


**A WALK THROUGH THE YEARS...
BROWSING THROUGH THE PAGES OF**

TELE-MEDIUM

The Journal of Media Literacy

**FIRST OF A SERIES – THE EARLY YEARS
1953-1983**




BETTER BROADCASTS NEWS

120 E. WILSON ST. MADISON, WIS. 53703 TEL. (608) 257-7712
MARCH-APRIL, 1983 VOL. 29, NO. 4

Better Broadcasts
Tel. 257-7712 (608)
15 West Main
Madison, Wis. 53703

Better Broadcasts, Better World



RADIO-TV, EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

NEWS

NUMBER 75 APRIL 1, 1968

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Better Broadcasts, Better World



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423 N. Pinckney
Madison, Wis.



BETTER WORLD

NEWS LETTER

OCT. 1, 1953

"RADIO-TV, EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY"

A Chance to Work for
Better Radio-TV

BETTER BROADCASTS

423 N. Pinckney
Madison, Wis.



"RADIO-TV, EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY"

NEWS LETTER

OCT. 1, 1953

A Chance to Work for Better Radio TV

In Minneapolis, on June 24, 1953, the American Council for Better Broadcasts was formed. Representatives from 18 national organizations, 18 state groups, and many local organizations attended the organizational meetings. Delegates were there from 93 cities in 34 states.

They formed the AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR BETTER BROADCASTS, a non-profit, coordinating organization, to correlate the efforts of scattered groups and individuals for better radio-TV programming.

The PURPOSE is to stimulate the broadcasting of good radio and television programs; to study, in order to arrive at standards for judging programs; and to encourage all radio and television stations in fulfilling their obligations to "serve the public interest, convenience and necessity."

For nation-wide impact, the Council agrees to unite on one nation-wide project each year. The 1953-54 project is the LOOK LISTEN PROJECT. It asks groups to enlist as many members as possible (and others) to rate 8 network programs (3-10 P.M.) on one radio or television station, and tell why they rated the programs as they did. The reports need to be in by January 31, if they are to be included in the 1954 report that goes to sponsors, broadcasters, and the Federal Communications Commission.

WRITE TO MRS. G. F. MATTHEWS, 4539 Winnequah Road, Madison, Wisconsin for instructions and sample materials.

Project materials are free, except the 8 report cards for each monitor (3c per person). These cards may be copied locally if the identical form and size are used.

MEMBERSHIP is open to individuals who are not professional broadcasters; and to national, state, and local organizations (except broadcasters' groups and listeners' groups having broadcasters as members) who will undertake together annually one constructive project, to be agreed upon at the annual meeting. Their other activities in the field of radio and television are of their own choice. High schools and colleges and separate classes in them are eligible to membership.

THE INSIGNIA AND SLOGANS above are borrowed from the Wisconsin Association for Better Radio and Television. Do you like them? Shall we adopt them, if we get its permission? Or would you like something else? We'd like to hear from you.

ANNUAL DUES:

Local groups of members—		
3-50	\$1.00	Individuals \$1.00
50-200	\$2.00	State groups \$10.00
200 or more	\$3.00	National groups \$25.00

Clip and send: American Council for Better Broadcasts

Mrs. C. B. CHAMBERS, Treasurer of ACBB, 3480-7th Ave., No., St. Petersburg, Fla.

I enclose..... one year's membership dues for myself.....

my group, which is

Signed

Street

City

State

Children's Television

Children have strong tastes for programs adults consider not good for them. The British Broadcasting Company believes this demand should be partially met. But, according to the Educational Supplement of the *London Times*, it keeps in mind the "solitary viewer's vulnerability to fear. Bad men are allowed to be really bad, and the child has the satisfaction of seeing the good ones treat them as they deserve. Nevertheless it is careful not to restrict its work to any over-tight theories about audience's preferences. It tries to give abundant diversity."

A few of its entertainment programs have secondary educational benefits. "Through plays it may try to awaken curiosity about painting or history; other programmes—a story begun and left in the air, or imaginary conversation with dead authors—are planned as an incitement to reading; others coax the audience to watch birds or to use their hands."

People Seem Pleased

People have expressed gratification.

Mrs. Gertrude Broderick, President of the Association for Education by Radio-TV, says: "You are to be congratulated on the fine progress you have made in such a short time, and I have every confidence that this newest effort will bear fruit a thousand-fold."

William D. Boutwell, Editor of *Scholastic Teacher*, "I am very pleased to know you are making such progress with the Council for Better Broadcasts."

Norman Cousins, Editor, *Saturday Review of Literature*, "I am delighted to learn of your new Coordinating Council. It is tremendously heartening to see the increased effectiveness of your work and to observe the actual evidence of your growth."

Franklin Dunham, Chief of Radio-TV, U. S. Office of Education, "More Power to you."

Arthur J. Freund, Chairman of Section on Criminal Law, American Bar Ass'n, "You are engaged in a most worthy and highly necessary endeavor. I want to assure you of my deep personal interest and concern."

Charles A. Siepmann, Chairman, Communications Dep't, New York University, "I'm delighted that your organization goes so well."

Ralph Steetle, Executive Director, Joint Committee on Educational Television, "It seems to me that the American Council has a challenging assignment before it."

NOTES ON MAGAZINES

The first issue this fall of *Parent-Teacher Magazine* carries an account of the forming of the Council for Better Broadcasts in the column, "What's Happening in Education."

The *Journal of the Association for Education-TV* tells the story of the Council's organizational meetings and its objectives.

Response to "Variety"

In response to its article about the ACBB organizational meetings in Minneapolis, *Variety* received a letter from Shigeru Nakamura, Director of the Radio Culture Research Institute of Japan. He said, in part, "We are anxious to know how the Council is organized, i.e. the names of its members, and how they intend to raise radio and TV programming standards."

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*Telemidium, The
Journal of Media
Literacy* is published
by the National
Telemedia Council,
the oldest media
literacy organization

in the United States, having been
founded in 1953. *The Journal* reflects
the philosophy of NTC, which takes
a positive, non-judgmental ap-
proach to media literacy education
as an essential life skill for the 21st
Century. The National Telemedia
Council is an organization of diverse
professionals interested in the field
of media literacy. NTC encourages
free expression of views on all aspects
of media literacy in order to encour-
age learning and increase growth
of understanding of issues in Media
Literacy. Any opinions expressed in
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of NTC, therefore, do not necessarily
represent policies or positions of the
National Telemedia Council.

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A Walk Through the Years

Come stroll with us through the years of what is today *Telemedium*, *The Journal of Media Literacy*. As the field of media literacy appears to be poised at yet another major and exciting turning point, we take a look back with a new perspective on what we might glean, to help us look to the future. Looking back is not just about nostalgia. It is a search for meaningful roots. In order for media literacy to grow as an academic discipline, it must have a solid pedagogical foundation. This issue presents a sampling of the early pioneers who began the work we continue today.

Join us as we browse through the pages of notes, articles, events and insights that span the decades. Reaching back to the days of Edward R. Murrow and Eric Sevareid, when the world was engulfed in World War II, these memorable journalists were highlighted in monthly listings of “Some Good Listening,” published by what was then known as the Wisconsin Joint Committee for Better Radio Listening. In 1951, television was added and in 1953, the newly born “American Council for Better Broadcasts” set out to coordinate and provide leadership, inspired by the idea of a “Better World through Better Broadcasts,” to work “Toward a Media Wise Society.”

What had begun in 1935 as a small monthly brochure of the Madison, Wisconsin chapter of the American Association of University Women, next became a four-page newsletter, *Better Broadcasts News*, published five times during the school year, and evolved in the past decade into the publication you hold in your hand today. To keep up with the racing technologies and their expanding realm, the name of the “American Council for Better Broadcasts” became the “National Telemedia Council” in 1983.

Looking back through these pages, starting seven decades ago, we find not only our beginnings as a small AAUW study group of the 1930’s but also importantly the visionary individuals - educators and others—whose pioneering insights gave us direction. Dr. Leslie Spence and Jessie McCanse were both English teachers who founded and led the Council for six decades. Dr. Spence launched the annual nation-wide Look Listen Project, the first qualitative grassroots evaluation of radio and television. Jessie McCanse hosted ACBB’s radio program, *Broadcast on Broadcasts* for 25 years. Through their work, Spence and McCanse assembled the scholars whose work laid the foundation for this emerging field of media education. Among these were Dr. Louis Forsdale, Teachers College, Columbia University, writing on “Multi-Media Literacy” (1955); Dr. Edgar Dale, Ohio State University, on “Evaluating Mass Media”; Dr. Patrick Hazard of the University of

Hawaii, on “Living Rooms Without Walls”, and more. Look for the thoughts of these scholars in the pages that follow.

Building on the philosophies and teachings of these visionary scholars and educators, the ACBB/NTC developed a policy to which we have been able to remain true throughout the years and through the many changes in telecommunications. It has always been about education and evaluation – not advocacy and regulation. It was always about taking a positive, non-judgmental approach, working “with” rather than “against” the media industry. It is not about using the media to teach, but rather teaching to use the media. It has always been about media literacy education.

This issue, more complex to put together than at first glance, should be read with a focus on reexamining where the field needs to go, NTC’s role in it, and how our resources can best be used. We can look back on how we have embraced change time and again. We have never felt the need to stay the course... remaining static is not a part of our policy. Remaining true to our basic philosophy is. We know there is change on the horizon because that is the nature of our field. To remain relevant, we must not be afraid of change, in fact we must seek it out. Yet, in so doing, we must base it on a solid pedagogical foundation.

This retrospective is a part of that process. It takes us through the first thirty years of our publication. The sequel will follow later this year. We may well wonder, after seeing how much has been done already, why we do not yet have a media literate society. As you read, we ask you this question. We hope you enjoy this walk with us. We invite you to think along the way and join in. •



Karen Ambrosh

PRESIDENT



Marieli Rowe

EDITOR AND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Follow along through time. Read additional bits and pieces of ACBB/NTC history, as well as other media related events in the “timeline” continuing at the bottom of each page. →

HISTORICAL BEGINNINGS

ACBB is Born

To coordinate the efforts of...
To study, in order to arrive at standards for evaluating...
To create an active involved public through the annual Look-Listen project.

"Elevation In The Ether"
 In a news item found in "Education in the Ether," under the catchy title, "Elevation in the Ether," an account of ACBB begins: "If the people in your community are interested in improvement of radio and television, tell them of the newly formed American Council for Better Broadcasts, a non-profit, coordinating organization, to correlate the efforts of scattered groups and individuals for better radio-TV programming," and so on. "Education in the Ether" is the official publication of the Audio-Visual Department of the National Education Association.

A Chance to Work for Better Radio TV

In Minneapolis, on June 24, 1953, the American Council for Better Broadcasts was formed. Representatives from 18 national organizations, 18 state groups, and many local organizations attended the organizational meetings. Delegates were there from 93 cities in 34 states.

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"A Constructive Influence"

Others' summaries of what one is trying to do are interesting and illuminating. This is particularly true of an appraisal by Dr. R. J. Blakely in "Mass Media and Education," the 1954 Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. The original impulse to the founding of the American Council for Better Broadcasts came from three state groups that work for better broadcasts.

Of the oldest of these and of ACBB Dr. Blakely wrote:

"We have many examples in our history of citizens banding together to exert negative influences upon the mass media—boycotts, censorship, and the like. There are not many, but there are a few, examples of citizens organizing to exert a constructive influence. One of the bright examples is

the twelve-year-old Wisconsin Association for Better Radio and Television. Its basic principles may be summarized as follows:

The members must raise their own level of thinking and taste before they can raise the level of broadcasting.

The Association should praise good programs more than they should denounce poor ones.

The Association should search for effective ways of expressing themselves to persons who can change programs.

The Association must be and remain objective.

"The American council for Better Broadcasts was organized upon these principles in May, 1953. I suggest that the reader write this new council (423 N. Pinckney, Madison, Wisconsin) to learn its specific program."

APRIL 1955

A Sample of the Early ACBB Statement of Policy • Dr. Stuart Hyde, Chairman of the Radio-Television

Dept. of San Francisco State College, was Chair of the ACBB policy committee. The Council's statement of policy was updated every year, as needed, suggested by board members and Council members.

Summary of 1967-1968 Policy

The Statement of Policy recognizes that: Broadcasters and sponsors want public endorsement, and some of them welcome critical public response; and that

Since all broadcasting is done in the public domain, listeners and viewers have rights, privileges, and duties.

Specific Items

- The Council set itself:
- to encourage educational and cultural programs on all stations, including reliable programs of news and information and background for understanding other peoples;
- to urge adequate funds for Public Broadcasting;
- to publicize the most promising programs and to encourage all good organizations to do so;

to encourage members and others to express their opinions of programs by means of the Look-Listen Poll and by writing to sponsors and broadcasters; to find ways of expressing appreciation of sponsors' refraining from interrupting fine programs for their commercials messages;

to express gratitude to government agencies and public servants when they act to keep the ownership and control of mass media from passing into the hands of a few, and to keep these media open for the expression of diverse points of view;

to recommend that the law requiring stations to apply for renewal of license every three years be retained, and the quality of programming be reviewed at that time.

APRIL 1968

OCTOBER 1953

1919 9XM-WHA "The Oldest Station in the Nation" begins broadcasting in Madison, WI

1920 In England, Marconi creates the first shortwave radio connection.

1922 Nervous Hollywood sets up the "Hays Office" for self-censorship.

Philo Farnsworth designs a television "image dissector" at age 15, assembles the complete TV the following year.

ACBB... Its Founders... Its Enthusiastic Supporters

The Beginning

1935 could be called a birthyear of the American Council for Better Broadcasts. Jessie McCause was education chairman for the Madison, Wisconsin branch of the American Association of University Women. She gave another member a little assignment that was to last 50 years for both. The project not only marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship but developed a collaboration that has shaped the ACBB. That friend was Leslie Spence, Ph.D.

Leslie Spence was an only child, growing up in a home rich in the parental love of her pharmacist father and teacher mother. She recognized and cherished this kind of parental guidance. "I came from the right kind of home," she says, and her eyes brighten as she adds, "and there were always books around." Not only were those books available to her, but she was encouraged to read and

discuss them with her parents ... no wonder she developed an appreciation for literature and found such real enjoyment in books.

She earned her first college degree in English Literature, and, after teaching for several years, went on to earn her graduate degree in History and Education.

Leslie's job was to pull together a committee to evaluate and recommend radio programs, each week submitting their results to the two local Madison newspapers. As it turned out, she was to focus her life on broadcasting's potential and the fine tuning of individual responses to it.

