "they think nothing's here for me." But the teen-agers had explanations of their own. One said, "The person with the gun got the best hand . . . calling the shots. . . . You can just take your finger and pull the trigger, you ain't got to worry about the fellow no more. Bang, bang, bang! I got this fool. . . . You kind of happy." One cited the example of the movies: "So everybody gets a gun to figure, hey, I got the same equal rights as another man. . . . It's like a little Western. Let's go shoot 'em up. . . . Bam, bam,

bam, bam! It's over." And another acknowledged the influence of television: "It's not that hard to kill somebody. . . . It takes a little kid to pull the trigger. . . . I like the feel of a gun. . . . And just the idea of pushing the shells in. . . . I guess, you know, a lot of it comes from TV. . . . Just watch them dudes pack their guns, and I'm ready."

It all led a Los Angeles County deputy district attorney to conclude that "firearms are by far and away the most identifiable cause of violence," that "there are too many guns in our community," and that "there are too many people willing to use the guns." Moreover, there's no sign that people *will be less trigger-happy any time* soon. One of the teen-agers ventured to say, "I don't think it's ever going to stop."

IN 1934, Congress passed the National Firearms Act, aimed at curbing the sale of sawed-off shotguns, sawed-off rifles, and fully automatic weapons, such as machine guns, which were then among the main tools of the gangster underworld. In 1938, it went further, passing the Federal Firearms Act, which prohibited unlicensed gun dealers from selling guns across state lines, and made it illegal for firearms to be sold to felons and fugitives from justice. Thirty years later, when the country was aroused by the rash of political assassinations beginning with that of John F. Kennedy, Congress passed the Gun Control Act of 1968. By then, the pro-gun lobby had become an organized force. Its influence was strong enough that a number of the provisions of the original bill were watered down in the course of debate, when certain congressmen were intimidated by the gun lobby's threats. Even so, the Gun Control Act was the strongest measure that had yet been passed. Its major provisions included a ban on the importation of handguns and on their sale to minors, drug addicts, and convicted felons. But the act would be only as effective as its loopholes—no secret to those legislators who had fought to put the loopholes in. For instance, a number of the pro-gun congressmen had assented to the clause *banning the importation of handguns* simply because they knew that it could be circumvented. The gun dealers whose interests they represented knew that even better. Those dealers—complying "conscientiously" with the ban on handgun importation—almost immediately began importing handgun

parts and assembling them in the United States. Most were assembled in Florida, which is now the main center for the production of Saturday-night specials. So, despite the 1968 act, small arms have been as available as they ever were, and civilian gun violence and the death rate by handguns have remained high.

At a Presidential press conference in 1983, a reporter asked, "You are aware, I am sure, that the United States has an utterly disgraceful number of murders. Do you believe that there is any correlation between the wide dissemination of guns in this country and this disgraceful record? And, in short, isn't it time for a truly effective gun-control law?"

President Reagan replied, "We get back to the old argument again, and I have stated many times, you cannot find in the various states that have gun-control laws that there is any proportionate difference in the crimes committed where there are those very strict laws and where they are far looser in their laws. . . . What we should be aiming at all over the country is what we did in California. And that is that never mind whether you're going to try to take guns away from good people, the criminal is going to find a way to have a gun. What we did was say that anyone convicted of a crime, if he had a gun in his possession at the time it was committed, whether he used it or not, add five to fifteen years to the prison sentence and make the prison sentence mandatory. No probation could be given. And I think that is more of an answer. The guns aren't making people criminals. Criminals are using guns."

There's strong and respectable support for the President's views, and it comes not only from within the community that is predictably pro-gun in sentiment but also from disinterested quarters of scholarship. In a study of gun use and availability conducted in the early eighties, the sociologists James Wright and Peter Rossi, of the University of Massachusetts, arrived at this finding: "There appear to be no strong causal connections between private gun ownership and the crime rate. . . . There is no compelling evidence that private weaponry is an important cause of, or a deterrent to, violent criminality."

On the other hand, polls continue to show, as they have shown for decades, that most Americans see a connection between the availability of firearms and the rate of crimes involving guns, and that they want much stricter controls on the circulation and possession of handguns. That constituency is not without *its* support in disinterested quarters of scholarship, for several other social-science studies have indicated that fewer handguns in the society would in all likelihood result in fewer crimes where guns are used. So have statements by many law-enforcement officers across the nation, and so have federal statistics. The President ignored those statistics—if he knew about them—when he spoke of there being no "difference in the crimes committed where there are those very strict laws and where they are far looser in their laws." (Pro-gun statements about the failure of "strict laws" are often based on New York State's Sullivan Law, which is one of the oldest and strictest handgun statutes in the country, and which has been a popular target for those who argue that gun laws don't work. But that argument overlooks the fact that most illegal handguns in New York are purchased in states where there are looser gun laws, or from residents of such states who bring handguns into New York and sell them here.) The President might not have read the F.B.I.'s "Crime in the United States" for 1981, which discloses the following: "When the number of murder victims was related to the regional populations, the most populous Southern States averaged 13 murders per 100,000 people. . . . The Western States [had] a murder rate of 10 per 100,000. . . . The Northeastern States experienced a . . . murder rate [of] 8 per 100,000 population. The North Central States had a rate of 7 victims per 100,000 inhabitants." One point the F.B.I. report failed to make, since crime statistics are its main interest, is that the Northeastern states, with one of the lower murder rates per capita, also have some of the tougher gun laws in the country. Nor can it be concluded, from what the 1981 CBS documentary revealed about teen-age gun violence in Los Angeles, that the tough prison sentences enacted during Reagan's tenure as governor of California are having the deterrent effect they were intended to have.

Since the early seventies, when it became clear that dealers were circum-

venting the Gun Control Act of 1968, a number of bills have been introduced in Congress to close the loopholes and stiffen the act. Almost all have died or been snarled in committee. Pro-gun legislators not only helped to stymie those bills but also introduced some of their own. At the moment, there are two major gun proposals, one from each camp. One of them, whose co-authors are Senator Edward Kennedy and Representative Peter Rodino, proposes a ban on the domestic manufacture of cheap handguns and on the importation of parts that are used to assemble Saturday-night specials. The other, whose co-authors are Senator James McClure and Representative Harold Volkmer, and which is known as the Firearms Owners Protection Act, seeks, in effect, to pull whatever teeth are left in the Gun Control Act of 1968. Even in the House, which has been controlled by the Democrats, there is little enthusiasm for Kennedy-Rodino, whereas McClure-Volkmer has been co-sponsored by a majority in the Republican-controlled Senate, and President Reagan has promised to sign it if it comes to his desk. As a 1982 Senate document, "Federal Regulation of Firearms," states, "Thus, on the subject of violent crime, there remains a clear division in Congress between advocates of an interdiction solution—a policy that seeks to lessen the likelihood and danger of crime by curbing access to the more lethal weapons—and those who believe the problem is one of establishing a more effective system of criminal justice. The former see the easy availability of firearms as a principal generator of crime. The latter insist that the proper focal point is the offender and that any workable solution lies in the principles of deterrence and appropriate sentencing." This division in Congress, of course, reflects the division in the nation as a whole—one constituency backing the aims of Kennedy-Rodino, and the other those of McClure-Volkmer.

The constituency supporting the Kennedy-Rodino proposal is represented chiefly by the two leading gun-control organizations in America—the National Coalition to Ban Handguns, and Handgun Control, Inc., both with headquarters in Washington. The National Coalition, the smaller of the two, is headed by Michael Beard, a forty-three-year-old former legislative aide. The coalition embraces over thirty religious, labor, political, and civic groups, and its advisory council has included Eugene

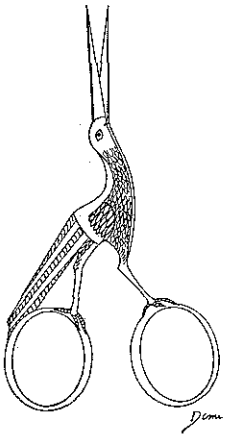
Carson Blake, John Kenneth Galbraith, Leonard Bernstein, Julian Bond, Robert Drinan, James Farmer, Harvey Cox, Walter Fauntroy, and Norman Lear. Handgun Control, Inc., seeks a limitation on the production and circulation of handguns. The National Coalition goes further, seeking a near-total ban on the production and possession of handguns, whether cheap or expensive, imported or domestically made. Beard told an interviewer in 1981, "We remain convinced that nothing short of an outright ban on civilian possession of handguns will ultimately be effective in reducing handgun crime and saving lives. If you call a total ban extreme, then we're extremist." Therefore, while the National Coalition lobbies strongly against McClure-Volkmer, it isn't as enthusiastic about Kennedy-Rodino as it would be if that bill were also seeking a ban on the production and possession of all handguns, not just the cheap ones. The cheap handgun remains "an easy target for legislators," Beard argues, "because the very name conjures up an image of the proverbial poor, inner-city youth or petty criminal buying one for fifty bucks on a street corner." He maintains that "a larger problem is now posed by the high-quality $200 to $300 handgun purchased by the white, blue-collar homeowner in the suburbs and stashed in a dresser drawer for 'self-protection.' "

