



# EQUAL ACCESS

Office of Women's Activities

Vol. 2/No. 3

May/June 1978

## Women and Minorities "Underrepresented" In Sample of PTV Programs

In a 1977 sample of nationally aired public television programs "women and minority groups did not get as much attention as males and whites" according to a recent report of the Institute for Applied Communication Studies at the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania.

The research, conducted under a \$20,000 grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, was designed to provide CPB's Office of Women's Activities and the 1978 Task Force on Minorities in Public Broadcasting with statistical data on the portrayal of women and minorities in public television programs. The CPB Office of Women's Activities will use the data to assess progress in implementing the programming recommendations of the 1975 Task Force on Women in Public Broadcasting.

The data focus on "the demography and roles of the characters who populate the world of public broadcasting, as well as thematic and structural aspects of these programs." The Institute analyzed public television programs aired nationally during the week of January 23, 1977 to January 29, 1977. This particular week was chosen by CPB to provide a sample closely approximating that used in 1975 by the Task Force on Women in Public Broadcasting.

The 1977 sample included 28 adult programs (20-1/2 hours) and 534 segments from 25 children's programs (17 hours). Of the 534 segments of children's programs viewed, over 50 per cent of the segments came from five episodes of *Sesame Street* and five episodes of *The Electric Company*.

More than two-thirds of the adult programs sampled fell into the category of general adult programming. One-tenth were music and/or dance programs and one-fifth were dramatic in theme. The adult programming was targeted for a general audience—only one program was aimed specifically at a minority group.

Women were underrepresented in each of three types of adult programming sampled. Only 27.9 per cent of the total characters in the 1977 sample were women. Still, in general adult programming specifically, women were better represented in 1977 than 1975. The 1977 data reveal that

29.1 per cent of the characters in this category were women, an improvement from 1975 when only 15 per cent of the characters in this category were women.

Minority group members were more representative of their numbers within the population in the three categories of adult programming sampled. In general adult programming 86.5 per cent of the characters were white, 7.8 per cent were black, and 5.6 per cent were classified as either Native American, Asian/ or Hispanic. A similar distribution existed in the dramatic programming sampled.

The majority of all characters, both male and female, in the general adult and dramatic programs sampled were cast in minor roles (as opposed to major or supporting roles). Still, proportionately fewer women than men assumed these minor roles. Blacks in general adult programs were more likely to serve in supporting roles than in major roles and

(see *Annenberg data*, page 2)

### OWA Cites Programming as Top Priority

A top priority of CPB's Office of Women's Activities (OWA) in FY 79 will be the full and equal integration of women in public television and radio programming. Said Audrey Rowe, Director of the OWA: "The recently completed Annenberg study on nationally aired public television programming indicates that some progress has been made—there has been some improvement since 1975. But it demonstrates that we have some way to go in the portrayal of women. And one of the goals of this office and CPB is to continue our active role to achieve parity."

In 1977 the OWA developed a manual on the fair and equal treatment of women in programming. In FY 79 the OWA hopes to integrate some of the manual's guidelines into an audio/video presentation on effective methods of portraying women. The tape would be utilized in the spring of 1979 at the program managers meetings.

The OWA is also considering providing technical assistance to female writers and producers  
(see *Office of Women's Activities*, page 4)

## REQUEST FOR RESEARCH

The Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press (WIFP), a tax-exempt, non-profit organization, has begun a long-range study of the United States communications system. WIFP will publish the results of the research in the next few years in a series entitled *The Source of Power: A Series of Books for Women*. Research in pursuit of an M.A. or Ph.D., as well as non-academic manuscripts, should be submitted to WIFP for consideration for publication in the series. All manuscripts must conform to the criteria outlined in WIFP's four-page "Call for Research." For a copy of the "Call for Research" and additional information, write: Dr. Donna Allen, Director, WIFP, 3306 Ross Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

*(Annenberg data, from page 1)*

no minority group members were portrayed in major roles in the dramatic programs sampled.

Family membership did not figure as an important aspect of characterization in public television programs sampled. Most of the characters in the adult sample could not be reliably coded on marital status, on their position within a family, or on having children. Similarly, violence was not seen as an important element in character portrayal.

The children's programs sampled appeared to be more racially and sexually balanced than the adult programs, even though many of the characters could not be classified as belonging to any specific racial or sexual group.

