

cause of CBS dropouts, and only a moderate reaction to ABC's cancellations, the enormous NANA poll shows.

It is vital that opportunity be given viewers to express their opinions on the quality of TV programing. Many wrote through the newspapers involved that television might "improve a lot" if the opinions of those who do not watch television as a narcotic are taken into consideration. The selective viewer, pretty well ignored by Nielsen's mathematics, hates to see marvelous programs like *Profiles in Courage* and the inevitably canceled documentaries shunted aside for more Westerns, more soap opera, more unendurable situation comedy, and TV-portrayed brutality and sex.

It will come as no surprise to anyone that live sports have risen nearly to the top of TV interest and no fault could possibly be found with this or any other category of special-events news coverage where the result is not known in advance. Similarly, the increasing facility and competence of the documentary newscasts on all three networks needs encouragement and not witless slashing on the basis of mass-denominator ratings alone. Oddly, one of the most recent NANA polls reveals that most viewers think TV news is too slanted, an accusation often made against the U.S. daily newspaper. Perhaps it is simply in the nature of news, which must be controversial to fit the definition, that over half of almost 10,000 replies in a May 22 poll expressed dissatisfaction with the content of news programs. We must say we think the news departments of all three networks are currently doing a job far superior to that of any other segment of the television industry.

Our premise remains: That TV comes woefully short of fulfilling its enormous potential, even at so early a stage of its evolution. We have come to suffer television as it is, to let its mechanism and quality standards become clichés that we somehow daren't question. But this is absurd when one thinks what television could become—the greatest medium of adult (and adolescent) mass education in our life as a nation. Can one imagine what wonders might be wrought if all of the networks devoted, as we have suggested here before, the prime evening hours of 5 to 7 or 6 to 8 P.M. every weekday night to mass education in the languages of other countries, top musical events, serious discussion of political and social issues through the highest government and academic spokesmen, news of the day in much greater depth, documentaries, the best in live theater, or world-wide pickups via Telstar and its competitors? The imagination is staggered by what would be added to the total American intelligence at the end of a single experimental year.

—R.L.T.

## Letters to the Communications Editor



### Harris on Harris

I FOUND your analysis of the directions of television [SR, May 8] fascinating and perceptive. You dealt with the data in our television survey fully and fairly. We do not quarrel with the accuracy of the rating service estimates of audience size. Rather, our survey results imply the necessity for finding qualitative measurements to watch the dominant quantitative guidelines now in use.

I take one factual exception to your piece—not relating to your analysis of television. In February 1963 I foresook polling for private political clients in order to write a weekly syndicated newspaper column and for *Newsweek* magazine—both for the Washington Post Corporation—and to become a consultant to CBS News, directing the Vote Profile Analysis (VPA) for election coverage. I would like to correct any misunderstanding that our firm is in any way engaged in survey work for men running for office or for political parties.

LOUIS HARRIS,

Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.  
New York, N.Y.

I READ R.L.T.'s article "The Long, Hard Night of the TV Commercial" with very great interest. It is my feeling, however, that the conclusions reached are based upon distorted and incomplete opinion-research findings.

These findings result from a survey completed by the North American Newspaper Alliance. NANA implies that it has accurately measured national consumer opinion. However, this is not the case. By using faulty sampling procedures, it disregarded the primary aim of sampling, which is to reflect accurately the true behavior of all members of the population.

A problem lies in the sample's lack of representativeness. A requirement for representativeness is that all sample subjects must be selected without bias and prejudice. By allowing potential subjects to decide for themselves if they wish to be included in the sample (as was done in the NANA "balloting," although not clearly indicated as such by them), the poll-taker is accomplishing precisely the thing that should be eliminated and overcome. Common sense indicates that there may be very meaningful differences between "responders" and "nonresponders." Perhaps the latter had no strong dislike about the subject at hand or even had no opinion

at all. These alternatives are very real possibilities.

Size alone will not overcome such distortion. Please consider the disastrous 1936 Presidential poll of *Literary Digest*. They used a much larger sample than NANA's. However, their poor sample selection methods resulted in a finding that did not reflect the attitudes of the vast majority of voters. Thus it must be recognized that a small representative sample can be a more accurate predictor of population attitude and behavior than a larger unrepresentative sample.

I think, then, that your statement of "an enormous nationwide poll on television programing and commercials," consisting of 5,200 different people, is misleading. They were not randomly selected and are useless as a means of projecting for the entire population.