"Gun control has been a great liberal cause," a New York City gun buff scoffed some time ago, going on to say that liberals "are not for strict controls, they are just not for any guns at all." Neither part of his statement is strictly true. Though gun regulation *has* been a liberal cause, it has not been a cause for all liberals: there are liberals who want strict controls, and nothing more; there are liberals who want no guns at all; and there are liberals who want no controls at all. There are also gun-control advocates who have nothing liberal in their personal or political backgrounds. One such anomaly is Nelson (Pete) Shields, who leads Handgun Control, Inc. Shields was an executive at E. I. du Pont de Nemours before he joined the anti-gun movement. He had been a Republican all his life, and a devoted hunter as well. And he still has no objections to shotguns. He hates handguns, however: in 1975, his son Nick was killed, on a street in San Francisco, by a member of a gang of gunmen known by the code name Zebra, who were then terrorizing the city. It was after his son's death that Shields took a leave of absence from his job at du Pont and began helping out a small and underfinanced group in Washington called the National Council to Control Handguns. His son's murder, he has explained, "made me wonder if I could do something to stop this from happening to somebody else's kid." In 1978, having retired from du Pont, he became the chairman of the organization, which became Handgun Control, Inc., the following year, and has grown to be the largest organization of its kind in the country. Handgun Control, Inc., now has what it calls a "citizen army" of about a million supporters, about a hundred and seventy-five thousand of whom are members and contribute to its operating budget (two million dollars in 1983). Its national-committee members have included William Ruckelshaus, Edmund G. Brown, Sr., Richard Hatcher, Kenneth Gibson, Martin Luther King, Sr., and John Lindsay. Like the pro-gun movement, Handgun Control, Inc., together with its political-action committee, lobbies in Congress, aids sympathetic groups in local communities, and supports politicians who endorse its objectives and opposes those who oppose them. An example of the last of these activities is a mailing that it sent to New York voters in 1982, which read, in part, "Why . . . is our new Senator, Alfonse D'Amato, co-sponsoring a bill [McClure-Volkmer] to weaken our national law? . . . Why is Senator D'Amato proposing that we begin erasing EVERY federal gun law on the books? . . . Mr. D'Amato has no business sponsoring a bill that endangers the lives of the very people he represents. . . . Why did he do it? Perhaps it's because he received $16,259 from the National Rifle Association's Political Victory Fund in the last election." This and similar letters about other politicians demonstrate how much Handgun Control, Inc., has learned from its powerful N.R.A.-led opposition, which early perfected the use of direct mass mailing to mobilize formidable support for its cause.

THE pro-gun lobby—a giant compared to Handgun Control, Inc.—is one of the largest, strongest, and best-financed special-interest groups in the nation's capital. Made

up of organizations on the right—the more prominent ones being the Second Amendment Foundation, the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, and the National Rifle Association—it seeks to preserve for its adherents, and for other Americans as well, the right to own and use firearms. It regards all gun-control advocates as "gun-grabbers"—as people whose true objective is not to regulate the possession of firearms but to confiscate all guns. It spreads that belief among its grass-roots following, and scares members of Congress with its ability to organize that belief and translate it into a mass of pro-gun votes.

Though polls show that the pro-gun groups represent a minority opinion in the United States, their membership far outnumbers that of the anti-gun organizations, and they have managed to exercise something resembling a veto over the desire that most Americans have expressed for stronger gun laws. This may be because the opponents of gun control are better organized—and perhaps more organizable—than the proponents. It may also be that they are seldom critical of their leadership, and do not hesitate at election time to put their votes where their gun convictions are. Many gun-control advocates, on the other hand, even those who are organized, do not, as a rule, vote solely on the issue of guns—they won't work to elect or defeat a candidate just because of his position on firearms. So while they continue to hope for stronger gun laws, they help to frustrate their own hopes by maintaining an admirable civic attitude: by continuing to act on the principle that a candidate's stand on a range of national and international issues provides a fairer test of his credentials for office than whether he's likely to support or oppose gun-control measures.



The Second Amendment Foundation and the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms are sister organizations. They share an address (in the state of Washington, though the Citizens Committee also has lobbyists on Capitol Hill) and some of the same officers; for instance, Alan Gottlieb, the founder and chairman of the Citizens Committee, is also the president of the Second Amendment Foundation. (His status at the foundation is now in some dispute. Six staff members who were dismissed by Gottlieb are in turn seeking his removal for alleged financial irregularities.) The Citizens Committee is the larger and more politically active of the two, and its advisory council includes well over a hundred United States senators and representatives—a sign of its influence in Congress. Though the Citizens Committee isn't the major force in the gun lobby, it's a formidable one. Since its founding in 1971, it has grown from nine thousand members to more than five hundred thousand. Each year, it spends more than a million dollars lobbying in Congress and state legislatures, and on numerous "action projects"—all with the stated aim of preserving "our RIGHT to keep and bear arms."

The National Rifle Association, thanks to the size of its membership, the size of its treasury, and the power of its clout in Congress, is the undisputed champion of the pro-gun lobby. It has a membership of about three million, and in 1983 its treasury financed a budget of fifty-two million dollars, compared with two million dollars spent that year by the much smaller Handgun Control, Inc. A 1983 issue of the N.R.A.'s *Reports from Washington* said, "The National Rifle Association spent more money communicating with association members during the 1981-82 election year than did any other organization in America, according to figures released . . . by the Federal Election Commission. The F.E.C. examinations . . . show the N.R.A. spent $803,656 on literature and other types of information designed to acquaint . . . members with the policies of various candidates in the federal election races. . . . One group not listed in the report was Handgun Control, Inc. . . . But H.C.I.'s PAC gave more than $50,000 directly to candidates with pro-gun-control sentiments, according to F.E.C. documents."

Like Pete Shields, of Handgun Control, Inc., Harlon Carter, the head of the N.R.A., has had a life marked by the tragedy of gunfire. Carter took over the N.R.A. leadership decades after he was convicted of shooting and killing a Mexican-American in Tex-

as, his native state. The incident occurred in 1931, when Carter and the victim were teen-agers, and it gained no wide attention until 1981, when—Carter having become a luminary of the pro-gun movement—the Laredo *Times* dug up the story from its files and reprinted it. According to that report, Carter was convicted of murder and sentenced to three years in jail, but his conviction was overturned when the state Court of Appeals ruled that some witnesses were untrustworthy, and the charges against him were later dropped. In 1982, while the N.R.A. was holding its annual meeting in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia *Inquirer* also ran the old story of the shooting incident. But if it was news to the assembly of N.R.A. members it did nothing to alter the high esteem in which they held their leader. Nor did it moderate Carter's militant rhetoric on behalf of the right to own and use guns. "We can reasonably and rightfully . . . aspire to a time when few politicians, mindful of their futures, will oppose us," he told the group. "Don't trust the politician who won't trust you with a gun."

If one of the original members of the N.R.A. had risen to make such statements at a meeting, he might have been asked to take himself and his views to a more appropriate organization. The N.R.A. was anything but a gun lobby when it came into being, in 1871. For decades after its founding—in New York City—its main and almost sole purpose was the teaching of long-range marksmanship to the post-Civil War generation of riflemen. In the early years of this century, having moved its headquarters to Washington, D.C., it became an organization for hunters, farmers, ranchers, sports shooters, and gun collectors, and a sponsor of rifle clubs and target-shooting contests around the nation. This essentially sporting and practical group of gun fanciers became politicized, and radically so, during the sixties, when political assassinations and race riots and the proliferation of crimes involving guns reawoke public anxiety over the destructiveness of firearms in American life. That anxiety was one of the main forces behind the passage of the 1968 Gun Control Act, and the act's passage hastened the transformation of the N.R.A. into a militant advocate and defender of gun-owning rights.

Since then, the N.R.A. has led the fight against almost all attempts to pass stricter gun laws. In the 1980

campaign, it not only took the unprecedented steps of endorsing a candidate for President and claiming credit for many of the votes that put him in the White House but also, through its Political Victory Fund, spent more than a million dollars to help elect other pro-gun candidates. The conservative landslide to which N.R.A. contributed strengthened its position not only in the White House but in Congress as well. Drawing inspiration and justification from the Second Amendment to the Constitution, it views as sacrosanct the civilian right to own and use guns. Further, it sees the exercise of that right as a potential defense against any repressive or authoritarian government that might one day arise in the United States. That is the point the N.R.A. was making in full-page newspaper ads it ran after Lech Walesa and the Solidarity movement had been crushed. "The actions of the Polish Government in suspending basic rights and liberties of its citizens should cause every American to say *a silent thank you for the foresight* of the drafters of the U.S. Constitution," the ad proclaimed. "Poland has precisely the firearms laws that the N.R.A. has been opposing in the United States. . . . And so long as the Second Amendment is not infringed what is happening in Poland can never happen in these United States."