In 1983 ...

Jessie McCause remains a mainstay of ACBB, still concerned, an active participant, answering any call for help. Leslie Spence, in her mid-nineties, continues to live in her own home surrounded by

files and working stacks of media-related materials. She enthusiastically helped with this initial remembrance, giving us a lively interview, but one gets the feeling that dwelling on the past is not her idea of constructive interchange.

One recognizes in Leslie Spence the best kind of visionary ... an ethical, thoughtful, active person upon whom the progress of society must rely. Still fresh are the words of the 16th Century poet, Edmund Spenser: "The state of civilization in our country is what we're talking about — no monopoly of good taste — but those who participate care about quality of our civilization, of our life ... as a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

Phyllis Young & M.J.M. Koehl

*(Written for ACBB's
Thirtieth Anniversary)*

FEBRUARY 1983



1922 BBC goes on the air

1924 King George addresses his subjects via radio

1925 First flight of the Goodyear Blimp

1926 Unregulated radio frequencies drown each other, govt. control requested

ACBB History Special 25 Years On the Air, "Broadcast on Broadcasts"

by Jessie Hill McCanse

In the early years of our organization, before we were legally on the records as the American Council for Better Broadcasts, it was suggested that the Wisconsin Association for Better Broadcasts have a "voice on the air." With the support of two University of Wisconsin radio station's leaders, H. B. McCarty and Bill Harley, we were invited to present a weekly program on WHA in Madison, Wisconsin, one of the early pace-setters for public radio. Thus Leslie Spence joined other regulars on the station such as Professor Philo Buck, Aline Hazzard, Dr. H. Kent Tenney and Roy Vogelman.

Broadcast on Broadcasts, as the program was called, came on at nine o'clock every Thursday morning for more than a quarter of a century. The material brought to the public was varied. With Leslie Spence as M.C. during the first years, we discussed our aims as an organization as well as our projects — such as the Look-Listen Poll, Project Postcard, and specials like the Children's Film Festival. We often reviewed books of particular interest to our listeners, like *Prime Time* by Edward R. Murrow. We interviewed visiting broadcasters, U.S. Senators and state officials whenever they were able to find time in their busy schedules.

Some visitors to the campus were most cooperative. After I came on as moderator, I particularly remember Margaret Mead's visit. She was quite willing, but found her day pretty full, so

she suggested that I come over to the Student Union, follow her around, and during our 15 minutes she would guarantee to talk to me. I took a student with me, the proper equipment, and just after nine o'clock she signalled. We turned on the instrument and asked our questions. She was an excellent "interviewee."

I interviewed the World's President of the YWCA, Mme. Mavrogordota from Athens, Greece, and a gentleman from Dahomey who was that country's Ambassador to the United Nations. I have since forgotten his name but I will never forget the man and his words. When I asked him what radio meant to the people of his country, he said it was "enfant culture." His English was not very good — neither was my French — but I got that word. If *agriculture* had to do with farming, *enfant culture* had to do with children (*les enfants*), so we discussed the role radio played in education. We had an amicable chat. Radio and education are much related in any language.

Radio Hall was a friendly place under the excellent leadership of H. B. McCarty and Harold Engel. I enjoyed my time, the last half of our twenty five years. And I wish there were such a program here or many places now so that ACBB could make known to its friends the plans and goals it now has in a wider world with all its modern facilities.

Oh, for a "voice on the air"!



Jessie McCanse and Dr. Leslie Spence (circa 1980) at work planning the next Look-Listen project, creating a "Teacher Idea," reviewing an article, organizing the following year's national convention.

Bottom photo, facing page: Jessie McCanse (circled) with members of the evaluation committee meet to discuss the "Good Listening" bulletin. Below: Dr. Leslie Spence (circled) with officers and executive committee members of the Wisconsin Association of Better Radio Listening.

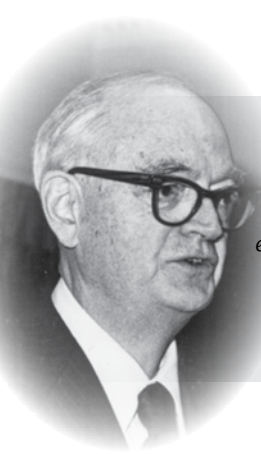


1927 US Radio Act declares public ownership of airwaves

1928 IBM adopts the 80-column punched card (future computers)

1931 Metropolitan Opera begins broadcasting Saturday matinees (Still on the air today!)

1933 FDR begins "Fireside Chats" bypassing newspapers



FCC Commissioner Abbott Washburn was a major force in bringing this issue to the table. The resulting FCC ruling premised on the finding that parental and teacher guidance can “mitigate negative effects” of media programming, opened the door to Media Literacy education and was followed by a \$1 million US Department of Education grant for major media literacy projects K-College. Compiled by the Executive Director, Marieli Rowe, and warmly received by the FCC. The following article is a slightly condensed version of the formal presentation to the FCC, on the need for teaching skills in evaluation radio and television presentation.

Developing Critical Skills in Judging TV-Radio Programs

Comments of the ACBB Before the FCC

WASHINGTON D.C., FEBRUARY 16, 1979

The American Council for Better Broadcasts files these comments in response to the Commission’s second notice of inquiry on children’s television and advertising practices, and addresses itself specifically to the question raised in Section 42f with regard to fostering the development of critical viewing skills in children. The ACBB is a consumer organization founded in 1953 to encourage through educational approaches and positive interaction with the broadcasting industry, the improvement of programming quality. The organization encourages grass-roots participation through evaluation and the development of critical viewing skills. Examples of ACBB’s efforts in these areas are appended, and the following comments are submitted:

I. THE NEED TO TEACH CRITICAL VIEWING SKILLS

There is a need to teach children critical viewing skills so as to develop a media-wise society.

We are focusing exclusively on section 42f of the inquiry in the belief that this important area of concern has not received adequate attention. ACBB has long been committed to this goal and commends the FCC’s interest in “cooperative efforts... to foster critical viewing skills in children.” While this approach has less visibility than others that have been pursued; while measurable results are more difficult to obtain; and while the responsibility does not rest with broadcasters alone, it is our belief that the development of critical viewing skills is crucial for the future. This belief is based on the following premises.

Guidance Can Modify Effects

Children learn from what they see and the effects of this learning process are significant. At the same time, while television is indeed a powerful teacher, what it teaches depends on the learner and this can be influenced and modified by guidance and education.

Future Choices Will Greatly Proliferate

Although quality programming for children remains an overriding goal, it alone will not prepare children to cope intelligently with the many other program choices offered on TV today, much less with the proliferation of choices which advances in technology will provide in the ‘information society’ of tomorrow.

Regulation Does Not Assure Quality

While establishing minimum standards may be a help, it is not certain that they will assure quality and it is a question whether quality can in fact be regulated into society. More likely, we believe, it must be the result of education. Therefore, to be effective, efforts to provide better quality programming for children, must be enhanced by such education.

The recurrent problem of 1st Amendment issues has also been raised in attempts to regulate program quality. In the long term, fostering quality through diversity may be a more creative approach. Again the skills for making discriminating choices are required.

II. BROADCASTER EFFORTS

The beginnings of broadcaster efforts to promote development of critical viewing skills are noteworthy.

We are aware of several efforts by the broadcasting industry, particularly in the past year. Among these are, first, funds committed by ABC to Yale University, to develop a curriculum in critical viewing skills for school-aged youth. Secondly, a project is being carried out by NBC, working with parents’ organizations and some school authorities, that will help parents and children together to develop these skills through parent participation TV workshops. Thirdly, related but somewhat tangential projects are represented by CBS reading projects and the

1934 Nazis use “Big Lie” technique in mass media propaganda

FCC Communications Act is created to regulate US broadcasting and telecommunications

1935 The Madison, WI chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) forms a radio evaluation committee at the request of Jessie McCause; Leslie Spence, Chairman. A monthly list of programs and news of radio is printed. The subtitle: *Better Understanding, Better World.*

Teachers' Guides to television programs. We are aware of a growing number of projects in this direction, such as Prime-Time-School Television and others in which the networks have been cooperating by supplying scripts and materials for in school use. However, these projects are concerned more with using television to teach school subjects whereas we are concerned with teaching to use television.

ACBB has always found broadcasters cooperative in its own educational projects. They have provided materials such as advance program information, films in segments or in their entirety for evaluations and for our early Children's Film Festivals, and have participated at our meetings through eloquent speakers.

However these are only beginnings. A much more massive effort is needed and the efforts of citizens' groups are greatly enhanced by the FCC's interest.

III. ACBB's PROJECTS

ACBB has long encouraged the development of critical viewing skills, or "media literacy," and has conducted projects toward this goal. Our efforts to promote the development of critical viewing and listening skills, span our entire twenty-six-year history. They include:

The ACBB Poll

The annual **Look-Listen Opinion Poll** which involves quality rating of programs and provides a teaching experience when under proper guidance and has been used widely by teachers for this purpose.

Teacher Workshops ACBB has sought to help teachers develop projects and teaching units. A "kit" was available (now under revision). To intensify the effort, a **Teacher-Idea Exchange** was begun in 1972. This was not as successful as hoped due to problems in identifying and reaching interested individuals. It became apparent that a more structured approach was needed. Thus in 1976 an experimental three-day summer workshop for teachers was held in cooperation with Edgewood College, Madison, Wisconsin. Designed to help teachers develop their own curriculum in critical viewing which would be suitable to their situation, the workshop was successful and is being continued for the third consecutive year in 1979.

Children's Channel

Currently ACBB is also sponsoring the developing of a children's channel on cable TV in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, an experiment in children's programming for and by children which deliberately incorporates the teaching of critical viewing skills.

ACBB participated in the 1975 education study on "Public Broadcasting and Education" carried out by the CPB Advisory Council of National Organizations. Throughout the deliberations, we stressed the importance of fostering critical viewing skills. The concept in fact became one of the study's eleven recommendations to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Earlier projects have included distribution in the schools of recommended programs for children, together with guidelines for teachers; essay contests for junior high schoolers; children's film festivals to expose children to quality fare; workshops, conferences and speakers on the subject.

IV. THE NEEDS

These past experiences indicate ACBB's long efforts to foster the teaching of critical viewing skills. From the problems we have encountered, useful knowledge may be gained for the future:

First, there is a need for closer cooperation and interaction between the broadcasting industry and the educational community—both powerful teaching forces. On a number of occasions where ACBB has sought to bring together broadcasters and educators, it was found that very little interaction, cooperation or even mutual knowledge existed.

Secondly, there is an urgent need for a new leadership role in education. Education is a field in which "new" is not necessarily perceived as "better" and the early experiences with the use of instructional television in American schools certainly reinforced this philosophy. It is to be noted that there has been little recognition by American education of its unique opportunity and its responsibility in dealing with the matter of children and television. Indeed, although concern and interest exist among teachers, the problem is not generally seen in the context of traditional education and American schools have not built a record of constructive help in this area. In general it is apparent that schools have been teaching the familiar school subjects from a negative perspective of fighting TV rather than as a part of children's lives capable of constructive contribution.

In conclusion, we believe that critical viewing skills are an essential necessity for the generations to come, who will have to cope with an increasingly complex global "information society." We are convinced that children can be helped to walk into this future equipped with the tools for intelligent, discriminating use. The goal is a self-generated rather than outside control.

In the past year we have noted a marked increase in interest and activity in this area on the part of the broadcasting industry. But the effort is in its infancy and should be greatly expanded.

The problems to be overcome extend beyond economic or regulatory constraints. They will require a change in societal attitudes and a multi-disciplinary approach involving cooperation and interaction between American education, broadcasters, and the public. •

Kids Across Space

The 1981 ACBB Annual Conference focused on Media Literacy in light of new media and diversity, and was highlighted by an ambitious and exciting experiment in Washington D.C. by and for children—US children of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin's Kids-4, Indiana's Kids Alive and in Brisbane, Australia's Channel 7 children's group.

Children's Channel For Sun Prairie

In Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, an experiment in children's television has been in preparation for the past three years. Premised on three major areas of concern—the effects of television on children, the recognition that children's needs are special, and an understanding of the *nature* of American broadcasting, the concept of a dedicated, non-preemptible children's channel via cable TV evolved as one solution to the "problem of children and TV." Cable can provide an answer to the needs of children while by-passing the need for federal regulation of programming and avoiding the necessity for fundamental changes in the economics of the American system of broadcasting. It offers opportunities for positive and creative uses, creates realistic shared responsibility between community, parents, children, and the cablecaster, and perhaps, most importantly, provides a teaching tool to help children develop critical viewing skills.

ACBB is sponsoring the project and has been involved in it since its very beginnings, providing first, the original written background rationale. (A copy of the entire paper may be obtained from the ACBB office.) More importantly, Board Member and Past Wisconsin Association President Nancy McMahon is the force behind the children's channel, having developed the concept from theory to practical reality. She chaired the Sun Prairie Cable Commission and wrote the ordinance, enthused the community, fought the battles, and overcame the obstacles. Currently, she is seeking major funding to carry out the 18-month experimental period designed to lead to a self-supporting future. Meanwhile, the project is being carried out entirely by volunteers. Developing and leading the activities of

the children's channel is Robert Rodriguez, communications teacher in the Sun Prairie High School. The following description was contributed by him.

M. Rowe

Our cable channel—called "Kids 4"—is devoted exclusively to children: their ideas, their talents, their viewpoints.

Since the first program went out over the Sun Prairie cable last November 20th, thirty kids have been working on several program formats including a weekly news magazine which will feature local, national and international news, a local heritage and cultural program, a program featuring local sports events and personalities, and yet another program which will feature local school activities and events.

Our activities began with the auditioning, in July of 1978, of over 250 young people between the ages of eight and twelve vying for the 30 staff positions available. It would be these people who would serve as the camera, graphics, and audio personnel, writers, directors, and producers of the programs. A rotation system was then introduced which allowed for maximum participation of each of the kids and, yet, discouraged the star system from evolving. The youngsters met in a series of meetings at which, among other things, they designed their visual and musical logos, developed their scriptwriting skills, and learned camera and editing techniques. When a new crew is chosen next year, this first and, yet, discouraged the star system from evolving. The youngsters met in a series of meetings at which, among other things, they designed their visual and musical logos, developed their scriptwriting skills, and learned camera

and editing techniques. When a new crew is chosen next year, this first group will teach the new members of the organization what they have learned.

These young people have only begun to explore the medium and yet they have illustrated that the children's channel concept has, thus far, succeeded in a manner which can be replicated and fostered in other communities which are served by cable television.