Negative reference is made toward the Nielsen sample. Since everyone else is quick to attack Nielsen's results, your attack is nothing out of the ordinary. Admittedly, his sample of "only 1,600 families [which] don't change from month to month" has shortcomings. However, Nielsen does attempt to have some level of representativeness in his sample and NANA makes no such attempt in its study.

The article states "the statistics from NANA appear to be valid enough." Validity as used here communicates that the data represents what it purports to represent, e.g., the population of the entire United States. Clearly, this is not necessarily the case here.

All in all, NANA must considerably improve its sampling techniques before its "survey" conclusions will become valid and meaningful.

DAVID A. SCHWARTZ,

New York, N.Y.

I DON'T THINK I will be beating a dead horse if I pursue the splitting phase of TV culture through one more point. The NANA, Roper, and Harris reports appear to reflect the course of all communication efforts. This is the inevitable division between higher and lower tastes of people . . . , with a middle group remaining passive. (Please note this verifies the same principle I stated in my letter to the editor printed in your issue of May 8. The upper and lower ends of all strata become effectively recognized and catered to, while the center becomes a passive connector.) But we should not be concerned. All forms of communication media such as art, music, literature, the newspaper, radio, have passed the same point and stabilized at class levels. TV reflects the same characteristics of people. We should be concerned if it *does not* behave as other media.

The interesting point, however, is that if TV is reaching its stabilization, what new



media will develop? I would like to propose one. This will be a system of highly developed storage and retrieval centers that will bring any photograph, motion picture, illustration, drawing, painting, document, book, play, opera, or popular music right into the home via TV or printout within seconds after a person decides and dials what he chooses. These giants are already feasible. Consider the Linotron, the Photon ZIP Model 900, and the Lexical-Graphical Composer Printer system. Entire books can be printed in minutes. A single picture or page could be flashed into the home from any information storage center in the United States. You could select your newscast at any moment and in any depth instead of waiting for network schedules. You could order any book without having to wait for mass publication. You could enjoy any music by any orchestration without having to purchase and store your own collection. In other words, you will be in complete control of your entertainment and education from your own information-receiving center in your own home. And I expect that in this advanced situation the same kind of people will be making the same kind of selections that are indicated by the NANA, Roper, and Harris reports.

SELAH BOND.

Ontario, N.Y.

KIM B. ROTZALL, instructor in advertising at Penn State University, is so right when he suggests not buying the product whose commercial offends. I've dropped certain soap products for insulting my intelligence; I no longer buy a headache remedy because of the deadly little domestic dramas they forced us to suffer through; however, I'm going to purchase one remedy for tummy aches because of their delightful commercial depicting a tummy ache by means of a composite of all manner of natural and man-made disasters; then after the product is taken, the relief is portrayed with a composite of many lovely, serene things—the unfolding of a flower, the floating of a swan, etc. I enjoy watching this commercial. TV commercials create an imaginary creature who is insecure, unathletic, unloved, stupid, constipated, bilious, generally ailing, in constant pain, depressed—and above all—smelly. It's so dismal it's funny.

HARRIET S. ARMSTRONG.

Allison Park, Pa.

I HOPE I am not too late to join the discussion triggered by Richard L. Tobin's editorial [SR, Apr. 10]. Even though I am a reasonably well-educated college graduate with a fairly adequate income, I still find myself liking the silly commercials, especially Ajax and Tareyton. I think the critics miss the point. Why did a man with an eye patch sell shirts? You just couldn't forget it.

GRACE FOOTE SHANNON.

New York, N.Y.

IN REFERENCE TO Kim B. Rotzoll's suggestion in LETTERS TO THE COMMUNICATIONS EDITOR of May 8, I did indeed take pen in hand several months ago to write to the Colgate-Palmolive Company. I informed them that their white tornado, white knight, and so on had so indelibly etched the name Ajax on my brain that I would

never forget it—to the extent that I would always remember never to buy anything labeled Ajax. Naturally, I never received an answer, but I have never purchased any of their Ajax products and will continue to boycott any product that employs what I refer to as the "Ajax" school of advertising. Perhaps if enough women did voice and record their objections we might see some results.

MRS. HAROLD B. KESSLER.

Levittown, Pa.

### Another View of Weeklies

JOHN TEBBEL, in his article on "The Resurgent Weekly" [SR, May 8], certainly reaches some conclusions that are at variance with the journalistic axiom of "Accuracy. . . ."