"The Right to Keep and Bear Arms" is only one of a number of slogans by which the N.R.A. and its allies make their case against gun-control legislation. Others, proclaimed on bumper stickers across the nation, are "Gun Laws Don't Work," "If Guns Are Outlawed Only Outlaws Will Have Guns," "Registration Is the First Step to Confiscation," and, of course, "Guns Don't Kill, People Do." These slogans are also the basis of pamphlets, letters to the faithful, newspaper ads, speeches, and articles in the gun press, and of Alan Gottlieb's book "The Rights of Gun Owners"—a manifesto of the pro-gun movement. Gottlieb has told an interviewer, "For over a decade, law-abiding Americans who own and use guns for legitimate purposes have been blamed by political hacks and extreme leftist media ideologues for the rising rates of crime in our country when the real cause for these rates is the permissive, mealy-mouthed, mollycoddling attitude of these same hacks and ideologues." In "Anti-Gunners Are a Threat to America!," an article published in a 1982 issue of *Guns &*

*Ammo*, the writer Bill Clede maintains, "Pro-gunners are in favor of gun control. They want mandatory sentences for those using firearms in crime. They want to eliminate plea bargaining of gun charges against criminals. They do *not* favor proposed laws that harass the honest citizen while having no effect on crime. . . . So, if the anti-gunners win, we 'the people' have no right to peaceably assemble, maintain personal security, retain rights not delegated [to] the federal government, or to keep and bear arms. . . . As far as I am concerned, the greatest threat of all this furor over 'gun control' has nothing to do with guns. It is a threat to my country and the democratic principles I believe in."

Gun-control advocates, for their part, wonder why the pro-gun lobbyists resist so strenuously almost every attempt to regulate the manufacture, circulation, possession, and use of handguns. Why, since nobody is trying to regulate long guns, does the pro-gun lobby oppose the slightest restriction on the production and use of snubbies—the weapons that account for so many of the murders and other crimes involving guns in the United States? In 1981, the Most Reverend James Hickey, the Archbishop of Washington, D.C., was denounced by the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms as a member of the "gun-grabbing" clergy, for having said that he dearly wished to see "the elimination of handguns from society." What could have been so reprehensible about the Archbishop's wish? One answer may be found in something that Alan Gottlieb has said against the movement to ban cheap handguns: "One compelling argument against such a ban has been brought forward by Ernest van den Haag. He reasons that both the poor and the elderly are the chief victims of crime and cannot necessarily afford expensive handguns for self-defense, and since inner-city police protection is so poor, many citizens must rely on self-protection."

ANOTHER question is raised by the stand that the pro-gun lobby has taken on the subject of armor-piercing bullets. They are also known as "cop-killer bullets," since they can penetrate bullet-resistant vests, which are worn mainly by the police. Eight types of armor-piercing bullets have been identified—five imported and three manufactured in this coun-

try. The most powerful and devastating is the type that is coated with Teflon: it is capable of penetrating the equivalent of four vests lined with seventy-two layers of bullet-resistant Kevlar. Why has the N.R.A. fought efforts to restrict the sale of such bullets? In a letter to the *Times* in June, 1982, the head of the New York City Police Foundation, Gerald W. Lynch, protested the N.R.A. stand:

> Why are these bullets being manufactured? In my judgment, and in the judgment of the police community, they are purchased mainly to penetrate bulletproof vests worn by police officers.
>
> Two bills to study the matter of penetration of bulletproof vests and to prohibit the manufacture of these bullets have been introduced in the House of Representatives. . . . At present, they appear to have little chance of passage because both the National Rifle Association and the Reagan Administration refuse to place any restriction on ammunition.
>
> I can think of no single issue in criminal justice that should compel more unequivocal public support than restricting these bullets. . . .
>
> The criminals using them are the most desperate and most odious. . . . With the killer bullet, they have a guarantee they can mortally wound anyone they wish, vest or not.
>
> The slogan of the N.R.A. people flies in their face on this issue. Their argument that "if you outlaw guns, only the outlaws will have them" cannot be true for killer bullets, because if they were outlawed only certain law enforcement officers would have them. I believe the police would give them up completely if this would eliminate unauthorized use. . . .
>
> There is one happy note: DuPont . . . has taken the courageous stand that it will not sell Teflon to bullet manufacturers who intend to make "killer" bullets. The company is to be congratulated for the highest level of corporate responsibility in resisting the pressure of the manufacturers and the N.R.A.

It is not only in Congress and in the big cities that the N.R.A. has fought to keep armor-piercing bullets in circulation. As Stephan Burke, a councilman for the town of Brookhaven, in Suffolk County, New York, can testify, the N.R.A. has fought in small communities as well. Burke, the father of a policeman in New York City, had occasion, in 1982, to reflect on the problem of armor-piercing bullets, his son having said that it worried him to think he could still be shot dead despite the "safety blanket," or bulletproof vest, that he wore. After considering the matter for some time, the older Burke—though he was powerless to protect his son in New York City—began thinking of what he could do to protect policemen in Brookhaven. He decided to propose a law that would

ban the possession and sale of armor-piercing bullets, and in a talk with the town supervisor he suggested that his proposed law was unlikely to provoke much opposition. The supervisor agreed, saying that she could imagine no one objecting to such a law. "Who would be for bullets that can pierce armor and kill cops?" she asked. "Well, nobody that I know of," Councilman Burke said. But there were people in the community he hadn't thought of. The day before public hearings began, he received a letter from the N.R.A. objecting to the proposed law and asserting that the N.R.A. would fight it to the bitter end. It wasn't an empty threat. A flood of letters and telephone calls began coming in, and N.R.A. adherents turned out in large and vociferous numbers when the public hearings opened. One of them got up and shouted at the town legislators, "You call yourselves Americans, voting for this? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, whoever brought this damn law up. It's a real shame, Americans! You want to restrict our rights!" When a local policeman gained the floor, he said, "Our police officers in Suffolk County and indeed throughout the country must be assured that our law-abiding citizens are in their corner. We are human beings. We are not machines. We cry when we're hurt. We bleed when we're cut. And we die when we're shot." Burke's bill was eventually enacted, over the not-quite-dead body of the N.R.A. Fighting to the bitter end, as it had promised, the N.R.A. opposition then took its case to the Suffolk County Legislature, which passed a less restrictive law. This law permitted the continued sale of armor-piercing bullets in the county and provided that possession of such bullets would be punishable only if they were used in the commission of a crime—that is, only if they were used to injure or to kill. The reasoning was characteristic of the gun lobby's interpretation of the right to keep and use firearms: the penalty for using those bullets was what mattered—not whether they were available, or whether lives could be saved by proscribing their sale. Of a similar case in Virginia, in 1982, where N.R.A. pressure had kept armor-piercing bullets from being outlawed, the Arlington *Journal* said, "Frankly, we're tired of the N.R.A.'s knee-jerk opposition to reasonable proposals. We can't help but believe that the organization's

opposition to outlawing a weapon whose sole purpose is to kill police officers reveals the morally bankrupt nature of the group."

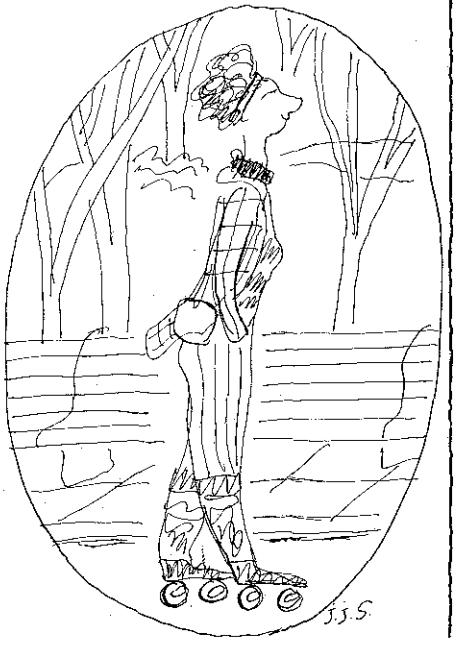
In 1983, Governor Charles Robb, of Virginia, signed a bill providing strong legal penalties for anyone convicted of possessing or using armor-piercing bullets in the commission of a crime. The bill had passed the state legislature with the support of the N.R.A., and, according to Warren Cassidy, the executive director of the N.R.A.'s Institute for Legislative Action, Robb's signature reëmphasized "the concept that law-abiding gun owners have rights and responsibilities and that criminals should be held fully accountable for their actions." While the N.R.A. continued to oppose any limitation on the freedom to acquire the bullets, at least twenty-one states and the District of Columbia passed legislation, in one form or another, against them. At the national level, however, attempts to curb armor-piercing bullets have had no success. Two years ago, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Representative Mario Biaggi proposed legislation that would have banned the manufacture, importation, sale, and criminal use of such ammunition; but —partly because of strong lobbying efforts by the N.R.A.—their bill (the Law Enforcement Officers Protection Act) has still not reached the House floor. According to an article by Representative Biaggi in *Law Enforcement News*, a journal for police officers, there are two major reasons that his proposed legislation has yet to be enacted: "First, the National Rifle Association strongly opposes a ban on armor-piercing handgun ammunition. Second, the Reagan Administration, while not opposed to the idea, has offered very little meaningful support for such a ban." Jerry Kenney, a pro-gun writer for the New York *Daily News*, had this to say in one of his columns in March of 1984:

> The image of the sportsman, the average law-abiding hunter and target shooter, is going to suffer greatly from a puzzling decision by the National Rifle Association. This august (until now) organization, which claims to be the "voice" of law-abiding gun owners in the U.S., is opposing a bill by Rep. Mario Biaggi and Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan that would ban the production, import, sale and private use of armor-piercing bullets.
>
> Hunters and target shooters have traditionally been known as sportsmen and most of them are members of the N.R.A. They stand by the organization in most of

its decisions, particularly in the campaign against gun control. But the stand the N.R.A. is taking in the name of its many millions of members to allow the production and sale of ammunition that has no logical use except to penetrate armor and bulletproof vests is an outrage. . . .