They keys to the success of our program are, indeed, many:

First, this is a channel *for* children by children. This concept must remain foremost! And although adult supervision and influence are certainly necessary, the channel must not become an *adult* channel for children. Secondly, community involvement is paramount! The senior citizens, the school system, the business district of the community must be part of the concept if it is to develop. The scope of the program is too great to involve only a particular segment of the community.

Third, the young people must be provided with the opportunity to learn, create, lead, and explore within the medium. This will not only provide the "how's" of television production, but more importantly, the "why's" which will enable them to be more media literate. Fourth, be certain to get the kids involved. This refers, of course, not only to those who serve as the camera, graphics, and audio personnel, but also to the viewers. Television has too long been utilized as a passive medium. And lastly, this is a children's channel and not an educational channel. As adults, most of us recognize that education need not be boring. Unfortunately, most kids don't!

—Bob Rodriguez

FEBRUARY 1979



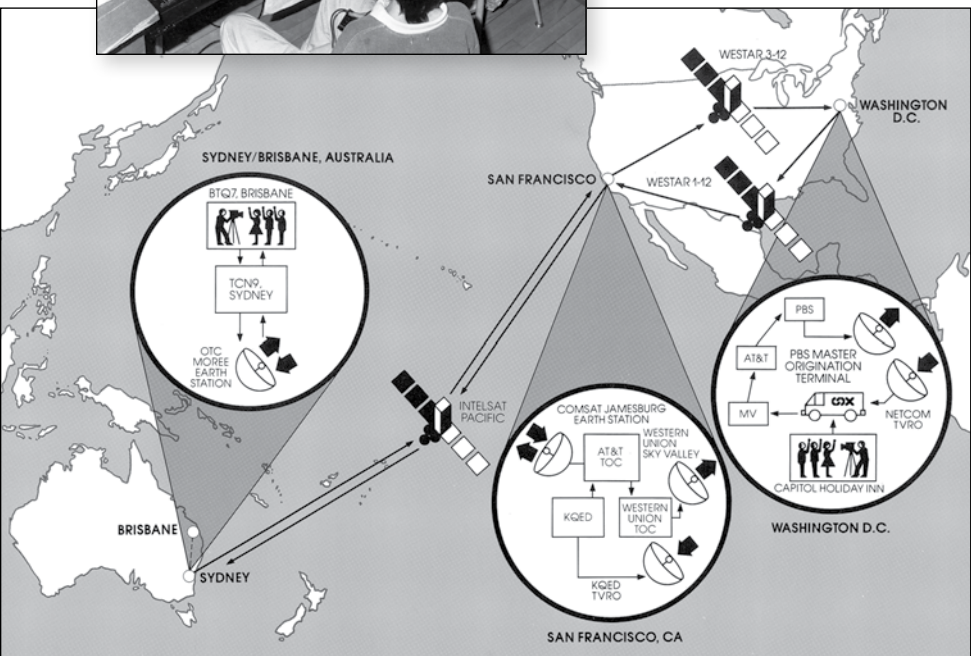
Historic First For ACBB's Conference '81 ... Media Notables Gather to Assess Experiment

The American Council for Better Broadcasts' 28th Conference promises to be one of its most exciting to date. Not only will the conference feature a distinguished list of guest speakers, but it will also be the site of an historic first event in telecommunications.

On the morning of October 15, two groups of children across the world will come together via live satellite interconnect. ACBB is proud to sponsor the international demonstration by and for children, made possible by several generous donors and many who willingly volunteered their expertise.

Children aged 9-13 years from the ACBB-sponsored "Kids-4" Children's Channel in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin and "KIDS ALIVE!" of Bloomington, Indiana will link up with children in Brisbane, Australia in an hour of interactive programming.

The live program is being developed, designed, and engineered by the children themselves. They become active producers of television material rather than simply passive viewers. The demonstration will not only illustrate the success of ACBB's experiment in developing media-literate children through their active involvement in television programming, but also exhibit the new technology that made it possible.



Counter-clockwise from upper right: Kids controlling the audio/video equipment for the discussion from Washington D. C.; the stage area with participants in Washington D. C.; the "control room" being worked by young participants; a diagram explaining the signal transmission route for the broadcast.

Right: Marieli Rowe and Genevieve Finnigan congratulating Jon Garrett and David Fabie, two participants of the interconnect.



SEPT/OCT 1981

1941 December 7, Pearl Harbor. FDR declares war to an audience of 90 million people, the largest radio audience in history

"Broadcast on Broadcasts," a weekly 15 minute program, begins on WHA, UW-Madison radio station—likely the first of its kind in the U.S.

1942 World War II newsprint shortage cancels recommended radio listings in the local Madison newspapers

Conferences

The first ACBB Convention is set to take place in Columbus, OH in joint collaboration with the annual convention of the prestigious Institute for Education by Radio-TV (IERT). The partnership will last until 1970, the final year of IERT. Many people think the first conference on Media Literacy took place in 1995. But in fact, these annual conferences, beginning in 1953, have brought many people together nationwide and internationally. Early on, we learned that collaboration was the way to go.

APRIL 1954

YOU Are Invited

TO THE SESSIONS OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR BETTER BROADCASTS, COLUMBUS, OHIO, APRIL 10, 1954

If you wish we had better radio and television programs, the Council will be happy to have you attend its convention. Membership in it is not required for attendance, DESCHLER-HILTON HOTEL.

Registration—\$1.00 or Institute registration.

BALLROOM

8:30 a.m. Business Meeting. (For resolutions to be proposed and nominees for office, see page 4.)
Registration (one dollar)

9:30 a.m. Joint Session with Institute for Education by Radio-TV

A good program on commercial TV will originate and be sent over the air from the meeting.

The Challenge of Educational TV, Garnet R. Garrison, Director of Television, University of Michigan.

Progress of Educational TV—a representative of the national Joint Committee for Educational Television.

12:00 Meeting of New Board for Lunch

Hall of Mirrors

2:00 p.m. Presiding: Mrs. Walter Brummund, ACBB Board, representing the American Association of University Women. Panel: Can Teachers Help Students to Evaluate Out-of-School Radio-TV?

Mrs. Mabel B. Eversole, Dept. of English, North High School, Columbus
Mrs. Kathleen Lardie, Manager WDTR; Dept. of Radio Education, Detroit Public Schools
Dr. Clyde Miller, Director, Audio-Visual Education, State Dept. of Education, Ohio.

3:00 p.m. The Look-Listen Project, Mrs. Ralph McCause, ACBB Project Chairman.

Convention Committee

Mrs. Melvin C. Koch, Columbus, Ohio, Chairman
Mrs. Walter Brummund, Appleton, Wis.
Mrs. J. Howard McKay, Springfield, Penn.
Mrs. James Ripley, San Francisco, Cal.
Dr. I. Keith Tyler, Consultant.

Presiding: Mrs. I. Howard McKay, ACBB Board, representing American Legion Auxiliary.

3:15 p.m. Demonstration: Educational TV

3:45 p.m. News on the Air—CBS Standards
Frank Stanton, President of Columbia Broadcasting System is sending a representative to discuss general CBS policy in news programs.

6:30 p.m. DINNER—Hall of Mirrors

Presiding, Mrs. Melvin C. Koch, Convention Chairman.

Panel: East-West Understanding Through Radio and Television.

Moderator: Harry J. Skornia, University of Illinois; Executive Director, National Assn. of Educational Broadcasters; from May, '51—May, '53, Radio Attache, U.S. Embassy, State Dept., Austria.

M. Aramvalanthanathan, Madras, India, on leave, Faculty of Sri Ramakrishna, Teachers College India.

Nagib Iskander Ibrahim, Cairo, Egypt; on leave, University of Cairo; President, Arab Club of America.

Mrs. Ruth Mougey Worrell, retired National General Director, United Church Women; 1947, Commission on Relief to Europe; 1952-53, World Tour of Missions (and Exchange of Women Students).

Miss Mary Harbage, Director, Elementary Education, Akron Public Schools; 1942-44, American Red Cross, Norwich, England; 1952-53; Chairman (United Nations and State Dept.) Unitarian Church Commission on Educational Reconstruction to Korea.

Advance Dinner Reservations—to April 8

Mrs. H. S. Mesloh, 62 W. Brighton Rd.
Columbus 2, Ohio

I enclose check for reservations
(\$3.85 a plate) for ACBB dinner, April 10.

Name.....

Street.....

City.....State.....

In asking for room reservations at the Deschler-Hilton, mention your attending Institute or Convention.

NOVEMBER 1953

WISCONSIN

"We Can If We Will"

The more than 300 people who attended the Wisconsin Better Radio-TV Institute in Madison, Oct. 22, went home convinced that they can influence programming, if they will. They took seriously the advice, borrowed from the League of Women Voters:

"Let the people know;
Make the people care;
Help the people act."

The panel, "Making Our Opinions Felt," seemed agreed that evaluation of radio-TV programs should be taught in the school, and that the quality of program listened to by adults in the home is a major influence in molding the taste of children. Speakers stressed the Look-Listen Project as a means of expressing individual opinions effectively and of improving one's own keenness of evaluation in the process in spite of such difficulties as women who would rather bake cookies ten hours than think two hours.

Dean Kenneth Bartlett, Vice President of Syracuse University, the main speaker, discussed "Television's Question Mark."



Above: Panel at the ACBB conference in Dayton, OH, 1978.

Right (opposite page): Speakers: Senator Harrison "Jack" Schmitt, the then NPR President, and Marieli Rowe (ACBB).

1943 Good Listening is "a monthly list of some good radio programs" recommended by Wisconsin Joint Committee for Better Radio Listening. Leslie Spence is the group's first president. On the back page of each newsletter is a strong plea for appreciative letters to sponsors. Good Listening is sent to members, interested readers, schools and groups for a minimal fee. It is also mailed to appropriate sponsors, networks and radio stations.

Convention

COLUMBUS, OHIO, APRIL 10

The first annual convention of the American Council for Better Broadcasts, Columbus, Ohio, April 10, will consist of a business meeting and four general sessions—the first, a joint session with the Institute for Education by Radio-TV; the last, a dinner session. Discussion will center on: Oriental-Occidental Understanding through Radio-TV; Radio-TV Evaluation Taught in Schools; Balanced News; and Educational Television.

Among the speakers will be **Garnet Garrison**, Director of Television, University of Michigan; **Kathleen N. Lardie**, Manager WDTR, Department of Radio Education, Detroit Public Schools; **Harry J. Skornia**, University of Illinois, Executive Director of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, and from May 1951-53 Radio Attache, U.S. Embassy, Department of State, in charge of German language network in Austria; **Ralph Steetle**, Executive director, Joint Committee for Educational Television (invited).

An outstanding program is now taking shape. It will be printed in the April 1 Newsletter. Will you ring April 10 on your calendar for this interesting and thought-provoking treat? The convention is open to the public. Anyone interested will be welcome (except to the business session at 8:30 a.m.) Registration fee is \$1.00.

The Convention Committee consists of Mrs. Melvin Koch, Columbus, Ohio, Chairman; Mrs. Walter Brummund, Appleton, Wis., Mrs. J. Howard McKay, Springfield, Penn., and Mrs. James Ripley, San Francisco, Cal., Dr. I. Keith Tyler, Dir., Institute for Education by Radio-TV, collaborator.

The nationally famous Institute held immediately preceding the Convention (April 7-10) draws a galaxy of talent. If you are able to come early, you would enjoy attending some of these sessions.

Left: Wisconsin's first lady, Joyce Dreyfus, listens to a speech from the head of Chinese radio.



Past Conventions: The First 30 Years

- 1953 Minneapolis, MN ACBB formed with representatives from 18 national organizations, 18 state groups, many local organizations from 93 cities in 34 states
- Madison, WI The Wisconsin Better Radio-TV Institute; **Focus:** Evaluation of Radio-TV Drama; Participants include High School students
- 1954 through 1970, the annual convention of the ACBB was held in Columbus, OH, in partnership with the annual convention of the nationally famous Institute for Education by Radio-TV (IERT).
- 1954 Columbus, OH First ACBB convention; **Focus:** Oriental-Occidental understanding through Radio-TV; Radio-TV Evaluation Taught in schools; **Speakers:** Prof. Harry Skornia, Dr. Keith Tyler
- 1955 Columbus, OH Second Annual convention; **Focus:** Teaching Evaluation of Radio-TV; **Speakers:** Dr. Keith Tyler, Prof. Edgar Dale, Dr. Louis Forsdale, Dr. Harry Skornia
- 1956 Columbus, OH **Focus:** Teaching Basic Evaluation of Radio-TV; How do you evaluate the mass media; Expectations from the classroom; Some Criteria.
- 1957 Columbus, OH Panel **Focus:** Helping Young People to Evaluate
- 1958 Columbus, OH
- 1959 Columbus, OH **Focus:** TV and Good Music; Children and TV
- 1960 Columbus, OH **Speakers:** James Robertson (NET), Dr. Edgar Dale
- 1961 Columbus, OH **Focus:** How We Learn To Evaluate; **Speakers:** Dr. Aldrich Paul (ACBB President), Dr. Lee Sherman Dreyfus, Dr. Stuart Hyde
- 1962 Columbus, OH **Focus:** ACBB—A Different Approach; **Speakers:** Dr. Clinton Bradford, Dr. Patrick Hazard, Dr. Lee Sherman Dreyfus
- 1963 Columbus, OH **Focus:** World Communications - Discussion of Satellite Communications; **Speakers:** Dr. Lee Sherman Dreyfus, others
- 1964 Columbus, OH **Speaker:** Dr. William Harley
- 1965 Columbus, OH **Focus:** At the Crossroads—ETV; Raising an audience that IS discriminating is the task of the schools; **Speaker:** Dr. George Steiner
- 1966 Columbus, OH **Focus:** The Values of Broadcasting: Strengthening Them
- 1967 Columbus, OH **Focus:** The Information Explosion; Public Television Next Year (beginning of PBS)
- 1968 Columbus, OH
- 1969 Columbus, OH **Focus:** Freedom and Responsibility in Broadcasting; **Speakers:** Kenneth A. Cox, Rev. Everett C. Parker
- 1970 Columbus, OH
- 1971 Chicago, IL **Focus:** Children's Programming, and News Broadcasting
- 1972 Springfield, IL **Speaker:** Jack Lyle
- 1973 Minneapolis, MN ACBB 20th Anniversary
- 1974 Baton Rouge, LA **Focus:** Redefinition of The Public Interest, Convenience and Necessity; **Speaker:** Dr. Clinton Bradford
- 1975 Cleveland, OH **Focus:** Broadcasting: Who's Really in Charge? **Speaker:** Dr. Robert Liebert
- 1976 Madison, WI **Focus:** Three "Rs" of Broadcasting: Research, Regulation, Responsibility
- 1977 Madison, WI Presented with WABB; **Focus:** It's Good Business to Promote Good Television
- 1978 Dayton, OH **Focus:** Television is a Member of your Family; **Speaker:** Hedda Sharapan
- 1979 Chicago, IL Presented with the NAEB; **Focus:** Toward a Media Wise Society for the 80s; **Speakers:** Abbott Washburn, Robert Mulholland, Senator Harrison Schmitt
- 1980 Los Angeles, CA **Focus:** The First Amendment in an Information Society
- 1981 Washington, D.C. **Focus:** Telecommunications In Our Everyday Lives; Kids-to-Kids International Satellite demonstration; Conference coverage presented on C-Span
- 1982 Madison, WI Presented with WABB; **Focus:** Telecommunications in Our Everyday Lives; **Speaker:** Jack Anderson
- 1983 Madison, WI Two conferences: 1. **Focus:** "KIDS MEET ACROSS SPACE" documentary and celebration; 2. **Focus:** ACBB 30th Anniversary; **Speaker:** WI Governor Lee Sherman Dreyfus

1945 Arthur C. Clarke develops the geosynchronous communications satellite

1947 Good Listening approves FCC role which "now functions for us, the public, who own the airwaves."

"Meet the Press" broadcast begins (Still on today!)