Women comprised 35.2 per cent of the character population in the children's programs, men 58.6 per cent, and characters whose sex could not be determined constituted 6.1 per cent of the total.

Whites comprised 36.7 per cent of the character population in the children's programs sampled, blacks 19.5 per cent, Hispanics 13.4 per cent, and Asians 3.9 per cent. A little more than one per cent of the characters belonged to some other racial group and at least a quarter of the characters could not be identified with any specific racial group.

Most of the characters (74.8 per cent) populating the children's programs were not seen working at an occupation. Still, the few male and female characters who were seen working were employed in "masculine" occupations. Occupations were classified as either "male", "female", or "neutral". The proportion of female characters classified as having "male" jobs increased from 1975 to 1977. Only 17.0 per cent of the women in the 1975 sample were classified as having "male" occupations. In the 1977 sample, more than three-quarters (77.3 per cent) of the women were classified in this manner.

Other findings included:

- Only one adult program had a female announcer. Announcers were most often men (75 per cent) or both men and women (14.3 per cent). None of the adult programs sampled used only

women as moderators or narrators.

- Major characters in adult programming sampled were measured on a five-point leadership scale. A higher score on the scale indicated that the characters exhibited more "leader" than "follower" qualities. Women in the adult sample scored 3.76 compared to 3.50 for men.

On June 2, 1978 research and programming staff from PBS and CPB met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the findings of the report with Annenberg researcher Nancy Signorielli. Participants at the meeting had an opportunity to ask specific questions about the methodology of the study.

## PACT: SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Many women are still unfamiliar with PACT and the services it provides. Equal Access is offering the following update on PACT for those who may have missed it in an earlier issue.*

**What is PACT?** PACT—People and Careers in Telecommunications—is the largest personnel service for public broadcasting. The service is managed by NAEB, as a contractor of CPB. At this time, the service is cost-free to all users.

**What services are provided by PACT?** PACT matches individuals with job opportunities in public radio and television and provides employers with a larger pool of people than would normally be available. PACT also publishes a bi-weekly jobs bulletin, *PACT Sheet*, which is distributed to over 5,000 subscribers, including radio and television stations, skills banks, and minority and women's organizations. NAEB recently contracted with three regional minority organizations (SER-Jobs for Progress, Los Angeles; Bay Area Broadcast Skills Bank, San Francisco; and Howard University's School of Communications Placement Service, Washington, D.C.) to channel larger numbers of minorities into positions in public broadcasting.

**Does PACT provide career counseling for individuals?** As an additional service of PACT, Joseph Schubert, director of NAEB Personnel Services, is available to provide job counseling and resume assistance to individuals and groups.

**Does PACT guarantee me a job in public broadcasting?** PACT does not guarantee every user a job in public broadcasting. Schubert explains that because of increased competition for jobs in public broadcasting, the current emphasis within PACT is on finding experienced broadcasters and individuals with a high level of experience in related fields.

To receive further information about PACT, including the *PACT Sheet*, write: Joseph Schubert, Director, NAEB Personnel Service, 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

## FREESTYLE TO DEAL WITH SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING

*Freestyle*, a new 13-part television series designed to teach youngsters 9 to 12 years old about their career options, is being produced by KCET, Los Angeles for airing nationally over the Public Broadcasting Service beginning in October 1978. Funded by a \$4.1 million grant from the Department of Health Education and Welfare's National Institute of Education, the series attempts to reduce the limiting effects of sex-role stereotyping on chil-



A teenage girl (Mia Bendixen) proves that she can handle a summer job at a gas station in one of the 13 half-hour adventures from *Freestyle*.

dren's interests and activities and on their future career choices.

*Freestyle* will present the dramatic adventures of an ethnically-mixed group of children in a middle-American suburban neighborhood. Each adventure will focus on a particular theme, such as independence for girls and emotional expressiveness for boys. Says Norton W. Wright, *Freestyle* executive producer: "The series will give youngsters knowledge about specific adult occupations and family roles, as well as about non-stereotypical behavior which they can use when they encounter a career-oriented opportunity or a dilemma—in a summer job, at home, in school or in extra-curricular activities."

Wright emphasizes that the series "will try to help both boys and girls develop life skills. Boys can be limited as much as girls by the reducing of options." In addition, *Freestyle* will explore the problems that stereotypical thinking presents to ethnic minorities.