It seems to me if the N.R.A. doesn't support a ban of the bullets, it will share the responsibility for the damage. That responsibility will trickle down to all its members, anyone who displays an N.R.A. sticker on his car windshield or wears an N.R.A. hat or carries an N.R.A. card. And I don't think N.R.A. members want it on their consciences. I know I don't.

To the N.R.A., there was no such thing as a good bullet or a bad bullet. Hence the organization viewed the Biaggi-Moynihan bill as a kind of Trojan horse, waiting to subvert the rights of all gun owners and deprive them of all ammunition. That was not, of course, the intent of the proposed legislation. Its main intent was to ban the circulation of armor-piercing bullets used in handguns. Biaggi, a former New York City policeman, who had been wounded several times in the line of duty, had more than just a casual interest in the legislation he proposed. And Moynihan reëmphasized to a Senate subcommittee in April of 1984, "Time and again, Congressman Biaggi and I have stressed that only bullets capable of penetrating body armor and designed to be fired from a handgun would be banned; rifle ammunition would not be covered." The N.R.A. was not persuaded by that statement. Therefore, recognizing the N.R.A.'s fears, and deciding that softer legislation was better than no legislation at all, Biaggi introduced a revised bill that



banned the manufacture, importation, and criminal use—but not the sale—of armor-piercing bullets. He was then able, in June of 1984, to write reassuringly to his congressional colleagues that the revised bill would not infringe upon "the rights of sportsmen and other legitimate gun users;" that it had been developed jointly by the Treasury and Justice Departments; that it was supported by the law-enforcement community; and that "even the N.R.A. has informed the Administration they will not oppose it." However, when the ban of the sale of the bullets was subsequently restored, the N.R.A. withdrew its support. So unless one side or the other alters its position, the prospect for passage remains uncertain.

THE pro-gun convictions of the N.R.A. are anchored in rights that it claims Americans have been granted by the Constitution. During the hearings in Brookhaven, an N.R.A. member said, "When you open a loophole with a law like this, you're just . . . unplugging a dike; you take your finger out of the hole and it's an approach, and eventually it erodes away everything, and we all go down the tubes." He was clearly referring to the Second Amendment, which states, "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." It is the principal clause of the Second Amendment that the pro-gun lobby lives by. Its words adorn the letterhead of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms and are inscribed in stone on the building that the N.R.A. owns and occupies in Washington. The gun-control movement, disagreeing with the pro-gun lobby's interpretation of that clause, has preferred to look at the full wording of the amendment. So has the Supreme Court, which ruled in 1939 (and has since declined to reconsider the matter) that the Second Amendment applies to the maintenance of a well-regulated militia, and not to any individual's right to keep and bear arms. Federal courts have abided by that ruling, and the American Bar Association has stated that the Second Amendment and similar provisions in state constitutions "have never prevented regulation of firearms."

Such opinions have failed to impress or influence the pro-gun leadership. It has continued to ignore or play down the Second Amendment's reference to

a militia, or, by niceties of historical interpretation, has sought to undermine it. In 1982, the Senate Subcommittee on the Constitution—chaired by Orrin G. Hatch, who is on the advisory council of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms—claimed to have found enough evidence in Colonial writings, in the debates over the ratification of the Constitution and the adoption of the Bill of Rights, as well as in modern testimony to justify an "individual" rather than a strictly "militia" reading of the Second Amendment. "What the Subcommittee . . . uncovered," Senator Hatch said, in a preface to his subcommittee's report, "was clear—and long-lost—proof that the second amendment to our Constitution was intended as an individual right of the American citizen to keep and carry arms in a peaceful manner, for protection of himself, his family, and his freedoms." Naturally, such a finding was profoundly reassuring to leaders of the pro-gun lobby. It quickened their hope that the Supreme Court might one day —perhaps soon—reverse itself on the Second Amendment, as it has done on a number of other constitutional questions.

AFTER the conservative landslide of 1980 had boosted the gun advocates' power on Capitol Hill and in the White House, prospects for new gun-control legislation seemed bleaker than ever. If most Americans still wanted stricter gun laws, it looked as though they would have to pass those laws themselves, at the state and local levels. It probably looked that way to the people of Morton Grove, a small town in Illinois, for in June of 1981 Morton Grove banned the sale and private possession of handguns within the town limits.

That initiative—probably the toughest and most uncompromising gun prohibition that had yet been passed in America—couldn't have come from a less likely community. Though Morton Grove is only sixteen miles from downtown Chicago, it is a quiet residential suburb. Its population is twenty-four thousand, and it has just a few commercial streets, the rest being lined mostly with single-family houses. Gun crimes were not unknown in the community, but they were never much of a problem, and certainly were never prevalent among its citizens. Neil Cashman was the senior trustee of Morton Grove, and, with white hair and a sober, avuncular manner, he

looked the part. A ban like Morton Grove's "had to start somewhere," Cashman later told a *Life* reporter. "Why not here?" But it wasn't to set an example for the rest of the country that he introduced the proposal that became law. He was simply trying to prevent Morton Grove—and especially its younger citizens—from developing too great a feeling for handguns. One resident had applied for permission to open a gun store, on a site not far from the town's junior high school. "We didn't want the kids looking in the window, dreaming of guns," Cashman said. "We wanted to stop that store." Since there were no legal grounds on which permission could be denied—no federal or state law, no local zoning statute—the trustees could stop the store only by outlawing the sale of handguns in their town; and on June 8, 1981, they passed two ordinances: one prohibiting the sale of handguns and the other banning private possession of handguns within the town limits. The trustees—realizing, perhaps, the national import of their action—then took two further steps. They voted to make copies of their ordinances available to any governmental body in the nation that requested them, and also passed this resolution: "That all other municipalities, counties and states in the United States and the U.S. Congress legislate against the manufacture, importation, sale and private possession of handguns, except for use by law enforcement and security personnel, military and sportsmen's clubs."

Morton Grove's ordinances, reported prominently in the press and on television, stirred a national response—not all of it, of course, favorable. Among the letters that poured into the offices of the trustees from across America were some addressed to "Moron Grove" or "Morton Grave"—and what their writers thought of the town's anti-gun law was couched in terms like "Nazi," "Communistic," "vile," and "filthy." The letters commending Morton Grove for its action included some from towns and localities that wished to use the ordinances as a model for gun-control legislation of their own. And within months stricter gun measures—some adhering to the letter of Morton Grove's, others merely reflecting its spirit—were proposed in Chicago, San Francisco, Detroit, and East St. Louis, Illinois, and in several other municipalities.

When the N.R.A. got wind of

Cashman's proposal, a few weeks before it was debated and passed, the organization swung into action, initiating its usual avalanche of letters and phone calls. It was too late. Minds in Morton Grove—the majority, anyway—were already made up. Defeated by this fait accompli, an experience to which they were unaccustomed, the national pro-gun leaders sought to overturn the Morton Grove ordinance banning the possession of handguns by challenging its constitutionality in the federal and state courts. But judicial opinion was firmly against them. In December of 1981, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois ruled that the Morton Grove ordinance did not violate either the federal Constitution or the constitution of the State of Illinois. In January of 1982, the circuit court of Cook County held that Morton Grove's ordinance infringed upon no guarantees of the Illinois constitution. In December of that year, the United States Court of Appeals in Chicago upheld the ruling made by the district court in 1981. And in March of 1983 the Court of Appeals again ruled in favor of the ordinance. This last ruling was a severe blow to the pro-gun lobby, because it had now exhausted its appeals at the federal level below the Supreme Court. But the pro-gun movement vowed to take its fight all the way—for, according to one of its spokesmen, the movement regarded the Morton Grove law as "the most dangerous attack ever staged against the right to keep and bear arms." Obviously, that right hadn't appealed very strongly to the trustees and citizens of Morton Grove. They seem to

have felt more strongly about their right to fear arms and their right to inscribe that fear in the democratic arrangements by which they govern themselves. Part of their motivation may be inferred from an article that one of the trustees later wrote for a Chicago newspaper. "What happened in Morton Grove was not extraordinary," he said. "It was, in fact, a textbook civics-class exercise in American government at its best."