1948 Community Antenna Television (CATV) forerunner of cable TV

LOOK-LISTEN

- an amazing interactive project that reached over 10,000 people at its peak;
- qualitative evaluations that could serve teachers, families and community groups;
- much potential for this to be reinvented-reincarnated

Thirty Years of Look-Listen, 1953-1983

by Clinton Bradford

Excerpts taken from May/June 1983 issue of Better Broadcasts News

Throughout the years the American Council for Better Broadcasts has urged concerned citizens to become knowledgeable judges of program quality. No other non-profit national educational organization has devised a more effective project for achieving its goals than ACBB's Look-Listen Opinion Poll.

The Poll conducted each fall as the television networks introduce their new season programs provides participating monitors opportunity to exercise their skills in judging program quality. Following the guidelines provided, the viewers assign a rating to each program and write an evaluative explanation in support of that rating.

Tuning In to Critical Viewing

One unique feature of the critical thinking process through which ACBB's Look-Listen Poll leads the viewer, is that the pattern quickly becomes im-

planted. The next program the participant views also gets a similar scrutiny. Viewer awareness of slighted production thoroughness may be as vividly disconcerting as an emptiness of substance in the program. Either can be justification for changing the channel or for clicking the set off.

"I still have the same programs as favorites and dislike the ones I did before this unit. But now I know why."

—A LOOK-LISTEN STUDENT PARTICIPANT

It was the realization that a critical viewing public can do more than "turn off the set," that prompted Jessie Hill McCause, Leslie Spence, and their friends in that 1953 meeting in Minneapolis to found the American Council for Better Broadcasts and to put in motion the Look-Listen Opinion Poll to educate us television consumers to understand and to recognize quality in programming. The ideal McCause, Spence, et, al., hoped for was that when the empty program appeared we would respond across the nation. And when the networks and their affiliates asked "Why?" they would have in their hands copies of the Annual Look-Listen Report where recorded comments of viewers everywhere would answer them.

Look-Listen Across the Nation

The Look-Listen Poll project reached large numbers of people through established service organizations in widely scattered communities. A featured group in the 1959 report, for example, was the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in Modesto, California. The chapter's mass media chairman enlisted participation by 6,651 monitors. Six hundred seventy-five were adults from other organized groups, and the school system provided 5,967 teenagers. Modesto submitted more than 30,000 program evaluations to the national poll that year. Overall, 10,703 monitors from 32 states recorded 56,440 ratings and accompanying justification statements.

Dedicated Leadership

And there was Leslie Spence, the ACBB executive secretary, who bossed, coordinated, gave attention to the million meticulous details! That her helpers returned year after year, that the reports were completed with clear and meaningful data, ready for distribution at the appointed times -these things attest to her complete dedication and devotion to duty!

LOOK-LISTEN

Look-Listen is a unique poll of opinion. Anyone on the audience side of the microphone can participate in it. It emphasizes reasons for people's likes and dislikes, and so supplies information not touched by most polls. Copies of the annual report are sent to networks, sponsors, the FCC, and Congressional committees—in short to those who influence programming.

YOU Are Invited

YOU, as an individual, wherever you are, are hereby invited to take part in this poll. Each monitor is asked to give careful attention to eight NETWORK programs of evening or late afternoon or anytime Saturday or Sunday, of these types: CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS, DRAMA, MUSIC, NEWS AND

INFORMATION. You rate them Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor—and tell WHY you rated them as you did. Three cents for the eight report cards each person needs is the only cost. Other material is free.

Report on programs from both educational and commercial stations, where possible. Don't neglect the special programs. Return your cards to your chairman. If you have none, to Mrs. George Nelson, 329 N. Randall, Madison, Wis., BEFORE THANKSGIVING.

To Chairmen: In enlisting monitors, please emphasize: 1. the little time each monitor gives; 2. the value of definite reasons for ratings; and 3. the need to perform this public service and return the cards promptly.

NOVEMBER 1953

Send for Material Early

Our joint undertaking in evaluation is the Look-Listen Project. Materials are free—except 3c for the eight report cards each participant needs. Order from Mrs. G. F. Matthews, 4539 Winnequah Road, Madison, Wis., stating number of participants. As reports to be included in the 1954 Project Report must be in before Jan. 31, send for material before the Christmas rush, if possible.

If your group and ten of its members are part of ACBB, cards for as many as 30 participants will be furnished free.

OCTOBER 1964

1948 "Listening Project" is organized—later to become the Look-Listen Opinion Poll. Greta Potter, of Superior, WI, enlists the first of thousands she will involve in her area over the years.

Airplane rebroadcasts TV signal across nine states

PROJECT

CHiPs: "Too many teeth in main character's mouth." (1982-83)

A sampling of participant comments taken from various Look-Listen Opinion Poll reports.

Ernie Ford: "No one a wittier host than Ol' Ern. Best singer on TV. Wish he would do more singing." (Modesto, CA 1959)

Lone Ranger: "Exciting, but no killing at all. Makes the side of law and order appear exciting for a change." (Nampa, ID 1959)

Nightline: "Mostly mediocre twiddle-twaddle." (Tacoma, WA 1959)

Happy Days: "No body likes the 50s anymore because it was a bad year." (1982-3)

Edward R. Murrow: "The airways [sic] are lacking in editorial comment by topnotch correspondents of experience in the international field. Mr. Murrow is the only commentator to fill that gap." (Milford, NJ 1959)

Leave It to Beaver: "I often come away wishing I could handle similar situations so wisely." (Midland, MI 1959)

CBS News: "So I know the whether [sic] for tomorrow." (1982-3)

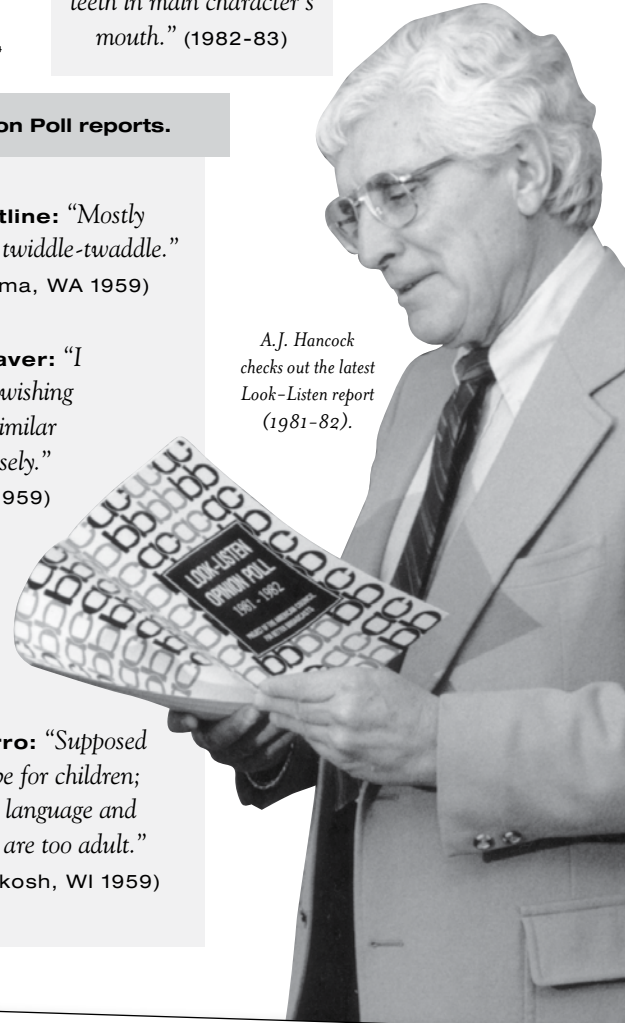
High Adventure: "A real relief from the glamour and egotism of many so-called stars of radio and TV." (Rising City, NE 1959)

Filthy Rich: "I think this is a dome [sic] show." (1982-83)

American Bandstand: "Fun program for teens. My only objection, its length. I often wonder when the 'regulars' get their schoolwork done." (Minneapolis, MN 1959)

Zorro: "Supposed to be for children; yet language and plot are too adult." (Oshkosh, WI 1959)

A.J. Hancock checks out the latest Look-Listen report (1981-82).



PROJECT POSTCARD *Ruth Pflager, founder*

Project Postcard will now be available to supplement the annual Look-Listen Poll. It is a way by which you can keep your finger in the dike and help control the TV Tide. It is a do-it-yourself direct communication with the Sponsor who pays the bills and/or the Network which is responsible for what goes out over the PUBLIC AIR-WAVES which it uses in trust.

All of us at one time or another look at TV, and each of us has a reaction to the program and the commercial that we see. Tell your family about it if you want to, but, even better, why not tell the people who choose what is available to watch?

Project Postcard's TVviewer card will give you guidelines for comment if you want them, and the booklet of sponsors' addresses, "National Television Advertisers," will make it possible for you to mail your comment directly to a place where it counts.

In the last analysis, the Public Interest is best protected and defined by the public

itself. Gilbert Seldes, former Dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, says: "Broadcasting today is a minority service. It will remain a minority service until a substantial portion of the public joins the broadcasters and the FCC in defining the public interest. My overriding concern is to discover ways in which the public can do this. The public is the third party in interest, but it has not been able to make itself effective." Project Postcard provides a way for any group or individual to express continuing concern.

This is the way it works

For a Group:

1. Select a Project Postcard Chairman
2. Order Project Postcard Packet (material for ten people, \$2.00) from Mrs. George Nelson, 329 N. Randall, Madison, Wis.
3. Chairman enlists participants, who each agree to send 5 TVviewer cards during one assigned week.

4. Each participant watches any show he wishes and sends his evaluation directly to Sponsor/Network immediately—with duplicate card to Mrs. Nelson or to local chairman.

For Individuals:

1. Send for as many TVviewer cards as you want (1c each)
2. Send for "National Television Advertisers," addresses of over 400 sponsors (50c)
3. Mail cards anytime and all the time. So here is a way to have your say! Broadcasters and Sponsors do listen, and the more of us who have something to say, the surer we are to be heard. Send to us for your Project Postcard Packet today. It includes: the list of sponsors, TVviewer cards, Project procedures and tally sheets.

NOVEMBER 1965

Late 1940s 1.) The Wisconsin Association for Better Radio Listening (another name change) actively encourages teaching better radio listening in the classroom. Ethel Holt, teacher and lifelong WABB/ACBB member, soon promotes this on a large scale in Racine, WI high schools; this will continue for many years.

Sponsor Recognition Awards

Living out our positive philosophy, we complimented good programming and the sponsors of it and we critiqued when necessary. Look Listen & Project Postcard provided the outlet and the strength of our grassroots organization to present producers and sponsors with honest, individual, thoughtful responses rather than organized mass mailings. The Sponsor Recognition Awards were given annually until it became difficult to identify sole or major sponsors and underwriters of individual programs. More and more we saw thirty- and fifteen-second ads being sold on the basis of ratings and time slots.



AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR BETTER BROADCASTS
120 East Wilson Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703
Telephone (608) 257-7712

FOUNDED IN 1953

NEWS RELEASE

November 11, 1979, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Chicago, Illinois

Today, in Chicago, Illinois, the American Council for Better Broadcasts presented its Annual SPONSOR RECOGNITION AWARDS to eleven companies for their financial support of programs deemed to be outstanding during the past year. Each year for the past 14 years, the ACBB has presented certificates of recognition to honor companies which have sponsored or underwritten television and radio programs of exceptional quality.

Receiving the awards were:

The American Telephone & Telegraph Company (Bell System), for the sponsorship of "Horowitz-Live" and co-sponsorship of "The Boston Goes to China."
Illinois Bell Telephone Company Assistant Vice-President in charge of Advertising and Customer Relations, Mr. Bailey Markham of Chicago, accepted the award.
General Electric Company was honored for presenting "Amahl and the Night Visitors" and "Champions: A Love Story." Mr. Richard E. Geyer, Chicago Regional Public Relations Manager, accepted the award.

Kraft Foods received recognition for "The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe" and was represented by James R. Blocki of Chicago.

McDonald's



October 1981, reception at COMSAT, before the satellite Interconnect. Marieli Rowe explains it all to Ted Turner who was pleased to receive one of his first awards in recognition of his pioneering idea (cable/satellite all news channel-CNN)—our Special Recognition Award!

1967 Sponsor Recognition Awards

SPONSORS COMMENDED

Sponsors of outstanding programs seem to receive very little advance notice as compared with performers, directors, and others.