*Freestyle* will be viewed in both home and classroom situations. At home, youngsters will see a complete weekly half-hour program. In the classroom, the programs will be split into two 15-minute segments and will be reinforced with classroom discussions and study materials.

KCET created the series in cooperation with the Los Angeles County School System which developed the project's curriculum planning document; the East Los Angeles College Foundation which coordinated community outreach activities; Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago which developed the educational guides and materials; the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California which conducted the formative evaluation and research efforts; and the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan which will evaluate the project.

### CONFERENCE CORNER

**June 13-17, 1978:** 27th Annual National Convention of American Women in Radio and Television, Inc. at the Los Angeles Hilton. General session entitled "In a Free Press Society-Is Broadcast Journalism Meeting the Challenge?" will be moderated by Elmer W. Lower, journalism professor at the University of Missouri and recently retired vice president of corporate affairs for ABC. A second session entitled "ERA-The Light That Must Not Fail" will be keynoted by actress-producer Marlo Thomas. Twelve workshops will offer information on professional and individual growth. Non-members are welcome to attend. For registration information, write: National Headquarters, AWRT, 1321 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

**June 25-27, 1978:** PBS Annual Membership Meeting at the Fairmont Hotel in Dallas, Texas. Emphasis on the mission and goals of PBS, with sessions on programming and the satellite. The Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting will be in attendance. Speakers include Newton Minow and Pulitzer prize winning author Carl Sagan. PBS Board Meeting to be held on the 28th. For further information, write: Station Relations, PBS, 475 L'Enfant Plaza West, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024.

**DEADLINE** for station submission of applications for CPB's In-Service Training Grant Program is June 30, 1978.

(Office of Women's Activities, from page 1)

who lack information on developing effective program proposals. Currently the OWA is exploring with KCET, Los Angeles the idea of a conference for women writers. The goal of the conference would be to familiarize women with the realities of writing for radio and television.

According to Ms. Rowe, "equal employment and career training will continue to be an important focus of our energies in the coming year." The OWA plans to continue the professional career development project begun in 1977. Under the project, 85 women from the national organizations and from radio and television stations participated in career planning seminars conducted by Hennig-Jardim Associates, a management consulting team specializing in the problems of female managers. In FY 79 the OWA hopes to offer similar seminars for women on a regional basis.

The OWA will continue to encourage women to utilize the services of PACT. In addition, the OWA anticipates publishing *Equal Access* on a bi-monthly basis throughout FY 79.

Women are encouraged to share their ideas with Audrey Rowe, Director of Women's Activities, CPB, 1111 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

### **Fellowship Offered**

The Western States Arts Foundation has begun accepting applications for its 1978 Visual Arts Fellowship Program. Nine grants of \$5,000 will be awarded by a panel on the basis of the applicants' past work. Fellowships are awarded to persons residing in the Foundation's ten state region: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. Applicants must be U.S. citizens. Deadline for applications is July 31, 1978. For more information, write: Janice Steinhauser, Visual Arts Fellowship Program, Western States Arts Foundation, 428 East 11th Ave., Denver, Colo. 80203.



## **EQUAL ACCESS**

**Corporation for Public Broadcasting**

1111 16th Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20036

Human Resources Development Department

Office of Women's Activities

**Editor: Deborah A. Bonanni**

## **LETTERS**

Dear Editor:

After several years of participation in public radio conferences, I rarely expect anything spectacular to occur anymore. However, I was particularly disheartened when I attended the session on women's programming at the Annual Public Radio Conference held last March. For those of us who are no longer rookies in the system, many of these women's programming sessions offer little that is new and different. Although I recognize the need for women to get together in special sessions at public broadcasting conferences to discuss programming, I think that women should be offered additional sessions devoted to other, equally important, issues.

I suggest that more conference sessions for women be devoted to career development, similar to the Hennig-Jardim session held at the last NAEB convention. However, since NAEB conferences are geared toward public television employees, few women in radio have the opportunity to attend these sessions. I propose that another women's career development session be held at the 1979 radio conference.

I believe that CPB's Office of Women's Activities should set aside funds for more career training sessions. However, the monies should be divided into two parts—one part for women in radio and one part for women in television. Women from radio would attend only those career development sessions offered at public radio conferences. Women from television stations would attend only those sessions offered at public television conferences. This would ensure that women from both radio and television would have access to these very worthwhile and meaningful career sessions.

Barbara Berry  
Chairwoman

Women's Telecommunications Workshop

NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 6883  
Baltimore, Md.