He cites the Duxbury (Mass.) *Clipper* as prospering by reason of "sheer individuality." Poppycock! The reason it has prospered is that it gave 100 per cent coverage, by free distribution, of the somnolent, sylvan town it covers. (It has recently gone on a paid subscription basis.) And since there is a lot of wealth in Duxbury it is an attractive market for area merchants. The *Clipper* certainly isn't an individualistic weekly in the same class as the Vineyard (Mass.) *Gazette* or the Wilmette (Ill.) *Life*. The current *Life* before me contains 136 tabloid pages, including twenty of classified advertising, and these figures are not exceptional. From my observations, it is one of the best, if not the best, weekly newspaper in the country. And it's printed off-set, using hot metal composition.

Mr. Tebbel also is a trifle confused when he cites the advantages offset printing offers and at the same time states that weekly newspapers cannot afford automated typesetting devices. Well, type must still be set whether the reproduction is offset or letterpress, and the most popular offset typesetter is an automaton in use in hundreds of shops, a Friden Justewriter. Too, many newspapers find it less frustrating and less costly to employ girls to punch tapes on typewriters, which are then fed into TTS automatons that justify the lines and set the type on hot metal machines. Few papers can afford \$120,000 for a Linofilm set-up or \$35,000 for a modern Linotype or Fotosetter, but they can afford about \$6,000 for the Justewriter "cold-type" combination, plus the

small additional cost of a headletter or display type photo machine.

The third point of Mr. Tebbel's that is hardly true is that the "size of the small daily or weekly depends on the size of the community." The size of a community has little to do with the size of its newspaper, and no better proof is needed than Hingham, which is an attractive, well-groomed, residential town, mostly of professionals and executives, with a population of about 16,000. But its weekly, a six-column paper, can just about manage eight pages, and that after 138 years.

On the other hand, the New Canaan (Conn.) *Advertiser* is printed in a community much like Hingham in the number and quality of its residents and in the nature of its real estate development, but a recent issue of the *Advertiser* contained twenty-two eight-column pages, which is not unusual.

More important than size of a community is the thinking of its businessmen and the cash flow of local residents. If businessmen are not advertising-oriented and sold on its value to attract business, if the people are not good spenders locally, and if a paper is not stimulating or interesting reading—then no matter what the community's size, the paper will reflect this apathy.

There is one factor—radio—that Mr. Tebbel overlooks. True, television offers little competition (it is too costly) for local advertising, though it certainly has cut into the national picture as far as advertising space is concerned. But radio is a very potent competitor for the advertising dollar in many communities. People can listen to radio without stopping their chores, which they cannot do while watching television or reading newspapers.

I do not want to seem unduly critical of Mr. Tebbel, but I am afraid that from his ivory tower on Madison Avenue, or elsewhere, his observations are not empirical.

G. HARRIS DANZBERGER.

Hingham, Mass.

### Apropos of Nothing

SOME OF US attached to the Department of Psychiatry here have been having fun speculating on the meaning of a tidbit brought back from Detroit by a recent visitor there. It concerns the newspaper strike some months ago.

The report has to do with the effect of the strike upon various aspects of the life of the city. Sales, it says, were off in major department stores only slightly. Major items of national news were adequately circulated. There's a list of other items that remained unchanged, but, in brief, the report says that only one aspect of Detroit's life was sharply changed by the suspension of newspaper publication: the crime rate went down 27 per cent.

Perhaps there's a bit of *post hoc ergo propter hoc* in this report, and one could question the cause-and-effect implication. But what else was going on of major significance enough to have caused a decrease in Detroit crime? Perhaps some of your readers or your staff, both reporter-haters and reporter-lovers, would like to join in the speculations.

KENNETH R. MITCHELL,

Vanderbilt University Hospital.  
Nashville, Tenn.





# The New Look at the "Times"

By PETER BART

LOS ANGELES.

THE Los Angeles *Times*, a newspaper that had retained an aura of austere predictability for more than eight decades, has become a bundle of surprises lately. Readers who had viewed basically the same bylines and biases through several generations have suddenly encountered a new editorial approach, a new format, and virtually a new staff.

Though Los Angeles is a community accustomed to mercurial change, those at the *Times* have had a jarring effect. "To some old-line readers it's been like a death in the family," one *Times* editor conceded. Many younger readers, on the other hand, have welcomed the changes while admitting puzzlement over their timing. For the changes at the *Times* have come precisely at the time when many community leaders were predicting gloomily that the newspaper was about to sink into hopeless stagnation.