So the Council for Better Broadcasts, on May 18, voted special recognition to some of these sponsors. For it recognizes that sponsors who take sole responsibility for a significant special program or who alternate to sponsor an outstanding series make a valuable contribution to our society. The Council especially commended the following sponsors:

XEROX
 "Children's Film Festival"
 "China: Roots of Madness"
 "Mark Twain Tonight"
 "Death of a Salesman"
 "Glass Menagerie"
 "Crucible"

BELL TELEPHONE
 "Young People's Concerts"
 "Bell Telephone Hour"

HALLMARK
 "Barefoot in Athens"
 "Blithe Spirit"
 "The Admirable Crichton"
 "Abe Lincoln in Illinois"
 "Anastasia"

TEXACO
 "Metropolitan Opera"
 (for 27 years)

SINGER SEWING MACHINES
BURLINGTON MILLS "ABC Stage 67"
 "Hall of Kings"
B. F. GOODRICH "We Are Not Alone"
 "Christ Is Born"

AMERICAN GAS ASSOCIATION
 "Britain's Royal Palaces"
 "The Law and the Prophets"
 "American Image"

UNION CARBIDE "Twenty-First Century"
ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA
AETNA CASUALTY "National Geographic Series"
 "The Robe"

FORD
MUTUAL OF OMAHA "Wild Kingdom"
SYLVANIA "Nutcracker Suite"

OCTOBER 1967



ACBB President, Nancy McMahon presents Joe Hughes (Corporation for Public Broadcasting) with a 1977 Sponsor Recognition Award.



Left: ACBB President, Genevieve Finnigan presents Station Manager, David Sanks (WISC-TV, Madison, WI CBS Affiliate), with a Sponsor Recognition Award at the 1983 premiere of "Kids Across Space," in Madison.

Below: The recipients of the 1983 Sponsor Recognition Awards.



Our New Name...

National Telemedia Council, Inc.

Members of the American Council for Better Broadcasts, meeting at ACBB's 30th Annual Conference, November 20, 1983, ratified the new name voted by the members of the Board at its October 26 meeting:

NATIONAL TELEMEDIA COUNCIL, Inc. Look Listen Learn Respond

The new name was chosen after 18 months of research and study by an Ad Hoc Committee which reported periodically to the Board. Name suggestions came from a broad spectrum of individuals, including Board, Advisory Council and committee members, as well as others concerned with the future of the Council. This action recognizes the continuing growth and diversification of the communications media and the Council's role as both student and interpreter of changing technologies.

"In changing our name, we weighed several factors," said Susan Dreyfus Fosdick, the Council's president. "We looked for a straightforward name, easy to recall and clearly..."



At the 30th Anniversary celebration, in the Great Hall of the UW-Madison Student Union. "Head table": Jack Rowe, Genevieve Finnigan, Susan Dreyfus Fosdick, former WI Governor Lee Sherman Dreyfus, and former WI first lady Joyce Dreyfus.

Philosophy & Thought

Living Rooms Without Walls

TV's most significant effect so far has been the way it makes it impossible for "nice people" to ignore any longer the centrality of popular culture, good and bad, in American life. The TV set stares at us, lighted or momentarily dark, electronic symbol of the way popular culture or commercial entertainment has transformed both American leisure and the values that determine the use of that leisure. If every man's home has traditionally been his castle, the TV antenna became in effect an electronic drawbridge across which could gallop hordes of pitchmen and buffoons. Much less frequently an interesting character crossed the same moat of privacy. The TV set then put us all in living rooms without walls.

Parent and teacher knew now that something had to be done to help young people heed the Socratic maxim that the unexamined life is not worth living. Some have suggested a new course be set up in the schools; others, including the writer, feel there is more to be gained by relating the popular arts to the traditional program in English in new, imaginative ways. TV drama, for example, ought to be taught as an integral part of the course in American literature; British films, as a part of the English survey; TV comedy, as a part of the "types" approach to literature. Not only would this tremendously enhance the instruction of the traditional pieces, but it would also provide students with benchmarks against which they could measure the achievement of contemporary forms. The newest literary arts would then give life to our study of the old; the older selections, on the other hand, would remind our young people, already wondering impatiently what the 1958 Ford will be like, that excellence is a matter of intensity and complexity of experience rather than mere newness. The classics are antidotes to parochialism of time, the disease of contemporomania.

We need fewer grandiose curriculum revisions in our schools and more imaginative connections made in the classroom between our ethical and literary traditions and the world of popular culture.

The traditional disciplines are frustrating and meaningless only when they are studied with no attempt to see their relevance to the contemporary situation. I help students to perceive this relevance. It is first necessary for teacher or parent to see it himself

Patrick D. Hazard

NOVEMBER 1956

Patrick Hazard, Louis Forsdale, Fred Friendly, Roger Morris, Leslie Spence... a few of the early "philosophers" in media literacy, beginning to pull together the key principles that define the term... empowering citizens to move from passive to active viewing... to critical engagement... to analyze the impact of the industry, the producers, as well as their role as the audience. The "current" events of the 50's, 60's, and 70's outlined in these articles are not only fascinating, they also provide a poignant historical perspective, as our world has re-lived many of them in the 80's, 90's, 00s, and indeed even in these past months of 2006. George Bernard Shaw captures the unfortunate truth, "We learn from history that we learn nothing from history."

All the more reason to re-double our efforts toward a media literate global citizenry.

The Media Fallout Effect

by Dr. Louis Forsdale,
Teachers College, Columbia University

I still hear it argued by academicians, long hairs and community leaders that they have no reason to become seriously involved with evaluation of radio and television programs because they can happily live without these media, and if they don't watch and listen why should they raise their metabolism or their voices?

Gilbert Seldes has given the answer through an interesting analogy. He speaks of the "fallout effect," of the mass media, likening side effects of media to A-Bomb and H-Bomb fallout. The point is that you don't have to be at point zero or even near to be killed or damaged by an A or H-Bomb explosion. You can be in a fishing boat (or in Buffalo, New York) hundreds or thousands of miles away and be touched by the remote event.

So it is with television, to center on our most powerful new medium. You don't have to watch the screen to have it touch your

life. As millions of others view the screen their behavior touches your life. How? Among other things, what they learn of the news helps condition their attitudes toward politics, toward foreign policy and domestic policy. And, while nobody knows quite how effective TV is in such matters, your legislators are elected partly as a result of what happens on television, whether you watch the screen or not.

■ ■ ■

Television people say they can't or shouldn't editorialize, but they are engaged precisely in that act by selection of news relating to domestic politics, or, more particularly, to foreign views of our domestic politics. Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican or a Communist or a Socialist you are caught in this fallout of planned ignorance.

That's the best reason I know, at the moment, why even the man who doesn't give a hang for television had better look to his reasoning. There's no place to hide.

JANUARY 1957

The Trouble With Television Is America:

A PLAN FOR ACTION

Summary of an address May 2, 1962, at the ACBB Convention, given by Dr. Patrick D. Hazard, Director, Institute of American Studies, University of Hawaii.

"The biggest trouble with television may very well be America," said Dr. Hazard.

Three commonly held assumptions, he said, inhibit the maturing of our country and its institutions, including television: "1. the cult of American superiority; 2. the mythology of free enterprise; and 3. the doctrine of popular infallibility."

I. The Cult of American Superiority

"Perhaps the most blatant expression of the cult of American superiority was Charles Brouwer's contention a few years ago that 'America is the all-time Number One Hit on Humanity's Hit Parade.'"

"We are certainly the richest, but are we the happiest? We surely have the most freedom, but can we honestly say we've made the most of it? We are the luckiest nation in history, but have we been the wisest in protecting and conserving our good Fortune? . . ."

"The trouble with the cult of American superiority began, it seems to me, when we started to assume that the quantitative revolution of more chickens in every pot and longer tailfins in every two-car garage was what the American dream was all about. Addressing ourselves to the unfinished business of letting the underdog two-thirds of the world in on the decencies of abundance could justify the continuing superiority of American civilization. Frankly, I don't think enough of us are touched by that vision of extending maximum opportunity to the rest of man. We have become bemused by a trivial trinity—Las Vegas, Disneyland, and Miami Beach. When we should have been reading John Winthrop, Tom Paine, Abraham Lincoln, and Woodrow Wilson, we have been watching Liz and who is it today?—Eliot Ness, and Kookie.

" . . . Too many of us complacently assume that our revolution is behind us when the truth is that we are committed to an unending one. We must balance our quantitative revolution with a qualitative one. Not only the first, but the finest. Not merely the biggest, but the best of its kind. Not simply the most, but also a few things done with superlative care. . . ."

"The American people deserve to have a really complex picture of their past that explains them, warts and all.

I emphasize struggle because if we saw the tension, violence, and bitterly fought battles of our history, we might begin to identify more with the underdogs that now constitute two-thirds of the world as well as at least a quarter of those inhabiting our own shores. Only because the popular-media versions of Ameri-

can history are so bland, do we fail to see how not so very long ago we were an underdeveloped area, subject to the same contempt and doubt as the new nations of Asia and Africa are today.

"Facile illusions about our superiority may also keep us from learning enough from other cultures. We must never forget that our real genius, which we often allow to be obscured, is our capacity to assimilate and amalgamate. And we have a lot to learn as well as a lot to teach. . . ."

The "cult of American superiority" hampers America and its institutions in achieving maturity, according to Dr. Patrick D. Hazard, as reported in the last Newsletter. Two other hindrances, he went on to say, are "the mythology of free enterprise" and "the doctrine of popular infallibility."

The Mythology of Free Enterprise

A complex, interdependent, technological society needs a strong, active government at all levels. The very vitality of the private sector of our economy has developed imbalance in the public sector that only an energetic government can handle. Let us not forget that the Federal Radio Commission was first founded in the 1920's because business needed an umpire to quiet the howlings and squealings of unregulated wavelengths. The extension of governmental concern to the character and the program promises of applicants for wavelengths was a legitimate safeguard, so that we would not squander a scarce public resource. . . ."

"The fact is that today there are many sources of power which limit our freedom—big corporations, big agriculture, big labor, big trade associations. To continue to assume that government is the only potentially despotic power is innocent beyond imagination.

Which brings up another myth about our business system—competition. I don't really believe that 3500 radio stations have served us better than 1000, unless you consider the substitution of Chubby Checkers for a balanced schedule of news and public affairs an improvement. The penchant networks have for counter-programming documentaries and specials, or overlapping an opponent's schedule is competition that doesn't always rebound to the viewer's benefit.

"I have no easy solutions. But I am sure that ritual incantation of phrases like individual initiative, progress, and competition are no substitute for the steady and continuing examination of changing economic and social realities in America. After seven years of struggle, the educational broadcasters have successfully sought relief at the public treasury for tax money to accelerate the growth of a crucial part of the public sector. If this pump priming works, perhaps we should find further ways of helping the chronically undernourished educational broadcasters to fulfill their potential. I no

longer believe the myth that the private sector is the only wealth-producing part of the economy. Public health, public education, and other non-private institutions have contributed just as much to our abundance as has entrepreneurial leadership.

3. The Doctrine of Popular Infallibility

But perhaps the most deeply rooted illusion keeping America and its television from maturing rapidly enough to meet its agenda is the idea that if the public wants something in a democracy, it's perfectly O.K. to provide it, no questions asked. Giving the public what it wants is a business shibboleth; advising the public of where it is wanting is regarded as quasi-totalitarianism.

It is time we took a deeper look at the dangers of rule by the numbers. Whatever John Q. wants, John Q. gets, goes the refrain. But does he always? Really?

What I'm driving at is that the ordinary American may be accepting shoddy substitutes for the basic satisfactions a humane industrial society could provide him. The possibility is that what we call bad TV obscures basic needs.

Another insufficiently discussed problem about 'cultural democracy' is that it always carries the risk of failure. The majority can choose poorly, even to the point of self-destruction. Giving the public what it thoughtlessly feels it wants may actually be greasing the skids into oblivion. The enshrinement of the entertainer as hero in America is surely an instance of the public choosing poorly. And it will take much painful readjustment to dethrone Liz and Fabian and Mickey Mantle, and put in their place exemplars worthy of free men. If it is hard to dramatize the real heroes of the American experiment, then that is simply another example of how tough it is to be free successfully.

4. Conclusion

What I've been arguing, then, is that American television can ultimately be no better than our understanding of our own history, our own institutions and ourselves. Whitman once said that great art requires great audiences; and similarly great television demands an America aspiring to real greatness, not merely a facile sense of superiority. To paraphrase another great American, don't ask what this new medium can do for you but ask what you can do in your home and community to help broadcasting achieve greatness.

This does not mean however that we should let TV get off easily. As my demands on America are high because she has benefited so much from history, so my demands on the TV medium are great because of its unusual potential and our own great need for the understanding that leads to wise action. "To whom much is given" is as true of a medium of communication as it is of a culture.

OCTOBER 1962

THE PRESS AND DISCERNMENT

"Journalism for Poets, Protesters and Vice Presidents" was the title of the Commencement address given by Fred W. Friendly last June at the University of Wisconsin. While he spoke for the most part on the importance of a free press in a democracy, he saw also great need for a discriminating public.

Excerpts from the address will illustrate:

"The only proper antibody for the absolute power of politicians is the press, and the only sure control over the excesses and inadequacies of that power is the discernment exercised by the reading and viewing public.

"... The reader or the viewer, to quote Lippmann again, must learn 'to look for the place where the dispatch was filed, for the name of the correspondent, the name of the wire service, . . . the circumstances under which the statement was secured, . . . whether the reporter saw what he describes, and to try to remember how that reporter described other events

in the past.' Every citizen must know the difference between straight reporting, news analysis, and editorials. They should recognize whether an interview or a documentary has been edited and how.

"... We should understand that the last two presidents of the United States and the last three Congresses have done nothing about a long-range, insulated system of funding for public broadcasting. And we should realize that cable television may change telecommunications as much as television changed radio and that the FCC long-range policy on cable is now being second-guessed and threatened by the White House and certain powerful senators.

"I submit that the medium is not the message. Mankind continues to be the message and the messenger. To study the issues that divide us is not enough. We must perceive how most of the education available to us after formal education reaches us. To convey that knowledge, universities in their search for relevance might experiment with a new kind

of course in which their professors in political science, history, and the law, together with journalistic practitioners, both electronic and print, establishment and underground, collaborate on a kind of flexible critique. The syllabus for such a course should be today's newspaper, the 7 o'clock news as it varies on all three networks, documentaries like 'The Selling of the Pentaon' and NBC's recent essay on the FBI, the newsmagazines, books like Joe McGinnis's *The Selling of the President*, and the upcoming election itself.

"What makes my appeal for such additions to the curriculum so urgent is that I am convinced that the news media will not be able to perform the vital service required of it during the crucial 1972 election unless there is public support for its mission, support not for the content or style of the news, but support which reminds politicians of all parties that the First Amendment still means what it says it means."

A "LEAK" CAN BE DANGEROUS

This account by Roger Morris showing how misleading and potentially dangerous a "leak" can be in news stories is illustrated in detail under the title "Eight Days in April: The Press Flattens Carter with the Neutron Bomb" (*Columbia Journalism Review*, Nov.-Dec. 1978).