Morton Grove provided the national gun-control movement with an impressive victory. Michael Beard, of the National Coalition to Ban Handguns, called it "a symbolic message that is being sent to public officials that they can do something about handgun problems." And, in view of the number of communities that followed Morton Grove's lead, it was clear that public officials had not ignored the message. An even more striking development occurred in February of 1982, when a jury in Washington, D.C., awarded more than two million dollars to the family of a man who had been shot and killed with a pistol stolen from the N.R.A.'s headquarters. (The award was later set aside, when a United States district-court judge ruled that the N.R.A. could not be held legally responsible for the murder.) Several months later, James Brady, the White House press secretary who was critically wounded in the assassination attempt on President Reagan, filed a hundred-million-dollar damage claim against the manufacturer and assembler of Hinckley's Saturday-night special. And by the summer of 1983 a Dallas lawyer named Windle Turley, who had helped initiate the new product-liability strategy, had filed more than twenty suits seeking to hold handgun-makers and suppliers liable not only for murders and felonious injuries but also for accidents and suicides committed with their weapons.

But Michael Beard also asserted that Morton Grove "clearly marks a turning point" in the national struggle for handgun-control laws, and this assertion was overoptimistic. The evidence since then (except for court rulings on the Morton Grove ordinance) has failed to support his judgment. There has been no sign yet that the message from Morton Grove was heard in Congress. Morton Grove hasn't noticeably improved the chances of the Kennedy-Rodino handgun-control bill, and it hasn't diminished support for McClure-Volkmer, the bill

seeking to weaken the Gun Control Act of 1968. San Francisco's ban on the possession of handguns, which followed Morton Grove's (and the murder of Mayor George Moscone and Harvey Milk, a city supervisor), was overturned by California's Court of Appeal. And, in direct rebuttal to Morton Grove and the towns that have followed it, several communities have flaunted their Second Amendment "rights" by passing laws to compel their citizens to own firearms.

The first and most widely publicized of these cases was in Kennesaw, Georgia, which, with a population of five thousand, was a much smaller town than Morton Grove. In 1982, Kennesaw enacted an ordinance requiring the head of every household to own a gun and ammunition. That went beyond the most extreme of previous pro-gun demands, and looked to many outsiders like a copycat law in reverse —or a mere publicity stunt. Whatever the motivation, Kennesaw and its mayor, Darvin Purdy, attracted almost as much national attention as Morton Grove had. Even the New York *Times* devoted an editorial to Kennesaw. Mayor Purdy appeared on national television and also released the text of a letter he had mailed to Mayor Dianne Feinstein, of San Francisco, requesting that "you allow us to have your surrendered and confiscated weapons, so that we may issue them to our indigent citizens." But in Kennesaw itself there were serious questions about the law. Could it be enforced? Would the head of a family be fined or imprisoned for refusing to keep a gun in the house? Apparently not; drafters of the law had been careful to omit any penalty. "It's gonna be a tough one to enforce," the town's police chief said soon after the ordinance was passed. "You can't walk into people's homes and ask to see their gun." He added, however, that Kennesaw stood ready to "supply just about any sort of firearm" to residents who lacked the funds to purchase their own. To some residents of Kennesaw, the law seemed downright silly. "What are they going to do next?" a local educator asked. "Order everybody to buy a pickup truck to escape in case of a nuclear holocaust? . . . Here we were, trying to live down a redneck image, and they do this. It's kind of crazy." A businessman added, "This just makes us the laughingstock of the whole country."

Well, not of the whole country:

*Point Blank*, the newsletter of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, praised the Kennesaw ordinance, calling it "a solid counter to the Morton Grove handgun ban," and added, "The fight goes on around the country." And so it did. "KENNESAW-TYPE GUN LAW SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE," declared a headline in the newspaper *Gun Week* in July of 1982. "Such laws have now been passed in Kennesaw, Franklintown, Pa., Hollister, Mo., Chiloquin, Ore., and Palmer, Ill.," the accompanying story pointed out. "They are being considered in a number of towns, including Oroville, Calif., Bliss, Idaho, and Taylorville, Ill." And a number of other localities have since proposed or adopted gun codes similar to Kennesaw's. The news was a clear sign that the N.R.A. and its allies had recovered from the shock of Morton Grove.

IN September of 1983, Michael Korda, a novelist and publishing-house editor in New York, wrote an article for the N.R.A.'s *Reports from Washington* in which he agreed with some of the N.R.A.'s positions on gun control. The association also ran Korda's article, under the heading "Guns Are Not the Problem," as an advertisement in a number of magazines, including *The New Republic*—presumably because Korda's credentials are those of an urban intellectual, because urban intellectuals are generally seen to be liberal, and because liberals are generally deemed to be in favor of gun control. As it happens, Korda is a gun collector, a target shooter, and a life member of the N.R.A., but most readers, unaware of all this, were surprised to see his pro-gun statement.

Some time before the article appeared, Korda, in a conversation at his office, spelled out his views. "When people talk about guns, what are they really talking about?" he asked. "They're talking about a certain American penchant for violence. They're talking about the conflict between the old, rural view of American life and the modern, urban view of American life. They're talking about liberal and conservative attitudes toward self-defense and crime. They're talking about crime and about standing up for their rights to the extreme. They're talking about all sorts of issues that are very intense in American life—including, I need hardly say, racism—and all of which boil down to guns and gun control. The guns themselves have never struck me as being very interesting or, in real American terms, very controversial. The truth of the matter is that when people talk about gun control they're really talking about other things. Conservatives are talking about constitutional rights. Rural people are talking about looking after themselves. Big-city people are talking about what are seen as person-to-person crimes —seen by white people as being inflicted on them largely by blacks, and seen by black people as being inflicted largely on blacks by blacks. And city people, if they're liberal, are also thinking about a certain turning away from old American values, which are basically and predominantly rural."

Korda went on to say, "What applies to a city like New York does not, it seems to me, apply as easily to a state like Montana. What applies to Montana does not apply as easily to a state like Texas or Mississippi. And local custom, local tradition, local law enforcement vary so much that it is really very hard to talk about a national gun policy—which I think everybody in the federal government does more or less badly. There is no reason to suppose that a national gun policy would be better administered than a national anything-else policy—energy policy, civil-rights policy, or whatever. So I'm not so sure that the system we have—which is that gun laws are left largely to local communities—doesn't in some ways make the most sense. And while I'm not in favor of the decision of the Morton Grove people it seems to me that within whatever the constitutional limits turn out to be—it may well be that the Constitution does not give a community the right to mandate or to demand that it give up its guns entirely—if Morton Grove is silly, Kennesaw is sillier. The decision as to whether a person wants to arm himself or herself seems to me a very personal one, like a lot of other things. I don't think it should be managed by the state. I don't think it should be pre-

vented by the state. I think there's a case to be made that, given the type of environment, the political traditions, and so forth, of various areas, it can be regulated by the state, just as the state regulates cars."

After a pause, Korda continued, "One of the problems I have, as a logical person, is that gun-control laws as such don't seem to do what gun-control advocates think they will do. They don't diminish homicides, reduce crime, or cut down the number of deaths. The reason for that is that those deaths and crimes have absolutely nothing to do with gun-control laws. They have to do with poverty, urban environment, density of population, address, and so forth. . . . We don't have a gun problem in the United States. We have a problem of violence, a problem of law enforcement, and a problem that we are absolutely unwilling to address or solve—and that problem is not guns but youth unemployment, poverty, and so forth. . . . I feel very strongly that the crux of the problem lies in the fact that we have come to accept the criminal use of guns as natural and normal. I think it is outrageous that a guy who uses a gun in a crime should be able to plea-bargain that down to a misdemeanor. I think if you commit a crime with a gun you ought to go up for ten years. And if you shoot or kill somebody with a gun you should get at least a life sentence. And while I myself am not convinced that capital punishment is a good idea or a moral idea—or, indeed, that it works—it may well be that it's worth a try, if only to see whether it might work under some conditions. The thing is that liberals—and I'm not a totally illiberal person, and I should make it reasonably clear that I'm not a right-wing conservative—tend to come down in favor of gun control because, I think, gun control avoids certain very uncomfortable issues. One is the ethnic issue, which is that the fear of crime is of black crime against white people, whereas the reality of crime, though nobody wants to admit it, is, if you look at the statistics, that it's mostly black crime against black people. And this is for the very good reason that black people cannot get jobs, they cannot get an education, they have no future, and under the present Administration they can see that things are going to get even worse. To address the real social issues is to see that we are not educating black children fast enough, and that even if we did educate them we are not providing jobs or incentives for them, and that we are not rebuilding their neighborhoods and that we have allowed the drug thing to become so rooted in their lives that it is an ineradicable part of urban life."

IN November of 1982, a referendum called Proposition 15, which was meant to limit the number of privately held handguns, was put before the voters of California. It required all owners to register their weapons, and sought a jail term of six months for anyone found carrying an unregistered and concealable handgun. California, with more than four million privately held handguns, was a fitting stage for what—after Morton Grove and Kennesaw—was billed as a decisive showdown in the national gun-control war. And, with so much at stake, both the pro-gun lobby and the anti-gun movement threw themselves energetically into the Proposition 15 campaign. An N.R.A. spokesman called Proposition 15 "the most serious threat to firearms that has ever come down the road." And Pete Shields, of Handgun Control, Inc., said of the proposition, "If it succeeds in California, I predict it will . . . sweep across the country. If it fails, the invincibility of the gun lobby will be touted again."