These predictions had apparent logic behind them. After enduring for decades in a ruthlessly competitive newspaper town, the *Times* in 1962 suddenly assumed a position of complete pre-eminence with the passing of the afternoon *Mirror* and the morning *Examiner*. The only remaining competition in the explosively expanding city of Los Angeles stemmed from the newly merged afternoon *Herald-Examiner*, a thoroughly undistinguished Hearst product with little influence in the community. Los Angeles, it seemed clear, would belong to the powerful Chandler dynasty that had ruled the *Times* since its establishment.

To everyone's surprise, however, the Chandlers did not use their new predominance as an excuse to stand pat. Instead, at the very time that the status quo seemed the order of the day, the Chandlers initiated a program of change that involved not only the editorial revitalization of the *Times* but also the expansion and diversification of its corporate parent, the Times Mirror Company. Having endured since 1881 principally on revenues from the *Times*, the Times Mirror Company acquired, in

fairly rapid succession, a dozen diverse companies, including the World Publishing Company, the New American Library of World Literature, and two neighboring newspaper enterprises in San Bernardino and Orange County. Indeed, the Wall Street brokerage houses were suddenly proclaiming the once stolid Times Mirror Company as a "growth stock."

The Times Mirror Company has emerged from this expansion period as a formidably remunerative and versatile enterprise whose influence penetrates many domains. Through its various subsidiaries it produces a range of products that includes road maps (H. M. Gousha Company), flight operation manuals (Jeppesen & Company), law books (Matthew Bender Company), paperbacks (New American Library), Bibles (World Publishing Company), plywood (Dwyer Lumber Company), and scientific instruments (Pickett Industries). Its total corporate revenues in 1964 totaled nearly \$200,000,000, of which the *Times* accounted for only about half. Significantly, at a time when many newspaper-centered companies are showing the skimpiest of profit margins, the Times Mirror Company last year turned up earnings after taxes of \$11,400,000.

With all its diversification, however, the heart of the Times Mirror operation remains the vast Los Angeles *Times*, itself a journalistic monolith of impressive dimensions. Among the nation's newspapers, the *Times* leads both in advertising lineage and in the quantity of news and feature content. Its weekday circulation of 840,000 ranks behind only two other papers, the New York *News* and Chicago *Tribune*, while its Sunday circulation of 1,190,000 is exceeded only by the *News*, *Tribune*, and New York *Times*. Though the Chandler family has never publicly revealed the paper's profit margins, the *Times* is widely considered to be perhaps the nation's single most remunerative newspaper.

Despite its imposing stature, the *Times* is by no means uniformly admired in its home community. Politically, many liberals have never forgiven the paper for its endorsement of Barry Goldwater,

even though the *Times's* editorial pages leveled abundant criticism at Goldwater during the Presidential campaign. The extreme right-wing element, meanwhile, can never forgive or forget the *Times's* adamant denunciation of the John Birch Society and its frequent blasts at the tactics of ultra-conservatism.

Caught in this fierce ideological cross-fire, the *Times* in recent years has stepped up efforts to build a reputation of unassailable objectivity in its news columns while at the same time vastly expanding the scope of its coverage. The principal responsibility for implementing these objectives fell to thirty-seven-year-old Otis Chandler, a tall, blond-haired young man of massive build who in 1960 took over as publisher of the *Times*, succeeding his father, Norman Chandler.

Under the aegis of Otis Chandler, the *Times* has undergone the most complete editorial overhaul of its history, and the pace of change seems to be accelerating rather than diminishing. In the last three years alone the size of the editorial staff has been increased by forty men to a total of 386 full-time reporters and ed-



itors. The Washington staff has been expanded from three to twelve men. The foreign staff has been increased from one to twelve men, with new bureaus opened up in such capitals as Moscow, Rio de Janeiro, Saigon, Leopoldville, and Beirut. Plans now call for the establishment of a new staff of national correspondents who will make their base in Los Angeles but will be dispatched to various parts of the nation as the news dictates. One reporter, Jack Nelson, recently was stationed permanently in Atlanta and will cover the South from there.

In recruiting new talent for its expanding staff the *Times* has raided some esteemed publications. Among the newcomers to the staff are Robert J. Donovan and Don Cook from the New York *Herald Tribune*, Joe Alex Morris and Robert Elegant from *Newsweek*, Charles Champlin from *Time*, Art Seidenbaum and William Trombley from the *Saturday Evening Post*. The new foreign editor, Robert Gibson, came to the *Times* from *Business Week*, while the new national news editor, Ed Guthman, was formerly on the staff of Senator Robert Kennedy.

Both in style and format, the paper reflects this infusion of new blood. On any given day the front page may contain as many as six foreign stories, most

## Los Angeles Times