"Leaks of seemingly valuable information are usually made by a person or faction with something to gain by them. The informants claim accuracy but seldom will identify the person who was the source of the statement. In this case reporters accepted as truth a leak which occurred in the spring of 1978 when President Carter's 'indecisiveness' was a cliché being spread by the press; so it was easy for reporters to follow the current trend, and they were willing to pass on a 'relatively artless bureaucratic and foreign item about the neutron bomb issue.' The press largely failed to investigate, analyze, or sometimes to tell the who, what where, when, or why of the national security story' but passed on 'leaks' which were designed to enlist public support in a clandestine policy struggle with the President."

April 1, 1978, a reporter from Brussels said that our allies were "bewildered by the wavering and dissension in

Washington." She based her statement on "talks with senior alliance officers," who did not want to be identified. She quoted no other officials or views. Richard Burt ran the story in the *New York Times* and again on April 3 the *Times* front page reported the controversy in NATO as caused by "doubts" about Carter, "with no conflicting evidence or perspectives cited. There was no detailed analysis of alternatives or of the weapon itself." He failed even to say that some critics said the bomb was inhumane.

"The story begged most of the important questions: What history had brought the issue to this juncture? What role had the Pentagon and State Department bureaucracies played? Had the press and the President's top advisors been conducting two separate policies? Was there some reason for President Carter to 'doubt' that the NATO allies would actually deploy the weapon? What was the place of the neutron warhead in the larger arms control negotiations with the Russians?"

April 6, Burt was again on the *Times* front page. Now Carter was "reviewing" his decision. And Piscus of the *Washington Post* ran the story. April 7, the *Times* and the *Post* both said Carter would "defer" a decision on production.

FEBRUARY 1972

FEBRUARY 1979

Teaching New Media

Everything old is new again. As many of today's scholars are trying to create and name the new media literacy, it is interesting to look as far back as 1935 to the solid pedagogy being developed around televiewing. Even though the tools may have changed, the fundamentals of good teaching have been around since Socrates. These articles outline the work of some of the pioneering educators who presented how to teach the new media of the day and at the same time promoted the fundamentals of... positive engagement, beginning where the students are coming from... critical judgment... exploring and embracing new media... teaching for the future and teaching for change. We believe there will come a day when inventing a new word will no longer be necessary and the time honored term "literacy" will mean "reading" the world.

How to Evaluate the Mass Media*

by Dr. Edgar Dale, Ohio State University, Authority on Mass Media and Education (Summary of a Speech)

"The most important thing about a program is the author's view of life, for the program will show his attitude toward man. Is he trying to say that man is in the grip of outside forces? Or is man in charge, more or less, of his own life? . . . Is the desirable role of a person to inform, reform, conform, transform? . . .

"Frequently on television we see men in a dilemma which could be simply resolved and three acts are quite unnecessary. There is no illumination.

"George Alexred in a recent New York Times article quoted one dramatist as saying that the art of writing a play was to get the man up a tree in the first act, to throw stones at him in the second act, and to get him down in the third act. But, most important of all, it seems to me, is to give good reasons as to why he went up in the first place. Too often, as we evaluate a story, we see that it is unbelievable to start with."

One should ask himself what standard of success a play sets up. On TV or on film the hero usually wins. There is nothing wrong with a happy ending. One should ask: Is it reasonable? "The standard of reality is a basic one," Dr. Dale said, "on which to judge mass media."

He then took up the appropriateness of violence in plays for children and youth. Drama is supposed to purge our emotions through pity. "But to get this purging of the emotions, to get this suffusion of pity, one must understand. As one sees violence on

television, is it likely that he understands clearly why people are acting as violently as they do?

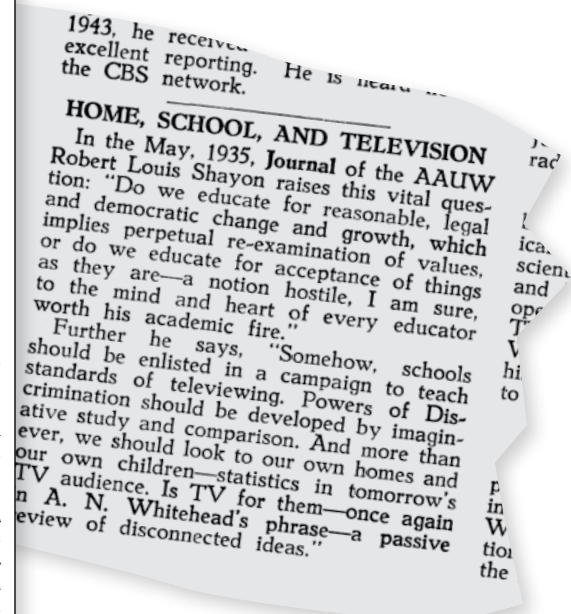
"To defend excessive violence in television or movies on the ground that Shakespeare had a good deal of violence and that there is violence in Huck Finn is, it seems to me, making a very untenable inference. The violence of the feud murder in Huck Finn provides illuminating insight. It communicates the futility, the tragedy of taking the law into one's own hands. It purges with pity, with understanding."

Dr. Dale said that motivations on the screen are often stereotyped, unreal, inadequate; and so cannot help a child to understand his own conflicts. Children do not always identify themselves with the good man. Even if they did, it is unwise to divide people sharply into kind-unkind; good-bad. Life isn't that neat.

"I ask, finally," said Dr. Dale, "does the violence shown illuminate the well-springs of conduct, help us to understand why people act as they do?"

Later he stated, "Violence and cruelty can dull the sensitivities of children, make them callous, make them want to be tough, hard, competitive."

He believes the existence of excellent programs is not enough. We must become critical listeners, he said—"bring our intelligence to bear upon the kinds of choices which we are making, be critical-minded, not sponge-minded. We are introducing the teaching of discrimination of radio, movies, television and the press into high schools, helping youngsters to choose their fare more wisely. . . . We have found that to the primary enjoyment of a film or television program, thoughtful viewing adds a secondary enjoyment, an enjoyment in depth."



NOVEMBER 1953

OCTOBER 1956

1953 TV Guide begins

The laser is invented

Good Listening headlines "We Go National" and continues—"Minneapolis, June 24, 1953...The American Council for Better Broadcasts. First place on the Council's sign-up sheet is given to the Illinois Council for Motion Pictures, Radio, Television and Publications. Leslie Spence is elected as the first ACBB President and Mrs. C. B. Chambers of St. Petersburg, Florida as Treasurer, accepts the first dues.

July/August 2006

TELEMEDIUM

19

Teaching Evaluation Of Radio-TV

(Highlights of a panel moderated by
Dr. I. Keith Tyler,
Get Out of the Rut

John H. Sitting, Director of ECDE, the Columbus Board of Education station, said that the result of evaluating radio and television programs is (or should be) a **basic change in attitude toward some programs and a groping for programs that are more satisfying.** People are too likely to get into a set pattern of listening, he said, in which familiarity makes them **unobservant and easily pleased.** Spectaculars, as well as thoughtful evaluation, are helpful in breaking up this set pattern. The wise teacher lets pupils tell each other the good and bad points to keep in mind when listening, and so reduces the number of pronouncements from the teacher.

What Can Parents Do?

G. Robert Holsinger, Program Supervisor of station WOSU, talked on the planning of programs for children. He also stressed the fact that **training in evaluation starts in the home.** From age one to five, the home is the chief source of such training. When television first came in, it was seen chiefly in taverns; then at the neighbor's. Now it is viewed by the family group, where the child is impressed by the reactions of his parents.

Mr. Holsinger believes that parents should experience children's programs with their children.

What Can Teachers Do? And How?

Mrs. Mabel Eversole, teacher of English at North High School, Columbus, Ohio, said that no teacher is unaware of the home and its influence on children's taste. But the teacher does have the opportunity to help young people to discriminate between the good and the poor so that they weigh the standards they have absorbed at home and those they learn at school. Children need to discuss standards in class to determine which are good measuring rods.

Mrs. Eversole teaches evaluation of radio and television within the curriculum and from the textbook assignments. She touches on drama, comedy, variety, advertising, and news. For example, the class evaluates advertising and news programs in connection with a chapter on propaganda in the eleventh grade text, "Building Better English" (Row and Peterson, pages 12-14). Evaluation of drama fits very well with drama units in tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades.

Mrs. Eversole uses the ACBB Look-Listen Project in the first part of the tenth grade, which is devoted to oral English. Discussion of programs makes an excellent basis for getting students to participate in oral discussion.

As helps, she mentioned (1) an evaluation sheet similar to the ACBB Sheet of sug-

gested criteria; (2) "Practical English," which a large number of students have—especially its rating charts for comedy, news, drama, etc.; (3) "Listenable and Lookables" in *Scholastic Teacher* and occasional articles on evaluation; (4) "Good Listening," a list of recommended programs published by the Wisconsin Association of the ACBB—especially its notes two or three years ago on the background of news commentators. The classes compared the sketch of Edward R. Murrow's background with what the school librarian was able to give them on the background of Walter Winchell and others.

Mrs. Eversole read some of her students' reactions to advertising. A girl said, "The advertisers appeal to your emotions with such slogans as 'Lipstick that makes him kiss you,' or 'With this color on, you're irresistible.'" So you don't stop to think. You just buy. And when he doesn't kiss you or find you irresistible, you are dissatisfied." A boy said, "The advertisers build up a fear of being unwanted if you don't smoke. They try to persuade you into getting under the influence of smoking just to be 'top banana' in your bunch. They build up a feeling of differentness inside the person who doesn't smoke until he has a feeling of being left out of everything."

NOVEMBER 1957

**BETTER
BROADCASTS**

423 N. Pinckney
Madison, Wis.

**NEWS
LETTER**

NOV. 15, 1953

"RADIO-TV, EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY"

ENRICHING, IF

"I am one of those who believe quite strongly that, if television were adequately programmed and seriously programmed, and if the people as a whole could discriminate and were taught in their schools through discussion how to discriminate, in selecting programs, television might conceivably enrich the American home."
(Donald Harrington, quoted in "Academy.")

COMMERCIAL TELEVISION— THE TEACHER'S FRIEND OR ENEMY?

By Dr. George Steiner,
Coordinator of Educational Television,
San Francisco State College, at the Council's
Convention, Columbus, Ohio, June 2, 1965.

Dr. Steiner brought to Columbus some illustrative material: a roughly flat stone about 9 x 7 x 3 inches. This he explained, as he held it up, people used to heat in a fire, then to wrap in handwoven material and use in smoothing clothing. Next he held up a piece of smooth iron pointed at both ends, which had a removable handle—the flatiron of his mother's day. Then he produced the modern electric steam iron, saying, "I don't need to ask any teacher which iron he or she would use. It's true, each iron was designed to do the job—and they did—and could do it today. The main difference is that the steam iron is much more effective."

His point was obvious. Many teachers who use the steam iron fail to use the modern tool of television in teaching. He quoted Dr. Harry Skornia in a recent NAEB Journal article entitled "Will the Citizen of 2064 Need to Read and Write?":

"Dr. Compton Mackenzie has said that probably by this time next century only certain professional classes will learn to read and write. These skills will be as useless for some as how to saddle a horse or how to raise a garden. Most communication will be made via the spoken word or the telemage. Letters will become obsolete—magnetic tape will be much more convenient."

"Dr. Skornia adds: 'This may sound like madness now, but think it over. We are only on the threshold of the electronic, televisual age . . . Certainly, we are fumbling and misusing the new tools entrusted to us.'"

Again quoting Dr. Skornia: "These instruments are upon us. Whether we like it or not, with the world moving supersonically all around us, educators cannot choose to leave these instruments to others. He who molds children molds the future. Right now children are being molded by these most modern of instruments."

Dr. Steiner continued: "I think we need to inform certain teachers that television is here, it is with us." Then he cites figures to prove the point: "Television has become almost 70 per cent of the American family's leisure-time activity. Better than 9 out of 10 households in the United States have a television set. 176 million men, women, and

children have access to a television set. (93.5 per cent of American homes). The percentage of bath tubs and showers in the United States is still some 10 per cent behind that of television sets. Whoever thought that a tube would replace a tub?"

Dr. Steiner raises the question whether the influence of television on children is detrimental. He recalls his own boyhood on a California farm, when, in 1930 he would sneak over to a neighbor's place to listen to a battery-run radio. Then in 1931, when electricity finally reached their farm, they had "An oblong tin box with two sets of plug-ins. By taping a Brownie earphone over the playback head of an old spring-wound Columbia record player, and by using the other earphone as a mike, I could broadcast, closed-circuit, all the way out to the umbrella tree in the front yard. I became the first disc-jockey ever to live on our property . . ."

"Radio took me, a farm boy, to the ends of the world and brought me back. It let me—it helped me, to understand and know how others talked, and I imagined how they looked. It helped me see myself and find myself; and for this I shall always be grateful. For all this, I have pledged myself to work for better broadcasting in America and elsewhere."

With that positive attitude Dr. Steiner returned to the positive attitude toward television which teachers should have.

"The problem of and with television today has a relationship to the problems of teenagers. Neither is really understood. The cause for this misunderstanding rests directly on the shoulders of people like you and me. The teleteen and the teenager are the responsibility of people.

A. If we, as teachers and parents are turning out a monster, whether human or electronic—we are responsible.

B. If our civilization will be swept away by the growth and influence of delinquents—we are to blame.

C. If we think it is OK to cheat on our income tax return, then it must be OK to cheat on an examination paper, and OK to have rigged quiz shows. If we do and say this, we are responsible for the consequences.

D. Likewise we should be accused if we take a passive position and ignore the needs of our children.

The positive attitude Dr. Steiner recommends means making the best even of programs that one personally dislikes. He said: "The most powerful magnets which draw children to the television set are: accessibility, action, adventure, excitement,

color, sound, etc., the type of entertainment 'that doesn't require much.' . . . It is at this level that we begin, and it is from this level that we build.

"Let's suppose that 'Gunsmoke', because it is a re-run at an earlier hour, becomes a favorite. At times this particular program can be pretty violent, and it may take some dedication to be able to overcome the attraction that violence holds. But for a moment, let's forget that part and accentuate the positive. 'Gunsmoke' it seems to me offers an excellent opportunity for discussion of this period in American history, and then supplement it with more authentic materials." Dr. Steiner suggests other tonics for historical discussion: clothing, food, shelter, law, social justice. "With documentaries, the teacher can direct students to the question of the program's point of view, or can initiate a discussion on objective reporting . . ."