Leading the fight for the proposition was a group called Californians Against Street Crime, which had obtained more than six hundred thousand signatures to place the proposition on the state ballot; and playing supportive roles were Handgun Control, Inc., the National Coalition to Ban Handguns, and hundreds of prominent Californians, a number of them from Hollywood. Though these organizations and individuals contributed about two million dollars to the proposition's campaign chest, the sum was considerably smaller than the more than seven and a half million that the opposition raised and spent. Organized as a coalition called Citizens Against the Gun Initiative, the opposition included Gun Owners of California, the California Rifle and Pistol Association, the Second Amendment Foundation, the Citizens Com-

mittee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, and the National Rifle Association. That aggregation also drew its share of support from Hollywood celebrities, one of whom, Roy Rogers, declared in the course of the campaign, "They'll have to shoot me first to take my gun."

In that shoot-out, it was Proposition 15 that was killed: Californians rejected it on November 2nd by nearly two to one. Having crushed its opponents, the pro-gun lobby naturally declared that the vote in California was a vote for and about America, a vindication of the lobby's crusade to preserve for all Americans the right to own and use whatever guns they chose. On the same day that Californians went to the polls, residents of New Hampshire and Nevada voted overwhelmingly to add to their state constitutions explicit provisions recognizing their right to keep and bear arms. "In crucial votes in three states," Alan Gottlieb said of the day's events, "Americans made it very plain that they will brook no interference with their right to keep and bear arms." He went on, "These votes clearly show that the anti-gun forces have been misrepresenting their polls and statistics for years. Where is their much-proclaimed majority of Americans in favor of gun control? If they're out there, they certainly don't vote. . . . Why don't they listen to the will of the majority and just leave everybody alone?" According to the *Times*, John M. Snyder, the chief lobbyist for the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, was sending out a Christmas card for 1982 that "showed Santa Claus with a sack full of pistols marked 'Morton Grove;' " the *Times* explained, "Santa was announcing his departure for California, a state that had just defeated a gun-control proposition."

The gun-control forces had been humiliated by their defeat in California. Victor Palmieri, a San Francisco executive, who had chaired the campaign for Proposition 15, confessed to a feeling of embarrassment, and described the failure as a sort of Bay of Pigs. John Phillips, a Los Angeles lawyer, who had drafted the proposition and directed the campaign to obtain its passage, said, "The N.R.A. is going to make a lot of noise about this over the next few years. I'm sad about that." Alan Gottlieb appeared to be right about at least one thing: if it was true that, as the polls had been saying for years, a majority of Americans favored gun control, then "they cer-

tainly don't vote." And, considering the recent mood and makeup of Congress, that is a dismal omen for the future of federal gun-control legislation in the United States. In assessing the cause of his movement's defeat in California, Pete Shields didn't attribute it to the voting habits of people who express themselves in favor of gun control but do not act upon their wishes in the polling booths; apparently, he either overlooked that factor or was tacitly acknowledging a displeasing circumstance. Instead, he suggested that the gun-control forces had been overpowered by the superior financial muscle of the opposition. Whether the four-to-one disparity in resources will be narrowed in the near future seems doubtful. Shields did not surrender his optimism, however. When he was asked if his movement would fight another day, he replied, "You're damn right we will, but not before we have the money in hand." (Till that day arrives, the movement for gun control might take grim notice of what John Hinckley has been quoted as saying from his place of incarceration: "If somebody like me can buy six Saturday-night specials with ease, there is something drastically wrong. I'm considering giving my support to the National Coalition to Ban Handguns.")

The gun-control movement might draw a measure of comfort from what the Supreme Court eventually decided about the case of Morton Grove. "March 7, 1983, will live in infamy," the N.R.A.'s Warren Cassidy had said when he learned of the second ruling of the United States Court of Appeals in Chicago. "It was a day of darkness for the people of Morton Grove, for they have been robbed of a precious right enjoyed by all citizens of this country since the adoption of the Bill of Rights and the abolition of slavery. It was a day of darkness for the courts of this country. . . . And, perhaps most of all, it was a day of darkness for our United States Constitution as well. . . . No nation which fancies itself as having a government of laws, and not of men, can endure such deliberate suppression of the rights of the majority in order to satisfy the orchestrated clamor of a minority of political extremists. After agonizing deliberation, it now appears that the National Rifle Association, as the organization which has always championed the right of law-abiding citizens to own and use firearms, must seek to have this outrageous decision overturned by the

United States Supreme Court." At the end of May, the N.R.A. filed a petition before the Supreme Court asking the Court—according to *Reports from Washington*—to consider "whether the lower federal courts should have abstained from ruling on the Morton Grove case . . . and whether the Second and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution effectively prohibit state and local governments from enacting gun bans." The Supreme Court remained silent on the matter, however. In October of 1983, it in effect dismissed the N.R.A. petition, by declining to rule on the Court of Appeals opinion. This was one of the few serious setbacks the gun lobby had suffered in recent years. From one of the most conservative courts in decades the lobby had hoped for a historic opinion, upholding once and for all its own interpretation of the Second Amendment. *Point Blank* complained that the Supreme Court, by its refusal to hear the case, was "ducking the issue of gun control." And the magazine continued, "Its action underscores the fact that the people no longer can rely on the courts to protect them in the maintenance of their rights. The people have to do that themselves, hopefully through their elected representatives in Congress. That is why pro-gun legislation now pending before Congress is so important, indeed, necessary."

THE most important piece of pro-gun legislation was, of course, the McClure-Volkmer bill, which the President had promised to sign if it should be passed. But as the pro-gun lobby regrouped to continue its struggle against handgun control it could take encouragement not only from the President's promise to sign the McClure-Volkmer bill but also from the memory of an address he had delivered to the hundred-and-twelfth annual meeting of the N.R.A., in May, 1983. To a gathering of some four thousand members and supporters, in Phoenix, Arizona, President Reagan said, "It does my spirit good to be with people who never lose faith in America, who never stop believing in her future, and who never back down one inch from defending the constitutional freedoms that are every American's birthright." He went on to say, "Being a part of this group, you know that good organizations don't just happen. They take root in a body of shared beliefs. They grow from strong leadership with vision,

initiative, and determination to reach great goals. And what you've accomplished speaks for itself—more than two and a half million members, and the N.R.A.'s getting stronger every day." The President cited the defeat of Proposition 15 as proof of the N.R.A.'s growing strength. Then he said, "It is a nasty truth, but those who seek to inflict harm are not fazed by gun-control laws. I happen to know this from personal experience." He went on, "By the way, the Constitution does not say that government shall decree the right to keep and bear arms. The Constitution says '. . . the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed.' " The President added that "no group does more" than the N.R.A. "to promote gun safety and respect for the laws of this land," and he thanked the organization. "Still," he said, "we've both heard the charge that supporting gun owners' rights encourages a violent, shoot-'em-up society. But just a minute. Don't they understand that most violent crimes are not committed by decent, law-abiding citizens? They're committed by career criminals. Guns don't make criminals. Hard-core criminals use guns. And locking them up, the hard-core criminals up, and throwing away the key is the best gun-control law we could ever have."

Before the President spoke, people entering the hall had been closely monitored by metal detectors. A sign posted near the entrance said, "Due to Presidential security reasons: No guns, knives, or tear gas will be allowed in the assembly hall." Perhaps it was odd that an organization of legal gun owners—and one so fond of President Reagan—should have found it necessary to issue such instructions to its membership. A resident of Suffield, Connecticut, put it this way, in a letter to the *Times*: "I note that metal detectors were used to screen the President's audience in Phoenix and that, naturally, no weapons of any type were allowed. Here we see at work essential hypocrisy: Gun control is utilized when the President makes a speech stating that he does not believe in gun control." —Jervis Anderson

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1. To be sure, the new Miss America might not qualify for a centerfold in The New Yorker. A practicing Mormon, she prays daily and is a churchgoer. Golda Meir was among her role models. She doesn't gamble, or believe in marijuana or premarital sex.—*Newsday*.

Nonsense. She's perfect!

**State University of New York at Buffalo**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

November 20, 1984

Dr. George Gerbner
Annenberg School of
Communications
The University of
Pennsylvania
3620 Walnut Street C5
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
19104-3858

Dear George:

Enclosed is a check for $1,066.24, including both reimbursement of the expenses you incurred in your visit to Buffalo to address the October 26 Breakfast Seminar, and an honorarium of $1,000. The latter (alone) will be reported by the Foundation that administers our account to the IRS, and you will also receive a 1099 from them after the turn of the year.

Both Wes Rowland and I deeply appreciate your contribution to this year's Series. The response to your seminar has been outstanding: those who attended obviously found your presentation sparkling both in substance and in delivery. We thank you.

Our best wishes to you for happy holidays as the season is upon us. I trust our paths will cross again.