"I am only suggesting that we start here—that we start with programs they are now watching and that we then gradually direct or lead them on to the better programs. If we are successful—and there is no reason why we can't be if we want to be—we have taken the first step toward creating a discriminating viewer, and it was not because we said he had to view so-and-so, but because he wanted to view."

He quoted a teacher, a former student of his: "As a source of promoting better viewing habits in our children, the schools can be an enormous help in two ways: 1. Teachers can direct children to the reality experiences of TV and can reinforce the children's selection of these programs by talking about them in school. 2. Teachers can make active use of commercial TV in school by considering it as a proper topic and resource for gaining new experiences. If children are helped to know good books from poor ones, good music from poor music, good art from poor art, there is no reason why they should not be helped to develop high standards in selecting telecasts."

He quoted Dr. Skornia as saying: "If we as a nation and as teachers do fail, it will not be because of the foes from without. It will be because of our smugness, the persistence of habit, the lack of imagination, or our lack of courage and leadership. Never in our history has the challenge been greater—never has the price of failure been so high."

JANUARY 1966

Originally published in September 1984 in *Telemidium* and *Wisconsin School News*, the official publication of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, this article could just as easily have been titled "A Challenge for the 80's." Educational policy and true educational reform are often worlds apart. From "A Nation at Risk" in 1983... to "Goals 2000: Reforming Education to Improve Student Achievement" in 1998 ...to "No Child Left Behind" in 2001...to "?" tomorrow.

Marieli Rowe identified the most important tasks of educators as understanding the ever-evolving "ecology of childhood," reaching children where their thinking begins, and then teaching them to think at a deeper, more critical level. Twenty plus years later, she continues to champion the educational needs of children, undaunted by the shifting political winds of the day. — KAREN AMBROSH

Educating Children in the Television Age: A Challenge for the 80s

BY MARIELI ROWE

Executive Director of the ACBB/NTC

Why are children not learning what the schools are trying to teach them?

If children today are not achieving the literacy skills which society expects, it may be that our teaching institutions are not reaching the children of the eighties where their thinking is. A new approach to literacy is needed in this television age: an approach which acknowledges and uses the world our children know.

School administrators and policy makers need to go where children are thinking and acting. Through policies and statements of philosophy, they must include the new skills of television or media literacy in their curriculum goals.

American education is under attack. There is national concern about the quality of education in the nation. Pick up any newspaper, daily, weekly, or other, and you will find expressions of this concern. A typical one from *U.S. News and World Report*, July 16, 1984: "Yes, there are indeed more jobs," states the article on currently improving employment conditions. "But employers are complaining about indifferent and poor attitudes among high-school graduates." And, "those gripes come on top of complaints about poor reading, writing," concludes the report.

For years we have been hearing about declining grades, college freshmen unprepared in the "basic skills," and the grim statistics of failing American intellectual achievements as compared with those of other countries.

The 1983 Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education is filled with such statistics. Calling the situation, "A Nation at Risk," it concludes that "the educational foundations of our society are presently eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and as a people."



In the same year, the report of another Commission, The Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, expresses "a conviction that a real emergency is upon us." We learn in these studies, in the press, in various other reports, that students are not achieving, that they are increasingly "functionally illiterate," and that other industrialized countries are surpassing American youth in virtually all areas of academic student achievement. There is understandable distress, and also a sense of frustration, in an inability to identify the underlying causes

for this uniquely American dilemma.

Are the children of this age poorer students? Are teachers not good teachers? Is it lack of money? Not requiring enough school time, not enough homework? "There is a lack of clear consensus about how to improve education," concludes The Task Force on Economic Growth.

The underlying cause of this national failure that has not been considered addresses the fact that today's children live in a television world. A new approach, therefore is to reach them where they are, correlating teaching methods with the familiar world of children today.

In *Nation at Risk* the very word, television, does not appear anywhere in the 65 page report. In the 50 pages of *Action for Excellence* the word, television, is mentioned only once, and then to make the negative suggestion that "those who report watching television and doing little homework score lower on national assessment tests."

In contrast, the concept of computer literacy has already been enthusiastically added to the vocabulary of educators and is being incorporated into educational goals across the nation. Where was the educational community when this same need came along for television literacy, the

ability to read and interpret the language of television, and to acquire the critical viewing skills needed to be fluent in this visual language?

It appears that the task forces of these two national commissions have looked at almost everything in depth and with painstaking detail. What they have failed to consider is the child of the television age. If the goal of education is to provide effective learning experiences then it follows that to teach a child you must reach the child where the child is. You must teach the learner where his thinking is and where his experience is. Yet, for the most part, our children are not learning what schools expect of them because their minds and their experiences are in a world that is different from the traditional school environment.

In the 35 years since the advent of television, the medium has become so firmly established in our society that it has gradually and deeply changed the very environment or the ecology of childhood.

Traditionally, childhood has followed a normal sequence of expanding horizons from parents and home to school and community, and later to the greater world outside... all at a rate compatible with the child's mental growth.

But television has changed all that!

Today, television brings the adult world into the child's earliest experience, undiluted and unexplained. The effects of this major new dimension on the ecology on childhood are many. For example, the television-age child reads the entire screen at one glance rather than the traditional left to right, working from top to bottom of the print oriented mind. Children's television experiences, although experienced only vicariously via the video screen are in a strange way broader. Most of all, children are growing up in a different environment, an environment in which they have never not known the world as television pictures it.

It is not our purpose here to dwell at length on the role of television in our children's lives. Rather, we are concerned that education consider its proper role in educating children in the television age. To us this role is clear, defined, and has been waiting to be recognized for over 30 years. Institutions of learning need to expand their view of literacy and the basic skills it encompasses, to include the new media literacy skills of television, giving the child the tools for critical viewing so greatly needed in the media-dominated world of today and tomorrow. For children, the need has been urgent for over a generation. For education, in its time of crisis and self-analysis, TV literacy may now prove to be an essential key to an effective interaction between teacher and student that is needed to bring about learning. Meeting the child on his own home ground, where his thinking is, can open doors never before unlocked.

Examples of such creative approaches were reported and explored at the 1983 February Conference of the National Telemedia Council (then still known as the American Council for Better Broadcasts). The conference, entitled *Children, Television and You*, explored How to Make Children's TV Viewing Habits Work for Them in the Classroom or Home Learning."

Television is an excellent subject for teaching divergent thinking techniques. Children become actively involved, thinking freely, at a higher cognitive level. Because they feel comfortable with the subject, teachers can use it to teach children to develop their thinking skills, including the discipline needed for critical thinking. This is media literacy at its best.

Alvin Toffler, futurist and author, recently expressed this need for our children's future eloquently in a television program based on his most recent book, *The Third Wave*. He spoke about the need for teaching media literacy if we are to prepare our children for an "expanded democracy fit for the 21st Century. We may be crippling our children by teaching them Second Wave methods in a Third Wave society," he warned. "Is a child literate if he cannot decipher the meaning of television's messages? Ahead lies a rich new diversity in which we will truly need a tri-literacy: print literacy, television literacy, and computer literacy."

If America is to meet the challenges of today, the need for leadership at the policy-making level is imperative. The time has come for innovative policies that will both catch the interest of children now and prepare them for the 21st Century which is their legacy.

To date there are few precedents. This, in spite of the fact that an entire generation has grown up with television and that we are now raising a third generation of children who are encountering yet another level of television experience in the video age. The children who are growing up today are surrounded by electronic media of a sort different from that of their parents' experience. Where the latter could only turn on the set and watch what was available, today's children are growing up with many telemedia choices: cable, computer games, and video tape recorders. The video screen is becoming a tool that today's children can manipulate.

Thus the question persists: why are there not more teachers involved in teaching television literacy? Teachers who know how to make effective use in school of the at-home viewing experiences of their students?

The ways of implementing a media literacy program are as varied as the number of teachers. Whether it becomes the major vehicle or just one of many, such a program can be integrated into an existing course and does not need to become "one more" added burden for the teacher's agenda. Rather than an extra time demand, it calls for an attitude of awareness and a willingness to step into the television age with a positive attitude toward telemedia as a powerful ally in preparing children for the future.

If just one school board in Wisconsin could be inspired to make an official policy decision to include media literacy—i.e. the teaching of critical viewing and listening skills in its curriculum; and to back up such a policy with a development plan for its implementation and funding we believe this would be a "first."

To our knowledge, such an official school board policy does not yet exist. It would be the work of an enlightened group within the realm of school administrators. The National Telemedia Council would be glad to give its support and its help! •

TEACHER IDEA EXCHANGE

This article by Bruce Reeves was the first developed teacher idea to be printed in Better Broadcast News. By 1974, the concept was formalized into an active committee that reviewed and compiled the Teacher Idea Exchange (T.I.E.).

"MASS MEDIA AND PROPAGANDA"

"Mass Media and Propaganda" is the name of an elective course in Acalanes High School, Lafayette, California. It is based on contact with reality, which gives it excitement. With this start it can lead to real discernment in judging broadcast speeches, book reviews, newscasts, interviews.

The stimulus to alert judgment is the testing of the claims of advertisers. This is the way it goes.

Each student is required to find an advertisement (printed or aired) making a claim which can be scientifically verified. Then he figures out a way of testing the claim and submits it to the instructor. He then runs his tests and reaches one of three conclusions: the product is "as advertised," "slightly misleading," "not as advertised." He reports this verdict to the class, which discusses his logic, clarity, and honesty. If he passes the examination by the class, he sends his verdict to the advertiser with a covering letter.

Some advertisers reply, probably about half of them. For instance, the student testing Zerex Antifreeze concluded that its claim, "Zerex is guaranteed not to run out on you" was slightly misleading. In its demonstration (not now used) on television a can of Zerex solution was pierced. Liquid spurted out, but only for a few seconds. In the student's copy of this demonstration,

one hole spurted liquid for two minutes, another, three. DuPont, in response, asked several questions—the size of the holes she used, their shape (since radiator leaks are usually slits), the amount of pressure, and so on, and requested that she run the test again, giving the specifications it used.

Such a letter, thoughtful and instructive, makes the students even more careful and observant.

Another example: Ivory Liquid claimed that it is "so rich and thick it even whips." The student agreed that it whipped, but so did its competitors, and she questioned the value of its whipping. In reply, Procter and Gamble said the claim of whipping was to stress its creaminess.

It is obvious that the necessary student initiative and responsibility would help to develop keen observation of statements and arguments and would foster discernment. Writing letters to the sponsors would require and develop skill in the use of words. The course is not confined to this one activity and method, but the claim-testing project is a lively stimulus.

For details, we refer you to Bruce B. Reeves, (teacher of the course and author of the article in the *English Journal*, May, 1972, from which this information was gleaned) Acalanes High School, 1200 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette, California 94549.

TEACHING TV EVALUATION IDEA—EXCHANGE

A short annotated listing of ideas on teaching evaluation of television programs will soon be made by the Idea-Exchange Committee and sent to those who have asked for help in this field. Meantime *Better Broadcasts NEWS* will carry some contributed ideas—like this one, from a Virginia teacher of Sophomore English:

"My four-week course on TV included Research and panel discussions on:
Education and TV
Violence and TV
History of TV
Advertising
TV's Influence on Society—Morals and Attitudes
Future of TV

"The class was divided into groups representing personnel of selected TV dramas. For instance, 'Kung Fu,' 'Edge of Night,' 'Maude,' 'Medical Center,' 'Lost in Space,' 'Mannix' provided variety. Each personnel group for a particular drama was responsible for presenting a typical show (videotaped), analyzing it, and convincing the rest of the class either to retain the program or to reject it. To insure interest and involvement, the class became the network's Board of Directors with power to keep the show or give it the ax. Each member of the Board was assigned (randomly as was their choice) different shares of stock, which allowed them various voting power. This activity resulted in a more critical eye during periods of TV addiction. By the way, the soap operas, 'Medical Center' and 'Lost in Space' were given the ax."

FEBRUARY 1973

Within one year the Teacher Idea Exchange had become a regular feature of Better Broadcasts News and continues today in Telemedium.

JANUARY 1974

The English Connection

Louis Forsdale, professor of Communication and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, researched and wrote about the impact of mass communications on the future of the human condition. A contemporary of Marshall McLuhan, his own theories including the understanding that the visual impact of mass media far exceeded the importance of the text supported McLuhan's observation that electronic communications were creating a "global village." Dr. Forsdale worked closely with the National Council of Teachers of English and was on the board of the American Council for Better Broadcasts in the 1950's, helping to establish the pedagogical foundation for teaching multi-media literacy in schools.

His articles written 50 years ago for the ACBB are addressing some of the very same challenges we are facing today. We are still in need of changing our teacher education programs to truly prepare teachers to be able to teach not only through, but also about the new media. This reluctance to change stems from our society clinging to the belief that print is more prestigious, thus making, as Forsdale states below, "new mediums on the 'wrong side of the tracks' culturally." This is no less evident today than when schools call for blocking interactive websites such as MySpace rather than teaching students how to critically analyze their impact and consider the positive opportunities the technology provides. The fact that media educators must continue to defend their programs as being more than "the AV club" that gets to set up the projector, watch films, or play with cameras demonstrates that academia and society need to come to terms with this prestige misconception before literacy education can genuinely be transformed.

THE PROBLEM OF PRESTIGE MEDIUMS

(The first of three articles to appear in the NEWSLETTER this year, written by Dr. Louis Forsdale, Professor of English, Teachers College, Columbia University.)

Most teachers know how important the modern mediums of communication are. Few teachers and school administrators underestimate the significance of film, radio, television, newspapers and magazines in our world. Why is it, then, that we spend so little time in our schools teaching about them?

There are several answers, of course. One is that many teachers have not been trained to teach about any medium but print. Another is that a very long tradition in our culture centers on print, and there is always difficulty in making a cultural "break-through." A third reason is that many teachers feel that the newer mediums are already too powerful and effective and that what is needed is less attention to them, not more. A fourth reason is an assumption that you don't need to be skilled or trained to get the most from radio, film, television and mass print; that the process is automatic—a kind of osmosis—and that critical use of the new

mediums is more a matter of basic intelligence and courage to choose than of education.

Without exploring these reasons in depth, let me suggest that perhaps the dominant reason for lack of adequate attention to the newer mediums in our schools is that the medium of print occupies a prestige position in our culture. Out of the long tradition we are likely to assume that, of course, print is more important, more worthy, more scholarly, more artistically useful than any of the newer mediums. This view places the new mediums on the "wrong side of the tracks," culturally.

This attitude does not relate to content exclusively either. It is often more a matter of feeling that the medium of print, as a medium, by virtue of its form, is the best and most dignified of communication modes and that other modes are inherently inferior.