Sincerely,

Walter C. Hobbs

xc: A. Westley Rowland

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THE NATION'S NEWSPAPER
USA TODAY
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**—Allen H. Neuharth**
**Chairman and Founder**
**Sept. 15, 1982**

John C. Quinn
Editor

John Seigenthaler
Editorial Director

# OPINION

## The Debate: VIOLENCE ON TV

Today's debate includes our opinion that the way to reduce violence in television is to encourage voluntary restraints, not new laws to regulate programs, an opposing view from Illinois, other views from Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York, and voices from across the USA.

# Laws are no way to curb TV violence

*The A-Team* is on television tonight, bringing its mix of militaristic mayhem into millions of living rooms.

Everywhere a viewer looks, on every channel, there is violence. On *Hill Street Blues* last week, a judge sprayed his courtroom with a machine gun.

*Mike Hammer* is about a private eye who enjoys revenge — with a large caliber handgun. And the recent TV movie *Burning Bed* showed family violence in gruesome detail.

The National Coalition on Television Violence has charged that there is more prime-time TV violence on the air this fall than ever. It claims nearly two-thirds of all prime-time programs are violent.

That's probably true. But the coalition also counts as "violent" a TV show in which Donald Duck spanked his nephews. That's a silly practice that hurts its credibility.

For 20 years researchers have been studying TV violence. They still lack hard evidence that fantasy violence causes real violence. There is anecdotal evidence, however, that life imitates art.

After *Burning Bed* was broadcast, a Milwaukee man was charged with setting his estranged wife afire. The Russian Roulette scene in the movie *Deer Hunter* led some to mimic it — and die.

Television sets are on an average of seven hours a day. Children who watch thousands of violent scenes may not understand the real pain of violence. They may become more tolerant of terror.

Some believe violence on television is so harmful they want Congress to write new laws to try to counter it.

That would be a mistake. It could lead to a government censor who would choose what we, the people, are free to see. It would be an Orwellian nightmare, where bureaucrats decided what was violent and what was not.

Fortunately, every TV comes equipped with its own censor built right in — the on/off switch.

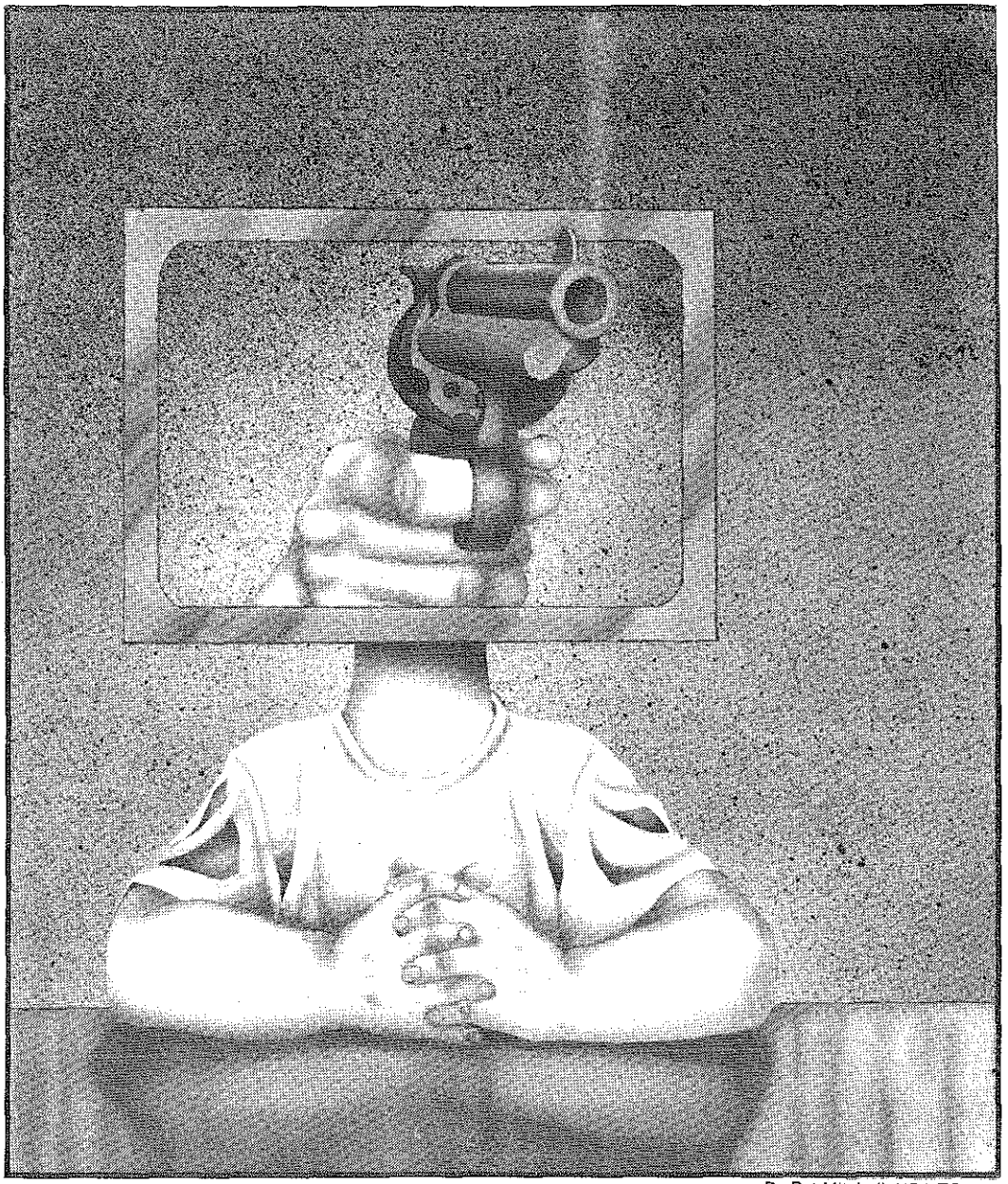
It is the responsibility of sensible citizens and caring parents to use that switch to determine for themselves how much televised violence they will tolerate in their homes.

TV broadcasters — the networks and producers — should remember that Congress is always eager to jump on issues that will let it respond to the mood of the moment.

If enough people are upset by violence on television, and if the networks continue to do little or nothing about it, Congress may write new laws to control it.

When programs include 30 or 40 violent acts an hour — and many do — clearly there is too much mayhem on television. Surely broadcasters are intelligent enough to create programs that will attract viewers without relying on that hackneyed formula.

If they don't, they will invite restrictive regulation that no one wants — and that could do more damage than mindless programs.



By Pat Mitchell, USA TODAY

**EDGAR BERMAN**

Guest columnist

# Violence by proxy is good for us

LUTHERVILLE, Md. — If those nervous Nellies who want to suppress sex and violence on TV had lived 400 years ago, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* would have never made the stage. They don't realize that violence by proxy is man's last, best hope to relieve his natural lust for gore and mayhem.

Actually, if we don't soon get more of *Riptide* and *Hill Street Blues*, life on the streets won't be worth a plugged nickel.

We were born red in tooth and nail, and if we don't get our quota of blood and guts via football, hockey and *The Dukes of Hazzard*, we'll surely get it on the streets.

In ancient times, we tempered our instincts for the real thing with sellout crowds at crucifixions. As we became more civilized, we loosened pent-up desires by screaming for Christian blood in the coliseums.

But with our bigness today, our only salvation is through the mass media. Watching *The A-Team* break bones and split skulls vicariously slakes our thirst for real blood.

The nightly news tries to help with battle scenes of the blue plate war of the day — and replays of the world wars when things get dull. But even so, the prime time of death and destruction wasn't enough. So we invented a 24-hour cable TV service for trauma.

However, for the psychology of ersatz violence to really take effect, we must begin a Head-start program for the kiddies. With the tots' natural instinct to tear off butterfly wings and garrote kittens, mild stuff like *Sesame Street* and Donald Duck must go. *Hawaiian Heat* would be more like it.

However, those do-gooders also can't see the need for more sex on the tube. But how else can we replenish our population loss from the yearly crime increase? The solution lies in more explicit TV sex rather than just the innuendos of incest and adultery on *Dynasty* and the soaps. Pornography and XXX-rated movies have helped, but only stuff like *Deep Throat* can do the trick.

However, I'm sure our clean livers will knock off this plan of survival. Worse yet, it'll be a great blow to the average TV fan's dream of an age of nefarious

*Edgar Berman is an author and satirist.*

GEORGE GERBNER
Guest columnist

# TV distorts world, makes many fearful

PHILADELPHIA — The debate about television violence has become a tedious and frustrating charade.

Networks insist that violence does not "cause" most real violence — something no responsible researcher ever claimed.

Politicians exploit the issue as a safe legislative dead-end.

Reformers use it to press their claims.

Social scientists note the obvious fact that growing up viewing 18 acts of violence and at least two entertaining murders on an average evening teaches acceptance of violent solutions and ways of life.

But that is not the main lesson of television violence. Our long-range research project called Cultural Indicators, now in its 17th year, shows even more pervasive and far-reaching associations.

With the set on for seven hours a day in the average home, the tidal wave of television violence (that shows no sign of receding) tends to cultivate a sense of living in a mean world of danger and insecurity.

The more we watch television the more we demand protection and accept repression if it promises to alleviate insecurity.