The late Professor Harold A. Innis of the University of Toronto would be quick to remind us that the problem of prestige mediums has always been with us. With sweeping historical perspective he demonstrated in his three volumes of speeches and essays*

that throughout the history of western civilization, mediums of communication have gained favored positions in their cultures, always to be supplemented, complemented or replaced by newer mediums which made information more widely available to all citizens.

We are in such a position today. For 500 years print has come gradually to occupy a position of very great prestige in our culture. For many teachers, print "came over on the Mayflower," metaphorically, and the ubiquitous new electronic mediums can't show the same lineage. Still, it seems to me that those of us who are teachers are learning, slowly perhaps, that our lives are richer for the new mediums, that they present opportunity more than challenge.

We had better learn that: History did not stop when Gutenberg (and others) invented the printing press.

LOUIS FORSDALE,

**Empire and Communications, 1950; The Bias of Communication, 1951; Changing Concepts of Time, 1952.*

OCTOBER 1955

• The cell phone invented & the beginning of email

• 1972 Sony's Betamax videotape introduced

• First home videogame, Pong, introduced

• 1976 Ted Turner begins nationwide satellite cable network (CNN)

• 1977 QUBE, the dream of "two-way television," is a short lived experimental trial

Multi-Media Literacy

Before he retired from Teachers College last year Lyman Bryson talked about the mass media to a group of young English teachers, who were getting ready to go to their first jobs. His talk ended on this note: "... I would like to make a prophecy: ... that the third, or fourth, or fifth generation of teachers from this present one is going to think about these new instruments of communication the way you now think of print."

Professor Bryson is right, of course. The time will come when the newer media (film, radio, and television) will not be viewed as imposters in the favored domain currently reserved for print. Some of us feel that the time for this view has already come.

Still the English teacher—who has a great stake in the implications of such a view—is faced with the question of how to think about the mass media now, not three generations from now; of what specific activities can be arranged for school use now to help students gain discrimination in their approach to the mass media. Thinking of that prophecy, here are some specific suggestions for in-school activities.

First, assign home television viewing as a classroom activity. Ask students to watch a TV play or a discussion or a

speech, and then devote time in class to discussing of the ideas and values of the program; consider techniques, dramatic excellence and the like.

Second, ask for critical papers and reviews about television radio and film as well as books. And why not a "cross media" report from the students who would accept the challenge of comparing what happens to a play (*Macbeth*, for example) when it is treated on the printed page, on the live stage, on film, on radio, on television?

Third, when dealing with literary genre—drama, short stories, novels, etc.—include in considerations of each literary type not only products from the printed page but also from the radio loudspeaker and the television screen. A television play is just as much a play as is a printed play, maybe more so.

Fourth, establish a communication arts column in the school newspaper or in the local paper where students may write in disciplined fashion about television, radio, film, paper back books, newspapers, magazines, and the like.

Fifth, organize a television club (or a film club, or a communication arts club) in your school, complimenting clubs on drama, photography, debate, model making, and the like. One such club that I know of pub-

lishes a weekly mimeographed newsletter of television for distribution to the whole student body.

Sixth, get copies of television kinescopes whenever possible and project them in class for critical discussion. Run them a second time and watch the perception sharpen!

Seventh, encourage students to write letters to television and radio stations as part of letter writing activities. But make the activity real—send the letters. And send the letters which praise as well as those which criticize adversely.

And on and on.

Through activities like these (and many, many more) we may hasten the inevitable maturation of the newer media and help our students gain necessary multi-media literacy. Is there an educational job to be done which has a higher priority?

Louis Forsdale
Teachers College
Columbia University

JANUARY 1955

A New Age

By Dr. Louis Forsdale, Asst. Professor,
Teachers College, Columbia University

A friend of mine who is a teacher of science once described for me the plight of science teachers in these times. "In college I learned my physics well enough," he said, "but when the atom bomb exploded much of my learning became obsolescent. Now I have to give myself a college course every day to keep up."

I remember that comment today because it states so well a parallel problem which faces those of us who are English teachers. Our subject has been changed too, not by fission and fusion, but by the new media of communication—film, radio and television. There was a time when English teachers could work almost exclusively with the skills of reading, writing and perhaps speaking, for the basic media of communication were print and face-to-face speech. Then in rapid succession the three new media changed our communication environment. As my colleague, Professor Lennox Grey, has pointed out, it is probable that for most people today the bulk of their literary experience comes not through print but through radio, film and television. If this is true—and I have no reason to doubt it—then English teachers must turn their eyes and ears to the newer media and study them. And to the traditional skills of reading, writing and speaking, we must now add listening (to radio, for example) and observing (film and television, for example).

While accepting this new obligation, English teachers must learn enough about the newer media to help their students discover the best which each medium has to offer, and this is a difficult assignment. After all, we have been trained to understand, re-spect and teach about words, generally printed words. Now we are faced with a medium like television which combines picture, language, sound and music in mutually reinforcing fashion.

How can English teachers (and other teachers) go about the job of becoming students, and subsequently teachers, of the newer media? The Committee for the Study of Television, Radio and Film of the National Council of Teachers of English is studying that problem, along with other problems, but materials are not as yet available from this group. Meanwhile I have made a list of suggestions, for myself mainly, but also for others who may be reading over my shoulder. These suggestions concentrate on television because that ubiquitous and attractive medium urgently calls for our attention, but with a little verbal juggling you can read radio and film into each of the suggestions.

1. Watch television. Before you can help students gain discrimination in viewing television, you need to know the medium from personal experience. (Still I know teachers who refuse for one reason or another to watch television.)

2. Look at everything — baseball, wrestling, soap opera, news, commentary, musical programs, and look at them without preconceptions.

3. Accentuate the positive. In all of your television viewing, seek the best. It takes but little talent for a mature adult to spot poor programs, but it is a truly creative task to identify the fine programs which fleetingly appear on the screen.

4. Don't praise or condemn programs by categories. All Shakespeare on television is not necessarily good; all crime drama is not necessarily bad.

5. Evaluate television in terms of its own potential, its own problems. Seek actively to discover the unique genius of the medium. Look at drama, for example, as television drama, not as stage drama.

6. Watch creatively for new talent among writers, designers, actors. There are serious workers in the new medium whose names are not generally known in other media (the Chayevskys, Footes, Segals, Gitlins, Murrows, among them).

7. Read the critics and discuss programs with friends and colleagues, but in the last analysis stand by your own opinions.

(In two future articles I hope to discuss some procedures which English teachers might use to help students gain discrimination in viewing television, and then make some observations about the peculiar nature of drama on television.)

OCTOBER 1954

From the Assembly on Media Arts of the National Council of Teachers of English

The National Telemedia Council has had a long history of collaborating with the National Council of Teachers of English. NTC's co-founder, Dr. Leslie Spence, an English teacher herself, forged these bonds from the beginning, helping to shape NCTE's policy on media literacy and building a reciprocal membership opportunity in the 1960's and 70's. NCTE's Commission on Media, beginning in 1980, develops policy and provides direction for the teaching of media literacy in the English Language Arts classroom. The Assembly on Media Arts (AMA) was organized in 1988 to bring NCTE members with a special interest in this area together to help integrate their efforts. Members of the National Telemedia Council have been instrumental in supporting these two organizations for as long as they have been around. Today, we continue to foster this partnership through a renewed reciprocal membership arrangement with the AMA, knowing that a higher level of synergy can be reached through collaboration.

TEACHERS OF ENGLISH VOTE IMPORTANT RESOLUTION

"On Preparing Students with Skill for Evaluating Media"

"BACKGROUND: It has been estimated that 96 per cent of American homes now have television sets, which are in use more than six hours a day in the average home. Obviously, since young people spend so much time with television and radio, they acquire widespread impressions of human life and events from these media. Be it therefore

"RESOLVED, That the NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) go on record as favoring the teaching of television and radio evaluation in both elementary and secondary schools, and, to that end, propose that colleges and universities prepare prospective and current teachers for the task of developing in their students evaluative skills for these media."

NCTE and ACBB enjoy reciprocal affiliation. ACBB, through its members who are also members of NCTE proposed this important resolution which was approved last November. We now watch its implementation.

Meantime, our Teacher-Idea Exchange continues. ACBB requests from teachers brief notes on their most successful methods of teaching program evaluation so that we may tell those who ask help. Please send them to ACBB, 111 King St., Madison, Wis. 53703.

OCTOBER 1973

NCTE Endorses Media Literacy

"Rationale for Integrating Media into English and the Language Arts"

In the mid-1960's, Leslie Spence, NCTE's co-founder and a teacher of English, worked with the National Council of Teachers of English to build their awareness of the importance of critical viewing skills. In 1984, NCTE and its Commission on Media endorsed the teaching of media awareness and critical skills as an integral part of language arts curricula, accompanying the more traditional discipline of reading, writing, and literature. "As our society changes," stated members of the Media Commission, "so must our English/language arts curricula to address the ever-expanding needs that our students will face in a rapidly approaching future." The NCTE stands by their statement today, and we publish it here with their permission.

Each new medium -- from the printing press to photography, radio, recordings, film, television, videotape, and the computers -- has been hailed as a potentially revolutionary force for changing the forms and functions of English and the language arts, our attention traditionally has focused on communication of knowledge through print, the first medium of literacy. Meanwhile, our students have grown up in an environment that includes the newer auditory and visual electronic media. For them, "acquiring literacy" involves taking into account a wider range of media of communication.

Certainly English and language arts teachers have moved beyond the early view of these media as mere audio-visual aids used only as support for print materials. Increasingly, we are

recognizing a need to integrate all communication media into the teaching of English and the language arts. But how can we justify devoting attention to the development of a broadly based literacy when we are expected to focus exclusively on teaching "the basics" of literacy -- reading and writing?

We believe that communication today and in the future will demand the ability to understand, use, and control more complex symbol systems in order to function competently. Thus, teaching students to discover meaning and to communicate effectively now requires knowing how electronic media function in the development of language, thought, and knowledge in our culture.

Integrating electronic media into classroom teaching involves not only teaching *through* these media but teaching *about* them. Whether we are concerned with film, television, or computers, we must provide opportunities for students to use these media. Students can develop the analytic thinking processes of a broader-based literacy through filmmaking experiences (as well as writing experiences), through discussions of television dramas (as well as short stories), and through consideration of values and stereotypes that appear in commercials (as well as in novels and essays). We should also teach about the media -- their interrelationships, their unique capabilities, their potential and actual influence (both positive and negative) on human consciousness, their future development.

Integrating media into English and the language arts does not deny the primacy of oral and written language. Although new technologies are changing the means of communication, verbal language is still basic to all media and central to our mission as English and language arts teachers. Natural language forms -- printed and spoken -- are required, either as part of the actual language of communication (as in movie

dialogue, television documentary narration, printed instruction on the screen) or as adjuncts to other communication forms (as in film production notes, stage directions for a television play, artificial computer languages).

Equally important, the thinking skills that underlie communication -- inductive-deductive reasoning, making inferences, supporting value statements -- are best taught in the contexts of all the media, verbal as well as visual. Students must learn to understand the power of all media in order to avoid being controlled by them.

In addition, practical considerations -- the growing number of jobs in information processing which require competency in the new communication technologies and the increasing use of new media languages in our daily life -- make teaching toward a more broadly-based literacy absolutely essential. Thus, an expanded concept of literacy is necessary for the development of efficient, effective communication in today's media environment. □

WINTER 1989

The NTC/AMA joint membership was launched at the 2005 NCTE Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by Mary Christel, a charter member of the AMA, past Director of NCTE's Media Commission, and board member of NTC. An enthusiastic response at the annual sharing session of the Assembly on Media Arts signals a revitalization of membership which will promote communication, research, experimentation, and growth for both organizations. We hope you will consider joining us in these efforts.



The National Telemedia Council, working toward a media-wise, literate, global society since 1953,
invites you to join us!

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Are you an English Teacher or in charge of pre-service English teachers? Sign up for our joint NTC/AMA membership opportunity today! For an additional \$5 over your current NTC membership category, you could become a member of the Assembly on Media Arts, the National Council of Teachers of English special interest group focusing on media literacy (saving \$5 on each organization's membership). Please contact Mary Christel, mchriste@district125.k12.il.us

GOOD LISTENING

Monthly List of Programs and News of Radio, Television, First Published in 1935
APRIL, 1953

"Better Listening, Better World"

Wisconsin Association for Better Radio and Television

THE PEOPLE'S TELEVISION

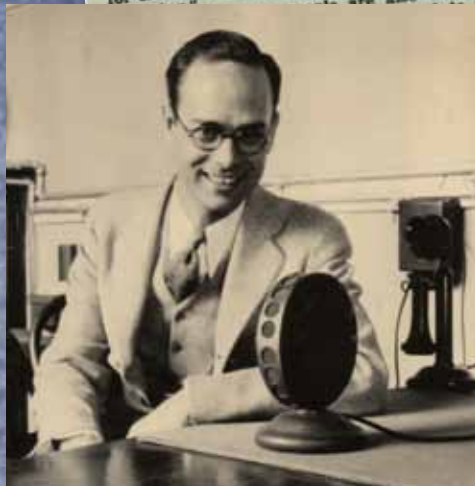
Channel 11 in Chicago is estimated to be worth \$8,000,000, though channels aren't supposed to have financial value. "Ten years from now," says Jennings, Chicago Superintendent of Schools, value will be inestimable. This is one of the channels reserved by the FCC for educational purposes. Citizens' committees throughout Illinois are working hard to see that this valuable asset is not lost to them. Wilmette was the first to organize a committee to see that money is put to use. Incidentally, it was Wilmette, led by Mrs. J. Cooney, which monitored Chicago's TV program for children, described in last month's issue of



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BETTER RADIO-TV BROADCASTS OF ORGANIZATION

You could have a chance to "test the waters" in a few days listening



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plied by the state.
The legislature is truly "economy minded." It is said. If so, it will not throw away millions of dollars worth of the people's money by spending \$625,000 now.
BUT—strong forces are working for a larger appropriation. In some localities, the people own the only local news station; and now they want to have a television station.
(Continued on page 11)



FRANCIS S. JONES, LESLIE OSBORN, MARVIN SEYMOUR, RALPH A. MCKANSE, T. C. MCCONNELL

Better Radio and TV Institute To Be Held Oct. 23 Is Dream Come True For Zealous Madisonians

A SMALL but zealous group of Madison women decided, 17 years ago, that the programs needed improving. Instead of waiting for the government to act, they organized the National Telemedia Council, Inc. THE FIRST MAJOR TEST of the organization's strength was the... from