*George Gerbner is professor of communications and dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania.*

Far from only creating threats to the social order, our research shows that violence tends also to make heavy viewers more dependent and more accepting of inequity and injustice than are light viewers in the same types of homes and neighborhoods.

Violence demonstrates and perpetuates a system of power. It teaches who can get away with what against whom.

Our study of thousands of TV drama characters shows the "pecking order" of the mean world of television. TV subjects women, minorities, poor, and young or old people to a higher rate of victimization (compared to their ability to inflict violence) than middle class white males in the prime of life.

Domination and control is the message behind the superficial debate that focuses only on occasional aggression — but ignores this pattern of pervasive victimization.

## QUOTELINES

"The fantasy mayhem on the television screen helps the child discharge tensions . . . (and) very rarely translates into inappropriate or aggressive acts."

*— Jib Fowles, University of Houston*

"This diet of (TV) violence has created an immunity to the horror of violence. The young child may even come to believe that the use of violence is justified."

*— Robert J. Keeshan, "Captain Kangaroo"*

"The consensus among most researchers is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior . . ."

*— National Institute of Mental Health*

"Now that we are reasonably certain that televised violence can increase aggressive tendencies in some children, we will have to manage our program planning accordingly."

*— Elton H. Rule, president, ABC*

## ONE LINE ON THE NEWS

■ In a newspaper interview, Rep. Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., called Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kansas, the "tax collector for the welfare state."

*That's why they call his wife Libby Dole.*

**WILLIAM S. RUBENS**
Guest columnist

# No proof that TV causes violence

NEW YORK CITY — For years, the conventional wisdom of television's impact on society — even among academicians — has been that, somehow, television viewing has a strong effect on real-life aggression.

The big news today from the academic world is that wisdom is being revealed for exactly what it is: a mere convention, and not good science.

As Professor Jonathan Freedman of the University of Toronto put it in the American Psychological Association's *Psychological Bulletin*, "the available literature does not support the hypothesis that viewing violence on television causes an increase in subsequent aggression in the real world."

Freedman goes on to say that the assertion that television viewing causes later aggression remains a plausible hypothesis, "but one for which there is, as yet, little evidence." Such a view is a long, long step from the usual assertions about television and aggression.

Even as recently as two years ago, you'd find the National Institute of Mental Health offering the conventional wisdom as something akin to fact. Today, for the best social scientists, it is only an interesting hypothesis.

What has brought about this great change? Two things, really.

■ New analytic methods in the social sciences have exposed serious weaknesses of past research.

■ New and better studies show only very small relationships between television and aggression — and it is not at all clear that these relationships mean that television has an effect on aggression.

Freedman thinks that the new studies do not show that television affects later behavior. One of these new studies was conducted by NBC. It's called *Television and Aggression: A Panel Study* (Academic Press, 1982). That study, as you might expect from its sponsorship, was subjected to the most intense — and sometimes skeptical — scientific scrutiny.

It is now widely regarded as a major contribution to the television and aggression literature. One of the lessons of that study is that private sector sponsorhip does not necessarily make for bad science. Nor does university affiliation necessarily make for good science.

But more is at stake here than academic issues. As Freedman points out, the television-and-aggression issue is also of great practical and political importance. Good public policy ought to follow from good science. And, as Freedman showed, the conventional wisdom is not good science.

*William S. Rubens is vice president/research for the National Broadcasting Co.*

THOMAS RADECKI

**An opposing view**

# New laws to control TV violence needed

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Primetime TV violence has increased 65 percent since 1980 to an all-time high.

*The Dukes of Hazzard* was the second most violent program in 1980. *The Dukes* today contains the same amount of violence as then, but ranks only 21st in violence among 1984 programs.

Sixty-four percent of prime time network programming now features scenes high in violence, averaging 9.4 acts of violence per viewing hour.

Brutal revenge and sexual sadism have also increased to record levels in Hollywood movies — a major part of TV's programming base. In 1970, only 6 percent of box office reciepts went into horror and violent science fiction films. Now, over 30 percent does. Violence in PG and R rated movies has reached record highs.

This intense violence is now brought into the American home by pay cable television. Violence in movie videos, rock music lyrics, pornography and children's toys has increased to record levels following televison's example.

The National Institute of Mental Health in 1982 found the evidence of harmful effects from violent programming on normal viewers to be "overwhelming."

In 1983, Dr. Thomas Cooke of Northwestern University reported for the Justice Department that "virtually 100 percent of aggression researchers agree there is a cause-effect relationship between the consumption of violent entertainment and an increased tendency to angry and violent behavior."

This year, the U.S. attorney general's task force on family violence reported it, too, has found "overwhelming" evidence that TV and movie violence are playing a role in the high violence levels in the American home.

A 22-year study of children consuming high levels of violent entertainment in 1960 found they were convicted of 150 percent more criminal offenses during their adult lives than were other children from the same classrooms.

Based on the available scientific information, I estimate that 25 percent to 50 percent of the violence in our country is coming from the culture of violence that has been established and is reinforced daily by violent entertainment.

After 13 congressional hearings without any action, it is time the American people got the honest truth.

The National Coalition on Television Violence has asked the Senate subcommittee on juvenile justice for legislation to require counteradvertising. For every three ads on TV promoting violent entertainment, one free advertising slot would be given to get out the surgeon general's message that violent entertainment has a harmful, unconscious effect on normal adult and children viewers.

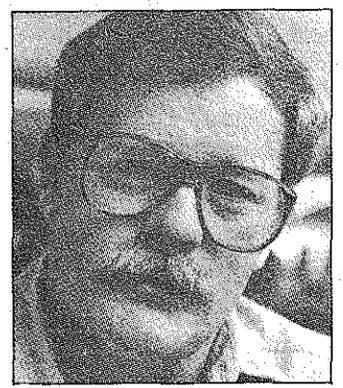
In addition, we want legislation to require nonviolent music video program hours and to require a nonviolent pay cable movie channel wherever a violent one is offered.

It is time congressmen stopped taking huge campaign contributions from the TV and movie industry and start being responsible to the people. In a democracy, the people have a right to honest information in viewing alternatives.

TV's first generation has grown up to be the most violent generation of adults in our history, with rape and assault rates 500 percent higher per capita than their parents' generation. One inexpensive step to help stop this epidemic is to decrease the promotion of violence by our TV and movie industries.

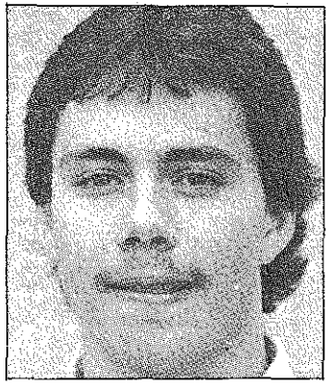
*Dr. Thomas Radecki, a psychiatrist at the University of Illinois School of Medicine, is chairman of the National Coalition on Television Violence.*

# VOICES FROM ACROSS THE USA/What do you think about violence on television?



***RICHARD MAYHEW,** 39*
*Pilot*
*Burlington, Vt.*

TV is violent, but viewers do have a choice: Either they choose to watch TV violence, or they choose not to. If the programming is offensive, they always have the opportunity to switch channels or to turn off the set. But the government shouldn't be involved. I don't want the government to make that decision for me.



***DAVID MILLS,** 20*
*Student*
*Portland, Ore.*

I've seen enough violence on TV to know that it influences everyone who watches it — adults and children alike. People begin to accept the standards that are set before them on TV — the violence, the sex and the lack of morals. The more they watch, the more it becomes a natural, acceptable part of their lives.

***DEBBI CULVER,** 25*
*Housekeeper*
*Laurel, Md.*

Of course there's a lot of violence on television, but I think adults can handle it. There's violence in real life, too. Most people who watch violent programs on TV realize that it's just fiction. Adults are not as influenced by violence on television as young kids, but even children realize that what they see on TV is not real.

***JAMES TAYLOR,** 72*
*Teacher*
*Jackson, Tenn.*

Violence on TV rubs off on children. When kids become violent for unexplained reasons, and their parents ask them why they did it, the answer is "I don't know. Just because." TV influences a child's behavior in subtle ways. Years ago, there were a few fist fights on TV and a little shooting, but nothing like it is today.

***ROSALIE MARTIN,** 66*
*Condominium manager*
*Algoma, Wis.*

Violence on TV and in the media incites people to duplicate what they see in real life. The examples include the gasoline torching of a spouse and a pool table rape. I'm sickened when I see violence on TV, and when I do, I turn off the set for the entire evening. I'd much rather enjoy reading a good book.

***DEANNE BEIER,** 45*
*Model*
*Richmond, Ind.*

There's a lot of TV violence, but as parents, we have the option to choose which programs our children will watch. If parents feel that what their children are watching is too violent, they have the choice of turning off the set. Parents have the ultimate responsibility of monitoring what our children see on TV.

***JERRY MOORE,** 35*
*Advertising executive*
*Greensboro, N.C.*

Too much violence on TV distorts a child's reality. A character on TV could be alive one day, and dead the next. So violence, to a child, becomes experimental in nature. They don't really know what it is. I'm opposed to government censorship. This should be a self-regulatory effort on the part of the broadcast industry.